

# CHALCEDON

## *Report*

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# THE G<sup>○</sup>D<sup>○</sup>LESSNESS OF GUN C<sup>○</sup>NTRO<sup>○</sup>



**P. Andrew Sandlin on** Got Guns?

**Larry Pratt on** What the Bible Teaches About Gun Control

**Brian Abshire on** Real Gun Control is Hitting What You Aim At

**Charles A. Wiseman on** the Origin of the Right to Bear Arms in America

**Peter Hammond on** David Livingstone's Postmillennialism

**And Much More**

**URGENT NEED AT RECONSTRUCTIONIST  
ORPHANAGE IN MEXICO**

(see inside for details)



# CHALCEDON Report

## *A Monthly Report Dealing With the Relationship of Christian Faith to the World*

### THE GODLESSNESS OF GUN CONTROL

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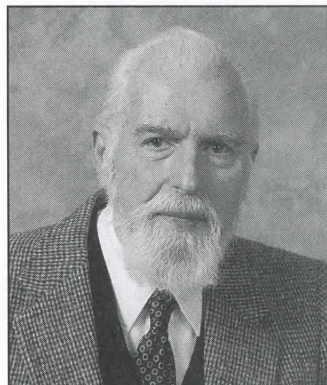
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# "For His Mercy Endureth Forever"

*By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony*



One of my favorite psalms, one I used to enjoy reading aloud, is Psalm 136. Every verse ends with the joyful refrain, "For His mercy endureth forever." How long does our mercy endure? How long do we show grace to those who wrong us or offend us?

God's wrath is no uncertain matter, nor His law one that He forgets. But God's mercy is an everlasting one and we need to rely on it and to trust in it. Moreover, we must show God's mercy towards those who sin against us.

We tend to overlook God's mercy and we forget how much Christians in the past relied on it. Remember, "Mercy" was often given as a name to girls.

A forgotten theme of Christian piety in earlier years was God's mercy. Few people now feel a need for God's mercy. They come to Him in the confidence of a happy reception,

forgetting how much they need grace, and how deeply they stand in the fact of God's mercy. We are never in His favor because of our superior works.

Psalm 136 thus summons us to give continual thanks to God for His mercy. Too often, when we pray, we forget to thank God for His mercy. We fall into the sin of expecting mercy and believing that we deserve it. This is why the reading of Psalm 136 is so wholesome.

*Mercy* is grace and good gifts to the undeserving. *Mercy* is inseparable from *grace* because it means goodness to the undeserving, God's goodness out of sheer grace.

The Bible speaks more often of God's grace and mercy than we do. We want God, as someone observed in the 1930s, as a spare tire, important to have in case of a flat tire, but nothing to think about otherwise. We should instead "give thanks unto the God of heaven: for His mercy endureth forever" (Ps. 136:26).

*Rev. R. J. Rushdoony is chairman of the board of Chalcedon and a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical Law to society.*

## Chalcedon Vision Statement

Chalcedon labors to articulate in the clearest possible terms a distinctly Christian and explicitly Biblical solution to the prevalent evils of the modern world. Our objective is nothing short of setting forth the vision and program for rebuilding the theological fortifications of Christian civilization. These fortifications have been eroded by the forces of humanism and secularism over the past three centuries. We are not committed, though, merely to reproducing a glorious Christian past. We work to press the claims of historic Christianity as the Biblical pattern of life everywhere. We work for godly cultural change across the entire spectrum of life. We strive to accomplish this objective by two principal methods.

First, Chalcedon is committed to recovering the intellectual foundations of Christian civilization. We do this in two main ways, negatively, we expose the bankruptcy of all non-Christian (and alleged but compromising Christian) systems of thought and practices. Positively, we propose an explicitly Biblical system of thought and action as the exclusive basis for civilization. Only by restoring the Christian Faith and Biblical law as the standard of all of life can Christians hope to re-establish Christian civilizations.

Second, Chalcedon is dedicated to providing the tools for rebuilding this Christian civilization. We work to assist individuals, families, and institutions by offering explicitly Biblical alternatives to anti-Christian ideas and practices. In the way we guide Christians in the task of governing their own spheres of life in terms of the entire Bible: in family, church, school, vocation, arts, economics, business, media, the state, and all other areas of modern life.

We believe that the source of godly change is regeneration by the Holy Spirit, not revolution by the violence of man. As God regenerates more and more individuals, and as they reorient their lives and areas of personal influence to the teachings of the Bible, He employs them to advance His kingdom and establish Christian civilization. We believe that God's law is the divine pattern of sanctification in every area of life, but it is not the means of justification; man is saved by grace, not by law. The role of every earthly government—including family government, church government, school government, vocational government, and civil government—is to submit to Biblical law. No government in any form can make men Christians or truly obedient; this is the work of God's sovereign grace. Much less should civil government try to impose Biblical law on an unbelieving society. Biblical law cannot be imposed; it must be embraced.

A guiding principle of Chalcedon, in fact, is its devotion to maximum individual freedom under God's law. Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition of Jesus Christ as God of very God and Man of very man, a formula directly challenging every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, schools, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; only Christ may announce that "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18). Historically, therefore, the Chalcedonian creed is the foundation of Western liberty, setting limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of all human freedom (Galatians 5:1). Consequently, we oppose top-heavy, authoritarian systems of government which are, by definition, non-Christian. We advocate instead a series of independent but cooperative institutions and a highly decentralized social order.

Chalcedon is an educational institution. It supports the efforts of Christians and Christian organizations to implement the vision of Christian civilization. Though unapologetically Reformed, Chalcedon supports the kingdom work of all orthodox denominations and churches. Chalcedon is an independent Christian foundation governed by a board of trustees, Christian men in accord with Chalcedon's vision statement. The foundation is not subordinate to the authority of any particular denomination or ecclesiastical body.



# Got Guns?

*By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin*



I haven't discharged a firearm in twenty years. I have never, if memory serves, shot a handgun. Friends of mine who can best be described euphemistically as gun aficionados (Brian Abshire comes immediately to mind!) classify me as significantly less experienced than tender-foot in my "firearms skills." Aside

from Biblically justified killing (for instance, capital punishment and the immediate defense of life), I abhor violence. I am not a member of the National Rifle Association, or even Larry Pratt's Gun Owners of America, though I would be quite proud to be a member of the latter. My views on gun ownership do not, therefore, spring from any obsession with guns themselves, with their use, or with the damage they can easily produce. I have always found the pen and pulpit more effective weapons than guns.

Nonetheless, I suggest that the 1999 shootings at Columbine, Atlanta, and Ft. Worth reveal a glaring problem in the United States: an insufficient number of citizens carry guns. Crime, of course, is decreasing overall in this country. However, violent shooting sprees on unarmed citizens seem to be on the rise—at least they are getting much greater publicity by a ubiquitous media, hungry for a story of any kind, or perhaps even interested implicitly in championing the gun control banner. Ironically, however, these murders should lead us to think in quite the opposite direction: armed citizens are exponentially less likely to be shot than unarmed citizens; therefore, more law-abiding citizens need guns. This is so simple that only the "deep thinkers" in the secular universities and media could miss it.

## The Rationale of Gun-Toting

When you and the other guy are both carrying a firearm, and when you have no particular desire to get shot, it's quite prudent to avoid assaulting the other guy, whether physically or verbally. This is not, of course, an ironclad rule: Today, Mafia and gang members are not deterred from shooting others of their own kind merely because the latter are carrying firearms. Civilian war is an aspect of their *modus operandi*, and guns are simply a part of that equation. The problem with these murderous men (and all other murderers, for that matter) is their hearts, not their guns. As long as there are guns, wicked men will find and obtain

them. If every last gun on the earth were confiscated and destroyed, wicked men would create them. If wicked men could not create them, they would create other lethal weapons (like bombs) from household items. Murder by firearm is a hamartiological (sin) problem, not a firearm problem.<sup>1</sup>

Unless gun-toting murderers are on a simple kamikaze mission, they are not interested in forfeiting their own life simply to take someone else's. In other words, they do not consider it desirable or inevitable that they be killed in the process of killing somebody else. If they know that the other guy is surely carrying a firearm that can end their life after they pull the trigger—or as they are preparing to pull the trigger—they might have second thoughts about their murderous intent.

## Responsible Gun-Toters Save Lives

Take Columbine, Atlanta, and Ft. Worth as examples. If in each of these cases, the adults who were targets or victims of the murderous assault had been carrying firearms, it is almost certain that many lives could have been saved. Responsible citizens trained in the legitimate use of firearms could have wounded or killed the murderers long before each wreaked as much damage as he did. Would this plan have prevented all these murders entirely? Probably not. But a number of individuals would be alive today had responsible adult citizens been carrying guns and been willing to use them in a crisis. (In the case of the Ft. Worth church murders, I already hear the plaint, "What? Carrying guns into church, the sanctuary of worship?" I am reminded of the Early American Puritan settlers, ambling to church with a Bible under one arm and a musket under the other. "But those were different and much more dangerous times. Why, the settlers could have been attacked by savages at any time!" Hmm . . .)

After the Atlanta shootings, Thomas Sowell perceptively wrote:

When people ask emotionally, "How can we stop these things?" the most straightforward answer is to ask: How was it [*sic*] in fact stopped? It was stopped, like most shooting sprees, by the arrival on the scene of other people with guns.

It is the monopoly of guns by people with evil intentions that is dangerous. Some of the most dangerous places in America are places where strict gun-control laws provide assurance to violent criminals that their victims will not be able to defend themselves.

What if every third or fourth person in that building in Atlanta had a gun available at the time? Under such conditions, it is very unlikely that Matt



Barton could have shot 22 people before he was stopped....

The one thing that so-called “gun control” laws do not do is control guns. They disarm potential victims. People who do not care about the law can always get guns in a country with 200 million guns and more coming in, both legally and illegally.

We can't even stop millions of human beings from coming into this country illegally—and a handgun is a lot smaller than a person. That basic reality is not changed by politicians and media loudmouths who appeal to emotions and symbolism by crying out for more gun laws. You can always pass feel-good laws and ignore their actual consequences. In fact, we have already done too much of that on too many other issues.

The biggest hypocrites on gun control are those who live in upscale developments with armed security guards—and who want to keep other people from having guns to defend themselves. Affluent homeowners pay to have private armed security patrols cruising their neighborhoods. Many of them are also for gun control. Of course you don't have to have a gun yourself when you are paying other people to carry guns for you. But what about lower-income people living in high-crime, inner city neighborhoods? Should such people be kept unarmed and helpless, so that limousine liberals can “make a statement” by adding to the thousands of gun laws already on the books?<sup>2</sup>

If anybody should be allowed guns, those in low-income neighborhoods should. This is, not coincidentally, the very location about whose “proliferation of guns” liberals howl. We need to get more guns into the hands of law-abiding citizens—wherever they live.

This is not a “solution” to firearm murders. As long as men are not fully sanctified, there are no “solutions,” only trade-offs.<sup>3</sup> Since limiting or forbidding gun ownership to law-abiding citizens would only assure their

vulnerability to law-breaking citizens (and a law-breaking state, for that matter), the best way to diminish firearm murders is to put guns in the hands of the potential victims and teach them how to use those guns responsibly.

### The Legitimate Use of Power Protects Life

Simply put, in civil society power is a deterrent to evil. (This is one of John Calvin's “uses” of the law: it restrains evil men.) Many of the people today calling for the confiscation of guns on the grounds of a proliferation of gun-related violence were the same ones twenty years ago calling for the United States to disarm itself in the face of “nuclear proliferation” with the Soviet Union. They envisioned all sorts of apocalyptic scenarios by which the nuclear weapons of both nations could destroy every individual on earth “seven times over,” or some other such idiocy. The fact is, however, for nearly four decades not a single American was harmed by a Soviet nuclear weapon and not a single Russian citizen was harmed by an American nuclear weapon. If, alternatively, the United States had disarmed itself, it would have been vulnerable to blackmail in the face of a regime bent on worldwide communistic domination.

By contrast, I will take “nuclear proliferation” any day. And I will take “firearm proliferation” any day. And so should you.

Deter firearm murder; buy more firearms.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Sandlin, “Hamartiology and Gun Control,” *Christian Statesman*, Vol. 140, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb., 1997), 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Sowell, “Gunning for Guns,” *Jewish World Review*, August 5, 1999, <http://www.jewishworldreview.com>.

<sup>3</sup> *idem.*, *A Conflict of Visions* (New York, 1987), 25-27 and *passim*.

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*Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin is executive vice president of Chalcedon and editor-in-chief of the Chalcedon Report and other Chalcedon publications.*

## Chalcedon Deserves Your Support

- If you are dedicated to the Bible and to historic Christianity
- If you care for your children's and grandchildren's future
- If you love your country
- If you pray and long and work for a worldwide Christian reformation
- If you believe in long-term victory for the saints . . . .

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# From the President's Desk

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony



Since my father, Rousas John Rushdoony, wrote the first *Chalcedon Report* in 1965, this publication has challenged believers to re-think every area of life and thought in terms of the sovereign, triune God of Scripture. Personal regeneration is the starting point, not the end goal of each pilgrim's

progress. Regeneration by God's Spirit can be compared to jumper cables putting "life" back into a "dead" battery. That regenerated battery has a purpose, whether it is to run a lawnmower or a supersonic jet. So too, those regenerated by God must use their new life purposely seeking how they can serve Christ and His kingdom. This growth in grace and knowledge we call sanctification. It begins within us, but its influence must then extend outward to our families, our callings, our churches, and our communities. From there it shall influence our culture, our nation, and our civilization.

This is no overstatement. Scripture tells us that Christ shall be victorious. Whatever time frame you believe Scripture reveals about that event, you know it shall be. If we know we are on the Lord's side, why not think and act accordingly? Why cower in a foxhole awaiting eternal life when there are battles raging all around? Why retreat into a truncated faith that is inward and strictly personal when all of creation belongs to our Lord? God's Word says the day shall come when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Believers must so believe and act now. It is our purpose here at Chalcedon to proclaim this message. Our efforts to that end in 1999 have included a number of milestones.

Our Executive Director, Andrew Sandlin, spoke in over twenty cities last year. In doing so, he met many of you and shared with us many firsthand reports of your encouraging words. Those of us at Chalcedon are grateful that we can serve Christ's kingdom through our humble efforts and we are grateful to all our readers who find our ministry of value.

My father had his third and final volume of *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, entitled *The Intent of the Law*, published through Ross House Books, which also released his *World History* tapes and notes set re-christened as *A Christian Survey of World History* (see the ad in this issue). Chalcedon's publications last year included *Keeping Our Sacred Trust*, a call to promote orthodox Biblical Christianity to combat the tolerance of heresy in the modern church. The 25th "Silver Anniversary Issue"

*Journal of Christian Reconstruction* was delayed, but is now available and includes selected choice articles from the past quarter-century. We also added another outstanding title to our monograph series. Archie Jones's *The Influence of Historic Christianity on Early America* confronts the modern myth that the United States was founded by deists and secularists. He gives an extensive overview of the pervasiveness of Christianity in early American thought and life.

This past July, Chalcedon was invited to send a representative to lecture to newly elected members of the South African parliament on developing a consistent and comprehensive Biblical worldview. We sent Brian Abshire to this three-day event which was predicated on the idea that God's law is the only valid source of law for the nations. We may be involved in such a teaching role for an international conference on the same theme planned for this year. It is exciting to know that Chalcedon is being used as an instrument of God's providence in promoting Christ's kingdom in Africa and in other locations around the world.

In April of last year Chalcedon purchased all rights to the 13 years of Chalcedon tapes produced by Christian Tape Productions. We are now developing a catalog and production capability to offer nearly 1,000 cassette tapes, most unavailable for many years. These tapes are a tremendous resource that we are very anxious to make available again.

Another resource that is already available is our web page. If you wish to share an article with a friend, just download it or refer him to our site: [www.chalcedon.edu](http://www.chalcedon.edu) <<http://www.chalcedon.edu/>>. We get thousands of "hits" each month at this site. Sometime this year we will have a full-service "shopping cart" so you will be able to order Chalcedon's or Ross House Books' titles on-line.

Lastly, we had two successful conferences in 1999. The first was in October on "Creation to the Glory of God" in Sacramento. Based on its success and the reception of our September 1998 *Chalcedon Report* on six-day creation, we hope to publish a monograph on that topic later this year. Our November conference in Dallas was on "The Defense of Historic Christian Orthodoxy" and was the occasion for unveiling *Keeping Our Sacred Trust*. If you are interested in hosting a Chalcedon speaker in your area, please call Susan Burns at Chalcedon. Her direct dial is (209) 532-7674 or you can reach her at email [sburns@goldrush.com](mailto:sburns@goldrush.com).

We are gratified and humbled at the privilege of being engaged in these activities to the furtherance of God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom. Your support and God's grace have made this possible. Thank you, and may you join us this new year in our humble efforts to proclaim and advance the kingdom of Christ.



# What Does the Bible Say About Gun Control?

By Larry Pratt



The underlying argument for gun control seems to be that the availability of guns causes crime. By extension, the availability of any weapon would have to be viewed as a cause of crime. What does the Bible say about such a view?

Perhaps we should start at the beginning, or at least very close to the

beginning—in Genesis 4. In this chapter, we read about the first murder. Cain had offered an unacceptable sacrifice and Cain was upset that God insisted that he do the right thing. In other words, Cain was peeved that he could not do his own thing.

Cain decided to kill his brother rather than get right with God. There were no guns available, although there may well have been a knife. Whether it was a knife or a rock, the Bible does not say. The point is, the evil in Cain's heart was the cause of the murder, not the availability of the murder weapon.

God's response was not to ban rocks or knives, or whatever, but to banish the murderer. Later (see *Gen. 9:5-6*) God instituted capital punishment, but said not a word about banning weapons.

## Did Christ Teach Pacifism?

Many people, Christians included, assume that Christ taught pacifism. They cite Matthew 5:38-39 for their proof. In this verse Christ said: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."

The Sermon on the Mount from which this passage is taken deals with righteous personal conduct. In our passage, Christ is clearing up a confusion that had led people to think that conduct proper for the civil government—that is, taking vengeance—was also proper for an individual.

Even the choice of words used by Christ indicates that He was addressing a confusion, or a distortion, that was commonplace. Several times in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ used this same "you have heard it said" figure of speech to straighten out misunderstandings or falsehoods being taught by the religious leaders of the time.

Contrast this to Christ's use of the phrase "it is

written" when He was appealing to the Scriptures for authority (for example, see Matthew 4 where on three occasions during His temptation by the devil, Christ answered each one of the devil's lies or misquotes from Scripture with the words: "it is written").

To further underscore the point that Christ was correcting the religious leaders on their teaching that "an eye for an eye" applies to private revenge, consider that in the same sermon, Christ strongly condemned false teaching: "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. . ." (*Mt. 5:19*). Clearly, then, Christ was not teaching something different about self-defense than is taught elsewhere in the Bible. Otherwise, He would be contradicting Himself, for He would now be teaching men to break one of the commandments.

The reference to "an eye for an eye" was taken from Exodus 21:24-25, which deals with how the magistrate must deal with a crime. Namely, the punishment must fit the crime. The religious leaders of Christ's day had twisted a passage that applied to the government and misused it as a principle of personal revenge.

The Bible distinguishes clearly between the duties of the civil magistrate (the civil government) and the duties of an individual. Namely, God has delegated to the civil magistrate the administration of justice. Individuals have the responsibility of protecting their lives from attackers. Christ was referring to this distinction in the Matthew 5 passage. Let us now examine in some detail what the Scriptures say about the roles of civil government and of individuals.

Both the Old and New Testaments teach individual self-defense, even if it means taking the assailant's life in certain circumstances.

## Self-Defense in the Old Testament

Exodus 22:2-3 tells us: "If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."

One conclusion which can be drawn from this is that a threat to our life is to be met with lethal force. After "the sun has risen" seems to refer to a different judgment than the one permitted at night. At night it is more difficult to discern whether the intruder is a thief or a murderer. Furthermore, the nighttime makes it more difficult to defend oneself and to avoid killing the thief



at the same time. During the daytime, it had better be clear that one's life was in danger, otherwise, defense becomes vengeance, and that belongs in the hand of the magistrate.

In Proverbs 25:26, we read: "A righteous man who falters before the wicked is like a murky spring and a polluted well." Certainly, we would be faltering before the wicked if we chose to be unarmed and unable to resist an assailant who might be threatening our life. In other words, we have no right to hand over our life, which is a gift from God, to the unrighteous. It is a serious mistake to equate a civilized society with one in which the decent people are doormats for the evil to trample on.

## Trusting God

Another question asked by Christians is, "Doesn't having a gun imply a lack of trust that God will take care of us?"

Indeed, God will take care of us. He has also told us that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (*Jn. 14:15*).

Those who trust God work for a living, knowing that 1 Timothy 5:8 tells us: "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." For a man not to work, yet expect to eat because he is "trusting God" would actually be to defy God.

King David wrote in Psalm 46:1 that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." This did not conflict with praising the God, "Who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle" (*Ps. 144:1*).

The doctrine of Scripture is that we prepare and work, but we trust the outcome to God.

Those who trust God should also make adequate provision for their own defense even as we are instructed in the passages cited above. For a man to refuse to provide adequately for his and his family's defense would be to defy God.

There is an additional concern to taking the position that "I don't need to arm myself; God will protect me."

At one point, when Satan was tempting Jesus in the wilderness, he challenged Jesus to throw Himself off the top of the temple. Satan reasoned that God's angels would protect Him. Jesus responded: "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (*Mt. 4:7*).

It may seem pious to say that one is trusting in God for protection—and we all must—but it is tempting God if we do not take the measures He has laid out for us in the Bible.

## Role of Civil Government

The Bible records the first murder in Genesis 4 when Cain killed his brother Abel. God's response was not to register rocks or impose a background check on those getting a plough, or whatever it was that Cain used to kill his brother. Instead, God dealt with the criminal. Ever since Noah, the penalty for murder has been death.

We see the refusal to accept this principle that God has given us from the very beginning. Today we see a growing acceptance of the idea that checking the criminal backgrounds of gun buyers will lessen crime, but we should seldom execute those who are guilty of murder.

In Matthew 15 (and in Mark 7), Christ accused the religious leaders of the day of also opposing the execution of those deserving of death—rebellious teenagers. They had replaced the commandments of God with their own traditions. God has never been interested in controlling the means of violence. He has always made it a point to punish and, where possible, restore (as with restitution and excommunication) the wrongdoer. Control of individuals is to be left to self-government. Punishment of individuals by the civil government is to be carried out when self-government breaks down.

Man's wisdom today has been to declare gun-free school zones which are invaded by gun-toting teenage terrorists whom we refuse to execute. We seem to have learned little from Christ's rebuke of the Pharisees.

Nowhere in the Bible does God make any provision for dealing with the instruments of crime. He always focuses on the consequences for an individual of his actions. Heaven and hell apply only to people, not to things. Responsibility only pertains to people, not to things. If this principle, which was deeply embedded in the common law, still pertained today, lawsuits against gun manufacturers would be thrown out unless the product malfunctioned.

Responsibility rightly includes being liable for monetary damages if a firearm is left in a grossly negligent fashion so that an ignorant child gets the gun and misuses it. The solution is not to require that trigger locks be used on a gun to avoid being subject to such a lawsuit. Some might argue that this is nothing more than an application of the Biblical requirement that a railing be placed around the flat rooftop of a house where people might congregate. But trigger locks are to be used with unloaded guns which would be the same as requiring a railing around a pitched roof where people do not congregate.

Surely in protecting against accidents we cannot end up making ourselves more vulnerable to criminal attack, which is what a trigger lock does if it is in use on the firearm intended for self-protection.

The firearm that is kept for self-defense should be available in an emergency. Rooftop railings have no correspondence to the need for instant access to a gun. On the other hand, guns that are not intended for immediate use should be kept secured as a reasonable precaution. But to make the owner criminally or monetarily liable for another's misuse violates a basic commandment of Scripture: "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (*Ez. 18:20b*).

## Self-Defense Versus Vengeance

Resisting an attack is not to be confused with taking



vengeance which is the exclusive domain of God (*Rom. 12:19*). This has been delegated to the civil magistrate, who, as we read in Romans 13:4, “. . . is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”

Private vengeance means one would stalk down a criminal after one’s life is no longer in danger as opposed to defending oneself during an attack. It is this very point that has been confused by Christian pacifists who would take the passage in the Sermon on the Mount about turning the other cheek (which prohibits private vengeance) into a command to falter before the wicked.

Let us consider also that the Sixth Commandment tells us: “Thou shall not murder.” In the chapters following, God gave to Moses many of the situations which require a death penalty. God clearly has *not* told us never to kill. He has told us not to murder, which means we are not to take an innocent life. Consider also that the civil magistrate is to be a terror to those who practice evil. This passage does not in any way imply that the role of law enforcement is to prevent crimes or to protect individuals from criminals. The magistrate is a minister to serve as “an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil” (*Rom. 13:4*).

This point is reflected in the legal doctrine of the United States. Repeatedly, courts have held that the civil government has no responsibility to provide individual security. One case (*Bowers v. DeVito*) put it this way: “[T]here is no constitutional right to be protected by the state against being murdered.”

### Self-Defense in the New Testament

Christian pacifists may try to argue that God has changed His mind from the time that He gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Perhaps they would want us to think that Christ canceled out the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 or the provision for justifiably killing a thief in Exodus 22. But the writer of Hebrews makes it clear that this cannot be, because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (*Heb. 13:8*). In the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi records God’s words this way: “For I am the Lord, I do not change” (*Mal. 3:6*).

Paul was referring to the unchangeability of God’s Word when he wrote to Timothy: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*). Clearly, Paul viewed all Scripture, including the Old Testament, as useful for training Christians in every area of life.

We must also consider what Christ told His disciples in His last hours with them: “. . . But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a sack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one” (*Lk. 22:36*). Keep in mind that the sword was the finest

offensive weapon available to an individual soldier—the equivalent then of a military rifle today.

The Christian pacifist will likely object at this point that only a few hours later, Christ rebuked Peter who used a sword to cut off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest in the company of a detachment of troops. Let us read what Christ said to Peter in Matthew 26:52-54:

Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?

In the companion passage in John 18, Jesus tells Peter to put his sword away and told him that He had to drink the cup that His Father had given Him. It was not the first time that Christ had to explain to the disciples why He had come to earth. To fulfill the Scriptures, the Son of God had to die for the sin of man since man was incapable of paying for his own sin apart from going to hell. Christ could have saved His life, but then believers would have lost their lives forever in hell. These things became clear to the disciples only after Christ had died and been raised from the dead and the Spirit had come into the world at Pentecost (see *Jn. 14:26*).

While Christ told Peter to “put your sword in its place,” He clearly did not say get rid of it forever. That would have contradicted what He had told the disciples only hours before. Peter’s sword was to protect his own mortal life from danger. His sword was not needed to protect the Creator of the universe and the King of kings.

Years after Pentecost, Paul wrote in a letter to Timothy: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (*1 Tim. 5:8*). This passage applies to our subject because it would be absurd to buy a house, furnish it with food and facilities for one’s family, and then refuse to install locks and provide the means to protect the family and the property. Likewise, it would be absurd not to take, if necessary, the life of a nighttime thief to protect the members of the family (*Ex. 22:2-3*).

A related and even broader concept is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Christ had referred to the Old Testament summary of all the laws of the Bible into two great commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (*Lk. 10:27*). When asked who was a neighbor, Christ related the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Lk. 10:30-37*). It was the Good Samaritan who took care of the mugging victim who was a neighbor to the victim. The others who walked by and ignored the victim’s plight were not acting as neighbors to him.

In the light of all we have seen the Scriptures teach to this point, can we argue that if we were able to save



another's life from an attacker by shooting the attacker with our gun that we should "turn the other cheek instead"? The Bible speaks of no such right. It only speaks of our responsibilities in the face of an attack—as individual creatures made by God, as householders or as neighbors.

### National Blessings and Cursings

The Old Testament also tells us a great deal about the positive relationship between righteousness, which exalts a nation, and self-defense. It makes clear that in times of national rebellion against the Lord God, the rulers of the nation will reflect the spiritual degradation of the people and the result is a denial of God's commandments, an arrogance of officialdom, disarmament, and oppression.

For example, the people of Israel were oppressed during the time of the rule of the Judges. This occurred every time the people apostatized. Judges 5:8 tells us that, "They chose new gods; then there was war in the gates; not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel."

Consider Israel under Saul: The first book of Samuel tells of the turning away of Israel from God. The people did not want to be governed by God; they wanted to be ruled by a king like the pagan, God-hating nations around them. Samuel warned the people what they were getting into—the curses that would be upon them—if they persisted in raising up a king over themselves and their families. Included in those curses was the raising up of a standing, professional army which would take their sons and their daughters for aggressive wars (1 Sam. 8:11).

This curse is not unknown in the United States. Saul carried out all the judgments that Samuel had warned the people about. His build-up of a standing army has been repeated in the U. S., and not just in terms of the military, but also the 650,000 full-time police officers from all levels of civil government.

Saul was the king the Israelites wanted and got. He was beautiful in the eyes of the world, but a disaster in the eyes of the Lord. Saul did not trust God. He rebelled against His form of sacrifice unto the Lord. Saul put himself above God. He was impatient. He refused to wait for Samuel because God's way was taking too long. Saul went ahead and performed the sacrifice himself, thus violating God's commandment (and, incidentally, also violating the God-ordained separation of duties of church and state!).

Thus was the kingdom lost to Saul. And, it was under him that the Philistines were able to defeat the Jews and put them into bondage. So great was the bondage exerted by the Philistines: "Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, 'Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears.' But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle. . . . So it came about,

on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan. . ." (1 Sam. 13:19-20, 22-23).

Today, the same goals of the Philistines would be carried out by an oppressor who would ban gunsmiths from the land. The sword of today is the handgun, rifle, or shotgun. The sword control of the Philistines is today's gun control of those civil governments that do not trust their people with guns.

It is important to understand that what happened to the Jews at the time of Saul was not unexpected according to the sanctions spelled out by God in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. In the first verses of those chapters, blessings are promised to a nation that keeps God's laws. In the latter parts of those chapters, the curses are spelled out for a nation that comes under judgment for its rebellion against God. Deuteronomy 28:47-48 helps us understand the reason for Israel's oppression by the Philistines during Saul's reign:

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of all things; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

The Bible provides examples of God's blessing upon Israel for its faithfulness. These blessings included a strong national defense coupled with peace. A clear example occurred during the reign of Jehoshaphat. 2 Chronicles 17 tells of how Jehoshaphat led Israel back to faithfulness to God which included a strong national defense. The result: "And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat" (2 Chr. 17:10).

The Israelite army was a militia army (Num. 1:3ff.) which came to battle with each man bearing his own weapons—from the time of Moses, through the Judges, and beyond. When threatened by the Midianites, for example, "Moses spoke to the people saying, 'Arm some of yourselves for the war, and let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the Lord on Midian'" (Num. 31:3). Again, to demonstrate the Biblical heritage of individuals bearing and keeping arms, during David's time in the wilderness avoiding capture by Saul, "David said to his men, 'Every man gird on his sword.' So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword" (1 Sam. 25:13).

Finally, consider Nehemiah and those who rebuilt the gates and walls of Jerusalem. They were both builders and defenders, each man—each servant—armed with his own weapon:

Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens loaded themselves so that with one



hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built (*Neh. 4:17-18*).

## Conclusion

The wisdom of the framers of the Constitution is consistent with the lessons of the Bible. Instruments of defense should be dispersed throughout the nation, not concentrated in the hands of the central government. In a godly country, righteousness governs each man through the Holy Spirit working within. The civil government has no cause to want a monopoly of force; the civil government that desires such a monopoly is a threat to the lives, liberty, and property of its citizens.

The assumption that only danger can result from people's carrying guns is used to justify the government's

having a monopoly of force. The notion that the people cannot be trusted to keep and bear their own arms informs us that ours, like the time of Solomon, may be one of great riches, but is also a time of peril to free people. If Christ is not our King, we shall have a dictator to rule over us, just as Samuel warned.

For those who think that God treated Israel differently from the way He will treat us today, please consider what God told the prophet Malachi: "For I am the Lord, I do not change. . ." (*Mal. 3:6*).

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## *Safeguarding Liberty: The Constitution & Citizen Militias*

Edited by Larry Pratt, Legacy Communications, Franklin, Tennessee, Pages: 357, \$15.00

Reviewed by Pastor John Weaver

Everything you ever wanted to know about the Second Amendment but were either afraid to ask or did not know where to look. The fifteen essays in this book cover the Biblical, historical, legal, and practical aspects of the Second Amendment. The book abounds with quotes from the Founding Fathers and numerous statesmen and leaders from other countries as well. For those who are unable or unwilling to do their own research, this book is a veritable goldmine.

If one wishes to know what the Bible says about gun control, the Israelite militia in the Old Testament and one's personal, unalienable right of self-defense, *Safeguarding Liberty* has the answers. Likewise, if one thinks the National Guard is the militia referred to in the Second Amendment, this book will correct his thinking. The Militia Act of 1792 required "every free able-bodied white male citizen of the respective states, resident therein, who is or shall be of the age of 18 years, and under the age of 45 years," to be enrolled in the militia and to obtain, within six months, "a good musket," bayonet, and twenty four rounds of ammunition. In fact, the militia act of 1983 only changed the ages from 17 to 45 and distinguished between the "organized militia" such as the National Guard and the "unorganized militia" which includes all male citizens. An entire essay is dedicated to the truth that the National Guard is not the Militia! Each of the fifteen essays is informative, enlightening, and easy to read.

*Safeguarding Liberty* should be mandatory reading for every Christian and every American. It will not only remind us of our history but our heritage as well. *Safeguarding Liberty* is well-researched and well-written and is highly recommended.

The book can be ordered at <http://www.gunowners.com/resource.htm>; by phone at (703)321-8585, or by mail at 8001 Forbes Place, Springfield, VA 22151.

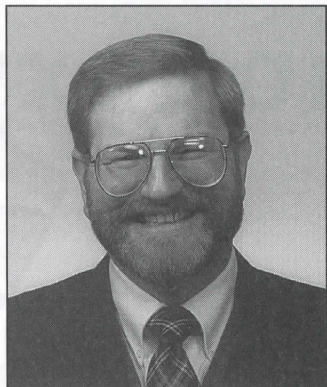
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*Rev. John Weaver has been in the pastorate for thirty-five years and for the last fifteen years has been the pastor of Freedom Baptist Church. He has authored three books, The Christian and Civil Government, The Sovereignty of God and Civil Government, and The Biblical Truth about God's Righteous Vengeance. He has an extensive video and audio ministry. He has been married to Alice Weaver for 37 years. They have four children and six grandchildren. He can be reached at P.O. Box 394, Fitzgerald, GA 31750.*



# Real Gun Control Is Hitting What You Aim At

*By Rev. Brian M. Abshire*



Recently, the nation has been struck by a number of senseless murders by psychotic individuals shooting fellow students, co-workers, or in one horrible case, little children in a daycare center. Predictably, the anti-gun folks, who will never be satisfied until all private ownership of

firearms is outlawed, are screaming for more gun control legislation. Janet Reno is calling for gun registration and licensing, invariably the first step to gun confiscation. Never mind that all these criminal acts were *already* illegal under existing laws. Never mind that laws cannot stop madmen from their perfidy. The liberal media again makes the law-abiding gun owner to be the cause of the problem.

## The Hypocrisy of Anti-Gun Fanatics

The hypocrisy of anti-gun fanatics is unbelievable. In California, where concealed-carry permits are legal, you have to be a Hollywood star or liberal gun-hating politician to get permission to carry your weapon outside your home. One of our Lefty Legislators, who two hours after a recent attack on a Jewish community center came out wanting to pass legislation licensing all firearm owners and banning all weapons that can hold more than 10 rounds, herself carries a concealed weapon. Of course, she is avidly against the average citizen having the same right she has. She believes she needs a firearm to protect herself, but we poor proles are left to a harsh word and stern look for our self-defense. (A number of Californian Christians are actually now committed to asking God to send some miscreant, preferably with a politically correct weapon such as a pointy stick, to accost this lady, forcing her actually to *use* her weapon. Though they wish her no harm, they think that her actually having to use a firearm in self-defense would destroy her credibility in denying the rest of us the same right.)

## Game Preserves for Vicious Predators

The reality is that in all these tragic shootings, all it would have taken would have been *one* armed citizen to have stopped any of these slaughters. Yes, that's right. Mr. Wacko enters a public place to start his shooting rampage and *one* armed citizen who knows how to focus

on the front sight and squeeze the trigger is all that is needed to ruin the bad guy's whole day. Don't liberal politicians understand that by making certain places "gun-free" zones all they have done is make them game preserves for vicious predators?

## It Looks Like a Conspiracy

I am not a conspiracy nut, but sometimes I wonder if the liberal politicians and media have a vested interest regarding outlawing firearms. Why is there *never* mention of the more than two million times a year when private citizens use firearms to protect themselves from rape, robbery and murder? How come they consistently *ignore* the fact that when a state allows its citizens to carry concealed weapons, the crime rates goes down? Why does my local newspaper neglect to mention that when a private citizen captured a bad guy that he did it with the help of a firearm? How come school killings make national press, when incidents of armed citizens preventing a school massacre go unmentioned? Why is it that the wealthy liberal elite, who can afford to live in exclusive neighborhoods with armed security guards to protect them from vicious anti-social types, want to forbid me and my neighbors from the only means we have to defend ourselves against those same criminals? Why do they fear normal, law-abiding people who have never committed a violent act in their lives, from owning firearms? And is anyone else slightly disturbed that while Hollywood stars continue to finance and vocally support anti-gun legislation, they make billions of dollars a year making movies where the hero settles all his problems with a gun?

## Gun-Control Messiahs

The answer, of course, is that the firearms issue is not about safety, but about power. Politicians and the liberal elite are convinced at the presuppositional level that the key to utopia is the Messianic State. The State therefore must have all the power, and the citizens, while free to wallow in immorality, must be controlled in every other area "for their own good." People must not be allowed private ownership of firearms because Statist religion does not trust people to take care of themselves. Hence, *the real issue is not gun control, but people control*. Armed citizens are a threat to the politicians' quest for power. No matter that our Founding Fathers were insistent that the best defense against political tyranny was an armed citizenry. That was the eighteenth century and of course irrelevant today. Now just when did George Washington, Samuel Adams, John Adams, *et. al.*, suddenly become right-wing militia nuts?



## Massive Gun Control Leads to Genocide

It needs to be remembered, constantly, that every major genocidal action of the past hundred years was conducted by national governments against their own citizens. And the first step to genocide was always disarming the people.<sup>1</sup>

The Turks, Germans, Soviets, Chinese, Cambodians and others first took away their own citizens' firearms and then murdered them by the millions. Conservatively, 56 million people have been slaughtered by their own national governments, in this century alone. Compared to the modern Humanist State, Ghengis Khan and the Mongol hordes were pikers.

## A History Lesson

I know what some people are going to say: "We are not Turkey, Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. This is America, after all. Why should we fear our own government?" Well, two good reasons. First, did anyone in Germany in the early 1930's see the death camps coming in the 1940's? Did the Russian people know what the Bolsheviks had in store for them? One has to have a little appreciation of history to know that both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia had considerable support in Western nations initially. Both had some American academics praising these "reform" movements. The point is, we don't always know what is going to happen down the road in ten or twenty years. And with such a poor track record, we cannot allow the Secular State to have a monopoly on firearms.

Second, let us not forget that even in the United States, we have had our own little holocaust going on against the most helpless of our citizens, unborn babies, for the past 26 years. Liberal politicians, wicked doctors and ungodly women have conspired together to murder more than 35 million babies since 1973, all with the protection of the courts, armed policemen and federal marshals. All it took was for one Supreme Court decision to eliminate the civil rights of an entire group of American citizens. Literally overnight, unborn babies became subject to the most barbaric forms of torture and murder. Their bodies are even used in medical experiments. Who says that the horrors of Nazi Germany cannot happen here? They already are! What other group can lose it rights *overnight* if it suits some humanist agenda? And in the words of the theme song to Cops, "Whatcha gonna do when they come for YOU?"

## Necessity of Biblical Law

Let us not be naive. If the source of law is the will of man, then when that will changes, so also will the law. What was unthinkable a decade ago is now the norm. Ever think you'd be guilty of a crime for using the term "faggot"? True, it is not a nice word; but if the word is ugly, then the deed is an abomination. Yet within my lifetime, what used to be something so disgusting

that normal people felt nothing but revulsion at even the thought of it, has now become the subject of prime-time comedies and cries for legislation to "protect" this poor, persecuted minority (Interior decorators of the world, unite!) Without God's law as the higher law to which all other laws must submit, we are at the mercy of ungodly men who have and will enforce their ever-changing "values" on the rest of us. Without the anchor of God's law, literally nothing is beyond the pale. All it takes is time and the inclination.

## Fears of the Nanny State

The liberal elite fear and hate guns simply because they undermine their control of the power state. The liberal elite have an agenda and are totally committed to using the power of the press, legislature, police and even the armed forces to impose that agenda on everyone else. They cannot imagine self-governed men, taking personal responsibility for their own welfare and safety. *They want power, and armed citizens are a threat to that power.* They are contemptuous that free men can live their lives without the Nanny State to tell them how to spend their time and money, raise their children, or even what to eat! They and only they know what is good for all us poor little slaves.

## Liberals Love to Ignore Evidence

Let there be no mistake about this. They don't really give a dam (French word referring to the smallest and least significant coin) about people's safety. They ignore all the evidence that private ownership of firearms prevents rapes, robberies and murders; and they continue to pass laws forbidding private citizens from carrying weapons. They don't care that the poorest people in our society are the ones most in need of protection, so they ban inexpensive weapons. They will not support gun safety programs in schools or actual shooting leagues that might remove some of the mystery and glamour of firearms to children. Further, though any reasonable police officer will tell you that he can't protect you (only investigate if you are the victim of a violent crime), the Liberal Elite will continue to insist that only the police and armed forces should be armed. The reason is for this is simple: right now, they control both, but if the people are armed, this is a threat to their power.

## Godly Gun Control = Criminal Control

Self-governed men do not use firearms to commit violence against other lawful citizens. They don't pull out guns to settle personal grudges. They don't kill their family members or go on shooting sprees against their co-workers. They certainly don't murder innocent children. Self-governed men work hard, serve their communities, pay their taxes and just want to be left alone. They take responsibility for providing for their families, and protecting their families.

Real gun control would be eliminating the criminal



class that commits most of the violent crimes in our country. Real gun control would be recognizing that armed citizens are the best defense against wickedness in the streets *and* in the halls of congress. Real gun control means giving power to the people, not an elite.

Finally, real gun control is hitting what you aim at.

(For a free tape, "The Bible and Self-Defense" and "Gun-Proofing Your Kids," contact Brian at Abshire@ix.netcom.com or call Reformed Heritage Church at (209)544-1572 between 0900-1700 PCT.)

<sup>1</sup> Turkey established gun control in 1911. From 1915 to 1917, 1.5 million Armenians, unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. The Soviet Union established gun control in 1929. From 1929 to 1953, 20 million political dissidents, unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. Germany established gun control in 1938. From 1939 to 1945, 13 million Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally ill people, and other "mongrelized peoples," unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. China established gun control in 1935. From 1948 to 1952, 20 million political dissidents, unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. Guatemala established gun control in 1964. From 1964 to 1981, 100,000 Mayan Indians, unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. Uganda established gun control in 1970. From 1971 to 1979, 300,000 Christians, unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. Cambodia established gun control in 1956. From 1975 to 1977, 1 million "educated people," unable to defend themselves, were exterminated. Does anyone else see a pattern here?

*Rev. Brian M. Abshire is the pastor of Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, California.*

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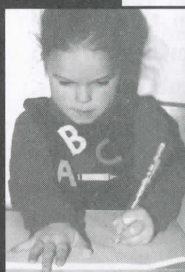
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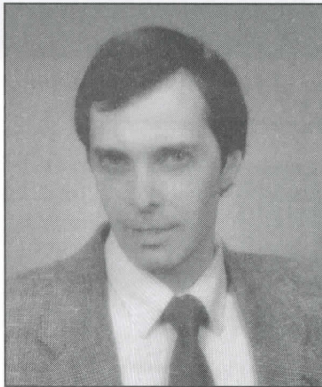
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# Origin Of the Right To Bear Arms In America

By Charles A. Weisman

(Reprinted from *The Right to Keep and Bear Arms in the United States*)



The concept that the people have a right to keep and bear arms seems to have survived over two centuries in this country without seriously being questioned. In recent times, however, the tide has turned against this apparent right. Few issues incite Americans more than the issue of gun control. The debate rages

on as to whether bearing arms is a permanent constitutional right, a mere American tradition, or an eminent danger to society contributing to crime and murder and, consequently, should be banned.

The merits of the arguments on either side of the debate must be questioned themselves if they evade the true legal foundation that surrounds the issue. It is the law of the land that determines whether we are dealing with principles of rights or an issue about gun use and control. Neither media propaganda nor crime rates and statistics can decide this. If such a right exists under the organic law of this land, then it clearly cannot be abrogated or impaired by a legislative body.

## History of the Right to Bear Arms

In order to have a just and precise idea of the meaning and nature of this "right" to keep and bear arms within this country, it will be useful to look at the state of things in the history of our ancestors and, thus, comprehend the reason and intent for its introduction into our American system of law.

The right of an individual to keep and bear arms has a long tradition in Western civilization dating back to ancient times. The Greek philosopher Aristotle thought the bearing of arms necessary to true citizenship and participation in the political system (Aristotle, *Politics*). Plato said that citizens ought to practice war—not in time of war, but, rather, while they are at peace (Plato, *Laws*, Bk. viii). Cicero, one of the leading advocates of Roman republicanism, supported the bearing of arms for the self-defense of the individual and for public defense against tyranny (Cicero, *De Officiis*). Niccolo Machiavelli, the Italian political philosopher, advocated an armed populace of citizen soldiers to keep headstrong rulers in line (Machiavelli, *Discourse*).<sup>1</sup>

The right to bear arms is older than the right to freedom of religion, speech, press, or assembly. The origin of this right lay in the customs of Germanic tribes, under which arms bearing was a right and a duty of free men. While the first mention of a citizen militia (*fyrð*) dates to 690 A. D., scholars have concluded that the right and duty to serve with personal armament is "older than our oldest records."<sup>2</sup>

From prehistoric days, the right to bear arms seems to have been the badge of a Teutonic freeman and closely associated with his political privileges. Such armed freemen made up the military host of the tribe. During Saxon times in England, there was a *fyrð*, or national militia, service in which was one of the three duties—*trinoda necessitas*—to which every allodial proprietor was subject.<sup>3</sup> King Alfred had gathered the armed citizenry together into a *fyrð*, or militia force, against Danish invaders, forcing them into a peace agreement with Alfred in 878 A. D.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest document recognizing a right to keep and bear arms was the Assize (edict) of Arms of 1181 A. D., issued by Henry II of England. The law was intended to permit the rapid creation of a militia, but it apparently permitted the carrying of arms in self-defense. Provisions stipulated that arms were not to be sold, given away, nor taken away. It further stated that, "If any one having these arms shall die, let his arms remain to his heir."<sup>5</sup>

In 1285 A. D., the Statute of Winchester was directed to be passed by King Edward I to control the crimes of "robberies, murders, burnings and theft" (13 Edw. I, chap. 1). The statute actually broadened the Assize of Arms. Now "every man," not just "every free man" had a legal duty to obtain arms.

In the year 1328 A. D., the Statute of Northampton was enacted under the reign of King Edward III, which regulated this right to bear arms by prohibiting the carrying of arms in riots and in certain public places such as courts. The law did not overrule the right to carry arms in self-defense, since the right to bear arms was considered an integral part of early English law and society. This stems from the fact that the practice of local police forces maintaining law and order began only in the nineteenth century. Before that time, villagers were expected to chase and catch highwaymen and other criminals. To do this they had to be armed.

"By the act of 22 and 23, Car. 2d, ch 25, sec. 3, (under King Charles II) it was provided that no person who has not lands of the yearly value of 100 pounds, other than the son and heir apparent of an esquire, or other person of



higher degree, shall be allowed to keep a gun.”<sup>6</sup> By this act, only persons of a certain status in life were allowed to keep arms.

James II, a Roman Catholic king, ascended the English throne in 1685 amidst domestic religious controversy between the Catholics and Protestants. James, by his own arbitrary power and contrary to law, disarmed the Protestant population and quartered his Catholic soldiers among the people and in private homes. The Protestants revolted in the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 and succeeded in deposing James II and bringing to power the king’s Protestant daughter, Mary and her husband, William of Orange. William and Mary were offered the crown in 1689 on condition that they sign the Declaration of Rights.

The Declaration was divided in two parts, the first listing the abuses and aggressions which had existed during the former reign. Among these abuses were the following:

Whereas the late James the Second by the assistance of divers evil counsellors, judges and ministers employed by him did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion and the laws and liberties of this kingdom.

... By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace, without consent of parliament, and quartering of soldiers contrary to law.

By causing several good subjects being Protestants to be disarmed, at the same time when papists were both armed and employed, contrary to law.<sup>7</sup>

There was also a Bill of Rights that listed and declared the existence of certain rights which the people possessed:

That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law.<sup>8</sup>

It has been questioned as to whether this declaration gave the individual the right to bear arms for self-defense or if it was to be limited to militia purposes only. Referring to this declaration a New York court stated:

There was here recognized a universal citizen’s right to bear defensive arms, and it seems to me that the Bill of Rights established a general right on the part of all persons in England, falling within the classification of citizens, to retain arms for their protection and according to their condition, subject only to a reasonable control by law.<sup>9</sup>

It should also be noted that the great English legal commentators, Sir Edward Coke and Sir William Blackstone, both agreed that an individual could legally bear arms for self-defense. But even if it is to be supposed that the only right that existed under the law of 1689 was for common defense in an organized body (actually both rights were contemplated in the act), it must be realized

that this situation of common defense necessarily entails private rights of ownership and to carry arms.

## Colonial Laws and Rights

It is a matter of historical fact that the majority of the colonial settlers who came to America had guns and swords in hand as they stepped upon American soil for the first time. These arms continued to occupy a prominent role in colonial life, being necessary for survival, self-protection, and common defense of the colony.

It thus would be expected that we would find the subject of arms covered in colonial laws, charters, etc. The right to keep and bear arms seems to have played a prominent role in early America, in that the American colonial concern was that all men were to have and bear arms so they could defend themselves and, thus, the colony.

It was stated in the Second Charter of Virginia of 1609 that any persons could abide and inhabit in the Colony who had “sufficient Shipping, Armour, Weapons, Ordinance, Munition, Powder, Shot, Victuals, and such Merchandises . . . necessary for the said Plantations.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, being well armed was a requirement to be part of the colony. This provision was repeated in the Third Charter of Virginia in 1611. In 1623, a Virginia militia statute required, “That no man go or send abroad without a sufficient party well armed.”<sup>11</sup>

In the New Plymouth Colony, the General Court enacted a law which required servants and others who were about to be new estate owners to possess arms:

### *Regulation of Servants & New Housekeepers in New Plymouth, 1639:*

It is enacted by the court that no servant coming out of his time, or other single person, be suffered to keep house or be for him or themselves till such time as he or they be competently provided for of arms and ammunition according to the order of the colonies.<sup>12</sup>

The 1640 militia law of New Plymouth provided: “That the inhabitants of every town within the government fit and able to bear arms be trained at least 6 times in the year.”<sup>13</sup>

The Commission for New Hampshire—1680 made provisions for “arraying and mustering the Inhabitants thereof; and instructing them how to bear and use their arms,” in order to have ready a disciplined militia.<sup>14</sup>

In New Jersey there were grievances being raised by the proprietors and planters regarding the free use of their arms. The issue was extensively covered in the *Fundamental Constitutions for the Province of East New Jersey—1683*, where the right to keep and bear arms was affirmed:

VII.... And that amongst the present Proprietors there are several that declare that they have no freedom to defend themselves with arms, and others who judge it their duty to defend themselves, wives and children, with arms; it is therefore agreed and consented to, and they the said Proprietors do by



these presents agree and consent, that they will not in this case force each other against their respective judgments and consciences;

... And on the other side, those who do judge it their duty to bear arms for the public defense, shall have their liberty to do in a legal way.<sup>15</sup>

A militia had existed in every one of the colonies and local laws were often passed for the regulating of the militia and providing the right of male inhabitants to bear arms so as to be eligible and ready for militia duty. Massachusetts had passed a lengthy militia act in 1693, containing the following:

#### AN ACT FOR REGULATION OF THE MILITIA

[SECT. 1.] That all male persons from sixteen years of age to sixty shall bear arms and duly attend all musters and military exercises of the respective troops and companies where they are listed or belong.<sup>16</sup>

Another aspect of bearing arms that had prevailed throughout the colonies was the requirement to bear arms when going to church on Sunday. A South Carolina law of 1743, was enacted for securing the inhabitants of the province against insurrections and other wicked attempts of Negroes within the province. The act provided that:

Every white male inhabitant of this province who, by the laws of this province, is or shall be able to bear arms in the militia of this province, who shall on any Sunday ... go and resort to any church or other place of divine worship within this province, and shall not carry with him a gun or a pair of horse pistols, in good order and fit for service, with at least six charges of gunpowder and ball, and shall not carry the same into the church or other place of divine worship as aforesaid, every such person shall forfeit and pay the sum of twenty shillings, current money.<sup>17</sup>

A similar act was passed in the Massachusetts Colony in 1706 which stated:

[SECT.3] And that all male persons in the frontiers capable of bearing arms, shall carry their arms with them and be well provided for their defence when they go to publick worship on the Lord's day, or other times, and also when they go abroad to work, on pain of forfeiting five shillings for each neglect, to be to the use of the town towards the procuring of arms or ammunition.<sup>18</sup>

These Sunday laws which provided for the bearing of arms were apparently aimed at providing both individual and public protection. Since the right of the people to keep and bear arms was a right that all English subjects possessed, and since the Crown had agreed to allow the American colonists all the rights of Englishmen, this right was generally acknowledged and even encouraged by the

British Crown up to the time of King George III. In a commission for Governor John Reynolds of Georgia in 1754, King George II was still encouraging armed citizens in the colonies:

You [Governor Reynolds] shall take care that all planters and Christian servants be well and fitly provided with arms and that they be listed under good officers and when and as often as shall be thought fit mustered and trained, whereby they may be in better readiness for the defense of our colony under your government.<sup>19</sup>

The colonial records of this country thus clearly reveal that the colonists not only had a right of ownership and use of arms, but in fact were *required* to possess them. While this right primarily rested on the need for common defense by having ready an organized and trained militia, the right to keep and bear arms for private defense had certainly existed. Further, there are no laws or records that show this right was ever denied or prohibited.

### The American Revolution

We next need to examine the events that led to and resulted in the American War for Independence and how those events may have influenced or developed a right of the people to keep and bear arms.

To best understand the events that led up to the Revolution in America, it is important to understand colonial thought at the time. Regarding arms, the colonists were educated in the works of many eminent scholars, jurists, and statesmen from whom they learned of the right and duty of self-defense and of owning arms. They read the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Vattel, Montesquieu, Hume, Locke, Hobbes, Blackstone, Sydney, and Coke, all of whom had made statements about the role of an armed citizenry and the bearing of arms. Sir William Blackstone, one of the most authoritative commentators on the common law, wrote:

The fifth and last auxiliary right of the subject ... is that of having arms for their defence, suitable to their condition and degree.... Which is also ... of the natural right of resistance and self-preservation.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the colonists' attitude and policy toward England, it, like England's policy toward her colonies, had always been a consistent one. England had always insisted that her colonies must in some manner contribute to the glory and advancement of the parent country, though it seldom resorted to direct taxation. In return, the colonists would be regarded as Englishmen with the same rights and privileges as loyal subjects in England, thus respecting the Crown. This arrangement prevailed until certain events in the mid-1700s.

The contest for the Ohio Valley came to pass with the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, during the reign of King George II (1727-1760). The British won



because of the fighting ability of the colonial militias and the war thus ended with the Treaty of Paris being signed in 1763.

King George III, who was now on the throne, urged that the war had been to the advantage of the colonies as well as of England; and, therefore, the colonists, as Englishmen, should be required to meet their share of the expenses of the war. The colonists, on the other side, argued that if taxes were to be laid, the colonial legislature must vote them. The colonists could not act in the English Parliament and so the laying of taxes by that body would be "taxation without representation," to which they declared they would not submit.<sup>21</sup>

While the colonists did not desire separation from the mother country and were proud to be called Englishmen, this feeling was gradually changed to one of distrust and aversion by the shortsighted policy of George III. The French and Indian War that had ended in 1763 brought large numbers of British soldiers to the colonies. King George III maintained and increased these standing armies following that war and ordered the troops to be quartered in private homes. The colonists, who were accustomed to relying on their own citizen militias, viewed the standing armies as an unnecessary and unlawful instrument of oppression. With soldiers established throughout the colonies, George III was now in the position to enforce any measure Parliament or his colonial ministers and governors might enact.

Early in 1764, George Grenville, Prime Minister of England, got through Parliament a series of measures for the control of the trade of the American colonies. The Navigation Acts, especially the odious Sugar and Molasses Act of 1733, were renewed and strictly enforced. All commanders of British frigates in American waters were to have the right of acting as customs officers, employing the hated Writs of Assistance,<sup>22</sup> or general warrants to search a man's premises for "smuggled articles."<sup>23</sup>

In 1765, the first bold attempt to directly tax the colonies was implemented by the passage of a Stamp Act. It required that revenue stamps purchased from the government should be placed on all legal documents, promissory notes, receipts, contracts, advertisements, newspapers, and other publications. There was more involved in this far-reaching tax measure than to just defray the cost of the war and support of the depleted Royal Treasury. "King George desired to keep a standing army in America, and it was proposed to make the colonists pay the cost of it by means of the tax."<sup>24</sup>

The passage of the Stamp Act aroused the utmost indignation from New Hampshire to Georgia. A declaration of rights and grievances was sent to the king and Parliament in England. The declaration said, among other things, that only the representative colonial assemblies could impose taxation. The struggle had now begun and the war cry was, "Taxation without representation is tyranny." The colonists showed their

violent opposition by mobbing and burning in effigy the tax officers and destroying the stamp offices.<sup>25</sup>

The colonists agreed not to buy, sell, or use the articles that had been stamped and ceased using English goods. As a result, the law was repealed March 18, 1766. However, in the following year, 1767, King George directed that duties be imposed on glass, lead, paper, printers' colors, and tea brought into the colonies. These measures were known as the Townshend Acts. To the colonists this again was taxation without representation and once more they rebelled.

In much of the colonies the revenue measures were difficult to enforce, especially in Boston where mob violence appeared in protest. The king became alarmed at the violence of the Bostonians and dispatched General Thomas Gage, as the commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, to Boston with two regiments of troops. These troops Gage quartered in the city, and the people resented this. Frequent collisions took place between the soldiers and the town's people, climaxing on the night of March 5, 1770, when the soldiers fired on the people, killing and wounding several. The following day there was an immense gathering of the people in the Old South Meeting House, and Samuel Adams demanded the removal of the troops. The Boston Massacre, as it was called, aroused the whole country.

On the day of the Boston Massacre, a bill was introduced into the British Parliament to repeal the Townshend Acts. All duties were removed except on tea and on this article the duty was made so low that tea could be bought cheaper in America than in England. This was done so that the right of Parliament to impose taxes could be maintained. This was said to be the "king's plan." The King meant to "try the question with America."

The Americans, however, were fighting for a principle and could not be silenced by cheaper tea. They knew that if Parliament could legally tax tea even a small amount, it could also levy any taxes it saw fit. The colonists, therefore, refused to buy or use tea. Ships full of tea were sent to Charleston, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and other ports. The people of Philadelphia and New York would not allow the vessels to land and sent them back. In Annapolis and Rhode Island the tea was burned. In Boston the British officers would not allow the vessels to be sent back. The result was the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773, in which a party of men, disguised as Indians, boarded the ships, ripped open three hundred and forty-two chests, and spilled the tea into the harbor. This was a direct affront to the King, and Parliament at once resolved to punish Massachusetts.

In March 1774, Parliament passed a number of acts for the punishment of Massachusetts and, because of their severity, they were known in America as the "Intolerable Acts." One of these was the Quartering Act which removed all legal obstacles to the quartering of troops in the colonies. These acts caused great hardships, especially in Boston.

On September 5, 1774, the first Continental Congress



met in Philadelphia. It respectfully petitioned the king to put an end to their grievances, specifying thirteen acts of Parliament which they deemed "infringements and violations of their rights." At the same time, the country was full of warlike preparations. Arms were bought and stored and militia groups formed.

General Gage, seeing the warlike feeling of the people, began to erect fortifications around Boston. Hearing that the colonists had collected powder, ammunition, and supplies, Gage sent eight hundred troops to seize the stores at Concord, where Gage believed the patriots had also hid a cannon. They were ordered to go by way of Lexington and arrest Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were visiting there. But the ardent Boston patriot Paul Revere had learned of the expedition and, galloping ahead of the British troops, warned the inhabitants and also Adams and Hancock, who fled to safety.

When the British troops reached Lexington in the early morning (April 19, 1775) they found a little company of seventy "minutemen" drawn up on the village green to oppose them. The British major John Pitcairn ordered "the rebels" to "disperse." When the minutemen bravely stood their ground, the British fired a volley of musket shots, leaving eight of the patriot band dead or dying on the green.<sup>26</sup> The Americans fired, but seeing they were greatly outnumbered, made no more resistance and the British marched on.

From Lexington Pitcairn's troops marched on to Concord, where, at the bridge, they again clashed with a group of minutemen who had gathered from the nearby towns. These were the "embattled farmers" who "fired the shot heard round the world."<sup>27</sup> When the King's subjects had taken up arms and fired upon the King's troops, the American Revolution had officially begun.

After destroying what few military stores remained, the soldiers were forced to retreat to Boston, as armed patriots were pouring into the Concord-Lexington vicinity. On the return trip the "redcoats" were fired upon by farmers and militiamen from the roadsides, behind trees, rocks, and stone fences. The redcoats retreated in a state of exhaustion, with a loss in killed and wounded of nearly three hundred men; the Americans had about eighty killed or wounded.

The news of this engagement spread like wildfire. Men grasped whatever weapons they had and hastened toward Boston. Sixteen thousand colonial militia had assembled around Boston and held Gage besieged in his capital.

On May 10, 1775, the second Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia. The delegates made appropriations for the colonial militia and George Washington was appointed, by unanimous vote, as commander in chief of the Continental army. They were also united in a Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms on July 6, 1775, as a last address to the king. The declaration stated in part:

In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed

till the late violation of it—for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.<sup>28</sup>

The colonists here were not only claiming a right to bear arms to protect their freedom and property, but a right to take up arms against the established government when it becomes destructive to these ends.

When we review the chain of events which changed the loyal British-Americans of 1763, into rebels in arms against their king in 1775, we see that the cause centered around a usurpation of power and a violation of fundamental rights. It became clear that the illegal acts of Parliament and oppressions of King George could never stand without military force. Prior to 1763, a standing army among the colonists was not necessary, in that there were no unlawful, oppressive acts which required force to be administered.

The events of this period show that the only way tyranny can be enforced or maintained is with armed government troops (or police) about the population. And when tyranny is administered by arms, justice can be obtained only by arms. Had not the colonists taken up arms, the tyranny would have continued. We can thus acknowledge the necessity, right, and justification for possessing arms. As with the tyranny of James II, history had once again repeated itself, revealing the importance of an armed populace to "keep headstrong rulers in line." The fact of this event was noted by an early court decision in Tennessee:

The evil that was produced by disarming the people in the time of James the second, was, that the King, by means of a standing army, quartered among the people, was able to overawe them, and compel them to submit to the most arbitrary, cruel and illegal measures. Whereas, if the people had retained their arms, they would have been able, by a just and proper resistance to those oppressive measures, either to have caused the King to respect their rights, or surrender (as he was eventually compelled to do) the government into other hands.

If the subjects had been armed, they could have resisted the payment of excessive fines, or the infliction of illegal and cruel punishments.<sup>29</sup>

King James had apparently known that his unlawful and oppressive measures could never be implemented unless the people were disarmed. This is what King George would have done if the colonists had sat idly by and offered no resistance by arms. It was when the king's army attempted to disarm the colonists by confiscating their gunpowder and ammunition stored at Concord, that they realized it was time to defend their right to keep and bear arms through the use of arms. For without arms, they would truly be helpless.



## The Original State Constitutions

With the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the colonies declared that they were "Free and Independent States." This declaration secured all of the "unalienable rights" which every free man possesses, and it cannot be doubted that the right to keep and bear arms was among those rights. The spirit of this document was proclaimed by James Otis, who said in 1764:

And he that would palm the doctrine of unlimited passive obedience and non-resistance upon mankind ... is not only a fool and a knave, but a rebel against common sense, as well as the laws of God, of Nature, and his Country.

This concept was incorporated into the original State Constitutions of New Hampshire (1784), and Maryland (1776); and proclaimed by the State Conventions of Virginia and North Carolina in 1788, as proposals for a Bill of Rights in ratifying the U.S. Constitution. The language used was:

The doctrine of non-resistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind.

In applying this American principle we are to resist Federal or State officials who, as usurpers, defy the limits of their powers imposed by the law of God and the Constitution.

As these newly formed "independent states" were drafting constitutions, they enumerated the more important rights they possessed as free men. It is significant to note that several of these states specifically singled out the right to keep and bear arms as one of their most cherished rights. The following are some excerpts from America's first State Constitutions:<sup>30</sup>

### *Constitution for Massachusetts — 1780*

CHAPTER V, ART. XVII. The people have a right to keep and bear arms for the common defence. And as, in time of peace, armies are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be maintained without the consent of the legislature; and the military power shall always be held in an exact subordination to the civil authority, and be governed by it.

### *Constitution of North Carolina—1776*

XVII. The people have a right to bear arms, for the defence of the State; and, as standing armies, in time of peace, are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up.

### *Constitution of Pennsylvania—1776*

XIII. That the people have a right to bear arms for the defence of themselves and the state; and as standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up; And that the military should be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.

### *Constitution of Vermont—1777*

XV. That the people have a right to bear arms for the defence of themselves and the State; and, as standing armies, in the time of peace, are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up.

Some of the other original states implied the existence of the right of the people to bear arms within the context of the militia, such as Virginia had done:

### *The Constitution of Virginia—1776*

SEC. 13. That a well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defence of a free State.<sup>31</sup>

It is quite evident from the circumstances at this period in time that the right of a person to keep and bear arms prevailed throughout the colonies, and the foregoing declarations further substantiated this fact. The declaration of rights in these constitutions merely reaffirmed those natural and common law rights they possessed as Englishmen. We can thus claim that the right to bear arms has an origin stemming from the English Bill of Rights of 1689, as asserted by this New York Court:

The state constitutions drafted in the revolutionary war era therefore included provisions guaranteeing the right to bear arms and prohibiting standing armies in time of peace. The relevant provisions of the English Bill of Rights of 1689 provided a useful model for the colonial drafters.<sup>32</sup>

It has been argued that subsequent legislation in England materially cut down the broad rights conferred or confirmed by William and Mary. However, the statute law of England did not become our law, but common-law rights, as expressed in the Bill of Rights, were effectually incorporated into the law of the state of New York by the Constitution of 1777.<sup>33</sup>

It is interesting to note that New York's Constitution of 1777, one of the original state constitutions, had no specific declaration of a right to keep and bear arms, but rather only reference to an armed militia. Yet the New York court clearly pointed out that the right was secured under the Constitution of 1777. This right is one that has clearly been recognized as existing prior to any formal Constitution.

The right [of citizens to bear arms] existed at the adoption of the constitution; it had then no limits short of the moral power of the citizens to exercise it, and it in fact consisted in nothing else but in the liberty of the citizen to bear arms.<sup>34</sup>

Thus the citizens of the United States have a right to keep and bear arms, and one that cannot be disputed since it was one of those rights which were specifically claimed and exercised by the Founding Fathers of this nation. It



thus is a right which is firmly part of our Constitutional Law.

- <sup>1</sup> Machiavelli had stated: "The principal foundations of all states are good laws and good arms; and there cannot be good laws where there are not good arms" (*The Prince*, XII).
- <sup>2</sup> U. S. Senate, *Report of the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 97th Congress, 2nd sess., Feb., 1982.
- <sup>3</sup> Ellis Stevens, *Sources of the Constitution of the United States* (New York, 1927), 223.
- <sup>4</sup> Edward P. Cheyney, *A Short History of England* (1919), 65.
- <sup>5</sup> G. Adams and H. Stephens, *Select Documents of English Constitutional History* (London, 1926), 23-25.
- <sup>6</sup> Supreme Ct. of Tenn., *Aymette vs. The State*, 2 Humphrey (21 Tenn., 1840) 154, 156.
- <sup>7</sup> Adams and Stephens, *Select Documents of English Constitutional History*, 463.
- <sup>8</sup> Adams and Stephens, *op. cit.*, 465.
- <sup>9</sup> *People v. Horton*, 264 N.Y.S. 84, 88; 147 Misc. 506.
- <sup>10</sup> F. N. Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters etc.*, (Washington: G.P.O., 1909), Vol. VII, 3799.
- <sup>11</sup> Hening, *The Statutes at Large . . . of Virginia*, vol. I (1823), 127.
- <sup>12</sup> W. K. Kavenagh, ed., *Foundations of Colonial America*, vol. I (N.Y., 1973), 405.
- <sup>13</sup> W. Brigham, *The Compact . . . of New Plymouth* (Boston, 1836), 31.
- <sup>14</sup> Thorp, *Federal and State Constitutions etc.*, vol. IV, 2448.
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, vol. V, 2576-77.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Acts and Resolves, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay*, vol. I (Boston, 1869), 128.
- <sup>17</sup> John B. Dillon, *Oddities of Colonial Legislation in America* (1879), 50. Also: *Statutes of South Carolina*, vol. vii, 417.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Acts and Resolves, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay*, vol. I, 586.

- <sup>19</sup> K. Kavenagh, ed., *Foundations of Colonial America*, vol. III, 2053. Also: *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XXX (1946), 126.
- <sup>20</sup> Wm. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Law of England*, vol. I, 144.
- <sup>21</sup> William Davidson, *A History of the United States* (Chicago, 1906), 157-58.
- <sup>22</sup> Against these writs the Boston lawyer James Otis had pleaded so vehemently three years earlier that John Adams called his speech the opening act of the American Revolution.
- <sup>23</sup> David Muzzey, *An American History* (Boston, 1929), 95.
- <sup>24</sup> Jacques Redway, *The Making of the American Nation* (1905), 123.
- <sup>25</sup> Thomas B. Lawler, *Essentials of American History* (1902), 133.
- <sup>26</sup> Muzzy, *An American History* (1929), 105.
- <sup>27</sup> Lawler, *Essentials of American History* (1902), 141.
- <sup>28</sup> Congress, *Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the American States*, 69th Congress, 1st sess., House Doc. No. 398.
- <sup>29</sup> *Aymette vs. The State*, 2 Humphrey (21 Tenn.) 154, 157 (1840).
- <sup>30</sup> Source: F.N. Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions, etc.* (1909).
- <sup>31</sup> F. N. Thorpe, vol. VII, 3814.
- <sup>32</sup> *State v. Kessler*, 614 P.2d 94, 97; 289 Ore. 359 (1980).
- <sup>33</sup> *People v. Horton*, 264 N.Y.S. 84, 88; 147 Misc. 506 (1933).
- <sup>34</sup> *Bliss v. Commonwealth*, 2 Littell (12 KY) 90, 92 (1822).

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# Livingstone the Liberator

By Rev. Peter Hammond



David Livingstone was one of the greatest missionary pioneer pathfinders of the greatest century of missionary advance. His primary goals were reached only after his death: the cessation of the pervasive Islamic slave trade and the opening up of Africa to Christianity and lawful commerce.

He had the grace to see that his mission was part of a divine plan to set many souls free from slavery, both physical and spiritual. Livingstone's great goal of bringing the plight of the Islamic slave trade in Africa to the world's attention was achieved largely through the work of his convert, American journalist Henry Morton Stanley.

## Faithful and Diligent

David was brought up in a pious, but poverty-stricken, home in Scotland. He was an avid reader and borrowed extensively from the local library. By age nine he had already committed to memory Psalm 119 and won a copy of the New Testament as a reward. By age ten David was employed fourteen hours a day, six days a week at the local cotton-spinning factory. With his first week's wages he purchased a copy of *"Rudiments of Latin"*! David managed to read in the factory by placing his book on a portion of the spinning jenny so that he could catch sentence after sentence as he passed at his work. He maintained fairly constant study, undisturbed by the roar of the machinery. His conversion to Christ at age twelve inspired him to resolve to devote his life to the alleviation of human misery.

Three themes dominated Livingstone's life: evangelization, exploration, and emancipation. He wrote at the time: *"That the salvation of men ought to be the chief desire and aim of every Christian."* He therefore made a resolution: he would give to the cause of missions all that he might earn beyond what was required for his subsistence.

After 10 years of daily drudgery at the cotton mill, David had saved enough money to be able to set out to study theology and medicine. Medical science in the 1830s was primitive by today's standards. Surgical operations were performed at hazardous speed because of the lack of anesthetics. Chloroform and ether were not introduced until several years later, and the discovery of antiseptics lay 25 years ahead. The study of chemistry was growing, but

physics had hardly started, and biochemistry and bacteriology were unknown. Nothing at all was known about the tropical diseases he was to encounter such as malaria and blackwater fever.

It was not in Livingstone's character to relax. He took his task and calling most seriously and whatever he did he performed thoroughly. He was uncompromising, diligent, and inflexible in his adherence to his word.

Friends described him as: *"a man of resolute courage"; "fire, water, stonewall would not stop Livingstone in the fulfilment of any recognised duty."*

It took him three months by sailing ship to reach Cape Town and another four months by ox cart before he even reached Robert Moffat's mission station at Kuruman where he would begin his work for the Lord in Africa. When he landed in South Africa, on March 17, 1841, David Livingstone arrived at a continent that was plagued with problems. Africa was still a place of mystery to the Europeans. The Arabs, south of the Sahara, never ventured inland far from the coast. The rivers were riddled with rapids and sandbars. The deadly malaria disease was widespread and inhibited travel. Entire expeditions of 300 to 400 men had been decimated by malaria. The African terrain was difficult to negotiate. Floods, tropical forests, and swamps thwarted wheeled transport.

## Fearless and Fervent

Livingstone soon acquired a reputation for fearless faith—particularly when he walked to the Barka tribe—infamous for the murder of four white traders whom they had mercilessly poisoned and strangled. As the first messenger of mercy in many regions, Livingstone soon received further challenge. Chief Sechele pointed to the great Kalahari Desert: *"You never can cross that country to the tribes beyond; it is utterly impossible even for us Black men."* The challenge of crossing this obstacle began to fascinate Livingstone who was convinced that *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Phil. 4:13). Livingstone wrote: *"I shall try to hold myself in readiness to go anywhere, provided it be forward."*

He is reported to have had a steadfast manner and folk knew where they stood with him. Livingstone's plans to establish a Bible college for Africans were frustrated. However, the sovereignty of God was seen in this. Had Livingstone's wishes been carried out, he might have spent his life's work teaching in a Bible college rather than traversing Africa and dealing a death blow to the slave trade.

His three great daily challenges he described as: heat, harsh conditions, and hardness of hearts.



I hope to be permitted to work as long as I live beyond other men's line of things and plant the seed of the Gospel where others have not planted. But every excursion for that purpose will involve separation from my family for periods of 4 or 5 months.

I am a missionary, heart and soul. God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and physician. A poor, poor imitation of Him I am, or wish to be. In His service I hope to live, in it I wish to die.

During his first missionary journey with his wife and children, their fourth child, Elizabeth, was born. Within a few weeks she had died and the rest of the family were sick. He received much criticism for the "irresponsibility" of taking a wife and four children on a missionary journey in the wilderness. Later he was criticized for sending his family back to Britain while he pioneered the hinterland of Africa. When his wife rejoined him for his second great missionary expedition in the Zambezi valley, she died of malaria.

*"I shall open up a path in to the interior or perish,"* he declared. *"May He bless us and make us blessings even unto death."* *"Shame upon us missionaries if we are to be outdone by slave traders!"* *"If Christian missionaries and Christian merchants could remain throughout the year in the interior of the continent, in 10 years, slave dealers will be driven out of the market."*

## A Vision of Victory

David Livingstone was inspired by an optimistic eschatology. Like most of the missionaries of the nineteenth century, Livingstone was a postmillennialist who held to the eschatology of victory:

Discoveries and inventions are culminative ... filling the earth with the glory of the Lord, all nations will sing His glory and bow before Him ... our work and its fruit are culminative. We work towards a new state of things. Future missionaries will be rewarded by conversions for every sermon. We are their pioneers and helpers.... Let them not forget **the watchmen of the night**, who worked when all was gloom and no evidence of success in the way of conversions cheers our path. They will doubtless have more light than we, but we serve our Master earnestly and proclaim the same Gospel as they will do. (See *Zep. 2:11* and *Zec. 14:9*.)

A quiet audience today. The seed is being sown, the least of all seeds now, but it will grow into a mighty tree. It is as if it were **a small stone cut out of a mountain**, but it will fill the whole earth!" (*Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Mt. 13:31-32*)

We work for a glorious future which we are not destined to see, the golden age which has not yet been but will yet be. We are only **morning stars** shining in the dark, but the glorious morn will break—the good time coming yet." (*Rev. 2:26-28*)

The dominion has been given by the power of commerce and population unto the people of the

saints of the Most High. **This is an everlasting Kingdom, a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands which will cover the whole earth**, for this time we work. (*Dan. 7:27* and *Hab. 2:14*)

## Against All Odds

Battling rains, chronic discomfort, rust, mildew, and rot, totally drenched and fatigued, laid low by fever (he suffered from malaria alone 27 times!), Livingstone continued to persevere across the continent. Hostile tribes demanded exorbitant payment for crossing their territory. Some tense moments were stared down by Livingstone, gun in hand. Trials tested the tenacity of the travel-wearied team. As he wrote: *"Can the love of Christ not carry the missionary where the slave trade carries the trader?"*

After two years pioneering across the hinterland of Africa, Livingstone reached Luanda. The *"Forerunner"* ship was ready to take him to England. However, Livingstone chose to return overland to bring his guides and porters back to their village. Rather than risk their being sold into slavery in Portuguese West Africa, he preferred to take another two years crossing the continent that had almost killed him on his first journey! Had Livingstone chosen to return, he might well have ended his ministry. The ship sank with all hands lost (and with his journals)!

"These privations, I beg you to observe, are not sacrifices. I think that word ought never to be mentioned in reference to anything we can do for Him Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor."

Often Livingstone endured excessive and unnecessary suffering and deprivation, hacking through dense jungle on foot because lack of funds prevented him from affording the "luxury" of a canoe!

Livingstone often saw the sickening sight of the Islamic slave trade: burned-out villages, corpses floating down rivers, and long lines of shackled slaves being herded through the bush. Livingstone's mere presence often sent the Yao slave raiders scurrying into the bushes. Livingstone and his co-workers set many hundreds of slaves free. On one occasion, a war party of Yao warriors attacked the missionary party. While attempting to avoid confrontation, the team found themselves cut off and surrounded by the aggressive and bloodthirsty mob. Finally, Livingstone was forced to give the command to return fire. The slave traders fled. This incident led to much criticism in England. Charles Livingstone, his brother, on hearing one outburst from Britain replied: *"If you were in Africa and saw a host of murderous savages aiming their heavily laden muskets and poisoned arrows at you, more light might enter your mind . . . and if it didn't, great daylight would enter your body through arrow and bullet holes!"*

It was Livingstone's great desire to see the slave trade cease. First, there was the internal slave trade between hostile tribes. Second, there were slave traders from the coast, Arabs or Portuguese, for whom local tribes were



encouraged to collect slaves by marauding and murder. Third, there were the parties sent out from Portuguese and Arab coastal towns with cloths, beads, muskets, and ammunition to exchange for slaves.

Incidentally, Livingstone inspired the shortest war in history—in 1872—when the British Navy presented an ultimatum to the Sultan of Zanzibar to close their flourishing slave market. When the Sultan refused, his palace was shelled—resulting in a record-breaking surrender within the hour!

In his writings and public speaking engagements, Livingstone regularly spoke on his twin concerns—to enlighten people on the evils of the slave trade, and to spread the Christian gospel among the heathen. Although he was renowned for his exploration, in his mind it was primarily a means to evangelism and to “disciple the nations.”

### Livingstone the Scientist

Dr. Livingstone believed in comprehensively fulfilling the Great Commission—ministering to body, mind and spirit. Along with his Bible, surgical kit, and medicine chest, Livingstone always carried a microscope and sextant—with which he observed God’s spectacularly diverse creation with awe and wonder. His books are filled with fascinating scientific, medical, botanical, anthropological, and geographic observations and details. Livingstone was the first to map the great Zambezi River and many other parts of the vast hinterland of Africa. He was one of the first scientists to make the connection between mosquitoes and malaria, and he pioneered the use of quinine as a treatment—often experimenting on himself!

The challenge of Livingstone rings out to us today: *“Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay . . . it is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather, it is a privilege!”*

The optimistic eschatology of Livingstone the Liberator comes as a stern rebuke to the prevailing escapist eschatology of defeat and retreat.

His steadfast example has been used by the Lord to inspire hundreds of men and women to devote their lives to African missions. Mary Slessor, for example, went to Calabar (present-day Nigeria) and ended the practice of murdering twins (believed by animists to be bewitched). Peter Cameron was inspired to return to Africa after his first mission failed, when he read the inscription on Livingstone’s tomb in Westminster Abbey: *“Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring.”*

“I beg to direct your attention to Africa: I know that in a few years I shall be cut off from that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity: will you carry out the work which I have begun? I leave it with you!”

This article is the third of an eight-part series on the nineteenth-century missionary movement, what inspired it, the people who transformed nations and their legacy.

*Dr. Peter Hammond is a missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Angola, Mozambique and Sudan. Peter is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship and the Director of United Christian Action. He has authored numerous publications, in particular he has written Holocaust in Rwanda, Faith Under Fire in Sudan, In the Killing Fields of Mozambique, Putting Feet to Your Faith and Renaissance or Reformation. He is the editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and UCANEWS. Peter is married to Lenora and they have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher, and Calvin.*

*For those who would like to learn more of David Livingstone, Christian Liberty Press has recently published David Livingstone: Man of Prayer and Action.*

### MACEDONIAN CALL FROM PETER HAMMOND

I desperately need more staff. We definitely do not have enough qualified people to be able to handle the tremendous opportunities and invitations of ministry before us. I need someone with experience in book ministry to run our “Christian Liberty Books” ministry; and we need an office manager who can juggle the many demands, matching available resources, vehicles, and personnel to the tasks at hand according to the priorities (this would free me up to do the writing, pioneering, and other ministry that I need to concentrate on): We always need more field staff, and administrative staff, but there is a wide-open opportunity for expanding our tape ministry, pastoral training, leadership training, Bible teaching, etc. The opportunities before us are so unprecedented, and I fear that we may be missing many windows of opportunity by not having sufficient resources and personnel to respond to them adequately.

This is a Macedonian Call: come over and help us!

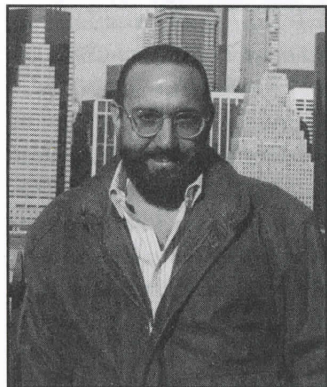
*Yours for Reformation and Revival,  
Peter Hammond*

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# All I Really Need to Know About Worship . . . I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle (Part IX)

*By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel*



Even during the gospel's Sinaitic administration, there were some variables permitted in worship. Certain Scriptures lead us to conclude that the RPW of Deuteronomy 12:32 was more elastic than modern regulativists would typically grant. I'm thinking, for example, of additions to

the prescribed Temple worship, additions which were countenanced by our Lord.

We've already seen the covenant celebration of Purim, a feast added to Israel's obligations (*Est.* 9:26-28). And the Feast of Dedication, an important holiday; on Israel's calendar, was added by man alone. Not only was there no divine command for this holiday, there was not even a prophet on earth at the time to consult. Yet it became part of Israel's observances—and the Lord Jesus attended its celebration in Jerusalem (*Jn.* 10:22).

## Water From the Rock

It may be that these additions were acceptable because they commemorated acts of gracious intervention by the covenant God on behalf of His people, *and* their observance by the people did not require additional priestly/Temple work. But I'm not sure that covers it all; for we do, in fact, find additions to the priestly/Temple service by the time of the New Testament. Indeed, we find our Lord Jesus taking certain of these additions in comfortable stride, very unlike modern regulativists. Two examples follow.

*ONE:* In the Gospel According to John, the Evangelist is much concerned to demonstrate that Jesus fulfills the Jews' expectations of a Messiah like unto Moses.<sup>1</sup> This is evident throughout. Consider, for example, how John begins and ends his book. His *first line* recalls the first line of the first book of Moses.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1).*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn. 1:1).*

Then see John's *last line* echoing the last line of Moses' last book:

*Since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses ... in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt ... and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel (Dt. 34:10-12).*

*And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen (Jn. 21:25).*

John's point, of course, is this: You think Moses was something? You're right! But now, not only has a prophet arisen in Israel like unto Moses, but *the* Prophet has come, one *greater* than Moses, and His name is Jesus (cf. *Dt.* 18:14-19; *Jn.* 1:17, 45; 6:14; see also *Ac.* 3:22-23).

In John 6, there is *explicit* comparison between the gift of the bread from heaven associated with Moses, and the gift of the bread from heaven who is Jesus. In John 7 and 8 there are *implicit* references to the other two wilderness gifts<sup>2</sup> associated with Moses, namely the rock that gave water, and the pillar of light that guided God's people to the Promised Land.

John 7:37f. sets forth Jesus as the Rock that gives water. We are told that Jesus spoke this "on the last and greatest day of the Feast" (*v.* 37). What Feast? Tabernacles. What's the connection between the words Jesus uttered and the last (the seventh) and greatest day of the Feast? A simple yet profoundly beautiful connection.

As Glasson has noted, "It is pretty generally agreed that the words of Christ in John 7:37-39 refer to the water ceremony carried out at the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkoth*)."<sup>3</sup> Priests would go down to the Pool of Siloam and draw water into a golden pitcher. The priest carrying the water would try to time his return to coincide with the moment that the pieces of a sacrifice were being laid on the altar by his fellow-priests.

"As he entered the 'Water-gate,' which obtained its name from this ceremony," Edersheim tells us, "he was received by a threefold blast from the priests' trumpets." He would go up to the rise of the altar where there were two silver basins with narrow holes. Wine would be poured into one while the water from Siloam would be poured into the other, the people shouting, "Raise thy hand," that they might see the outpouring and rejoice. David Baron notes that "the joy accompanying this ceremonial was so great that it became a proverb. 'He that hath not seen *Simchat-bet-ha-Sho'ebah*, the joy of the drawing (and the pouring) of the water, hath not seen joy in his life."<sup>4</sup>

## That's Not Funny

The people were very serious about witnessing this



event. According to Edersheim, when Alexander Janneus, in 95 B.C., showed contempt for this tradition and poured the water on the ground, the people pelted him with citrons and sought to kill him!

The Feast of Tabernacles came to be imagined as the time when God would determine the rainfall to be allotted for the ensuing year.<sup>5</sup> Before you say, "That's totally insane," read Zechariah 14:16-19. Be that as it may, the Talmud suggests that the rabbis were looking for something better in relation to this ceremony: "Why is the name of it called, The drawing out of water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.'"<sup>6</sup>

Now, our Lord Jesus comes upon this addition made by men, this tradition, this ceremony added to the prescribed Temple rites. We know He never pandered or catered to man's prejudices, never pulled any punches. We know He did not hesitate to overturn tables at the Temple on two occasions. What does He do now? Does he upbraid them for their "wickedness"? Does He throw the water out, thrash the golden vessel, interrupt the celebration?

No. He applies it to Himself and His work. He says, "Water? You want water? Let him who thirsts come to Me and find water!" Compare this to John 6:35: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." He makes the same use of a human addition, a tradition, as He had of an historical miracle.

### Light From The Pillar

*Two:* In John 8, Jesus again makes use of a tradition of human origin which became an important part of the Sukkoth celebration. Let's hear David Baron<sup>7</sup> describe it for us:

Worshippers congregated in the Court of the Women,<sup>8</sup> where a great illumination took place. Four huge golden lamps or candelabras were there, each with four golden bowls against which rested four ladders. Four youths of priestly descent ascended these with large pitchers of oil from which they filled each bowl. The old worn breeches and girdles of the priests served for wicks to these lamps. So great and brilliant was the light that, according to a saying, "there was not a court in Jerusalem that was not lit by it." Around these great golden burning lamps a sacred dance took place in which even the ... prominent leaders of the people with flaming torches in their hands danced before the people and sang before them hymns of song and praise.

Baron suggests that the illumination had a significance similar to that of the water: a harkening back to a wilderness miracle and a looking forward to a future divine intervention. "It reminded them of the past when God led them in the wilderness with the cloud of glory and the pillar of fire—of the Shekinah glory which dwelt in the first Temple."

What did our Lord do upon encountering this human addition to the worship prescribed by Jehovah? In reference to this illumination, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (*Jn. 8:12*).

We should perhaps note that F. Godet, in his commentary on John,<sup>9</sup> confirms this reading of the material:

That which concerns us is the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, which the people had met to keep. This feast was designed to commemorate the favors they had received from God during their sojourn in the wilderness. Hence the booths of foliage. Now among these favours, the two chief were the water from the rock and the pillar of fire. Jesus had just applied to Himself one of these types. He now appropriates the other.<sup>10</sup>

### Variegated Vagarious

Isn't it time to yield to the Jesus we've actually been given, rather than the Jesus we wish might be? The knee-jerk reaction of some of my brethren, recoiling at the thought that God would countenance "human additions," is uncalled for. We have found our God putting a non-Mosaic, non-prophet-authorized feast (Purim), into the Bible. We have found our Lord celebrating Chanukah, a holiday the antecedent of which occurred between the Testaments. We have found Him celebrating the Passover according to non-Scriptural, covenant tradition, even down to the use of wine (never commanded). We find Him worshiping in the synagogue, an institution whose liturgy arose apart from any recorded express divine command. And now we see Jesus participating in commemorative traditions of human origin.

How much do we need to read before we ask ourselves if there might not be a *better* principle—or set of principles—given in this Word to govern worship, a set of principles which might reasonably account for *all* the evidence of Scripture, that would allow us to read the Word without subjecting its texts to torture? Let's return then to our exposition of the IPW. We said in our last treatment that informed worship is I) doctrinally-driven and II) Word-centered. We now add. . .

### A Matter of Manner

Consider what God's *actual* will concerning "traditions" might be, in light of the whole Word. On the one hand, we see there are times when human inventions are condemned. On the other hand we see times when they are embraced. What then?

Have you ever noticed that what we found Jesus doing directly in the gospels, we find God doing indirectly (through a prophet) in Zechariah: allowing for the legitimacy of observances with purely human origins, under certain conditions. In a rather remarkable passage beginning in Zechariah 7, the people inquired concerning the fasts *they themselves had established as a*



tradition. Two of these four fasts (still observed by orthodox Jews, by the way) are mentioned:

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu; When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men, to pray before the LORD, And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?

God was obviously less concerned with the actual, man-originating practices than with the *motive* and *manner* of their observance. After an extended and earnest exhortation to His people to *act* like His people, He promises them that a time will come when their (four) fasts<sup>11</sup> will be turned into feasts.

*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.” (Zec.8:19)*

If God were a regulativist, He would have said something quite different, we think. If He were a regulativist, we could imagine Him saying something like, “You think those fast days you invented make you sorry now? Wait till you see what I do to you for adding them to my calendar!” But instead, He says something very different, very gracious. “You are mourning now in remembrance of the judgment I brought upon Jerusalem. Just be faithful, and I will turn those days of gloom into days of joy.”

Remember the following phrase as shorthand for God’s attitude toward tradition: *it’s less the matter than the manner*. Jesus didn’t condemn the human tradition of wearing *tefilin* (phylacteries) *per se*, he condemned making them wide for ostentation (*Mt. 23:5*), as if the wearer of wide *tefilin* and long *tzitzis* were holier than others—an attitude not less present in some RPW communions, however externally austere, than in the group Jesus was addressing. It wasn’t the matter, it was the manner.

Perhaps the real teaching of Scripture might more accurately, in view of the small light we’ve gained so far, be summarized as: Meaningful and earnest traditions which serve as memorials of actual interventions by God in history, whether in judgment or grace, or traditions which reflect credible understandings of His commands, are permitted. The meaning of these memorials and

traditions, however, must be easily accessible to the common believer.

On the other hand, traditions which are obscure, contradict or contravene God’s Word or express will, or traditions which exploit covenant occasions for personal gain—gain in coin or prestige at the expense of others—such traditions are forbidden.

These two paragraphs above seem to incorporate a great deal more Scripture with a great deal more harmony than the RPW.

Yes, this requires wisdom. Yes, this means we must operate without the convenience of the RPW. At least, we must operate without pretending that it is what God requires. If we’d only say, “We’ve found the RPW helpful in keeping our communion free from Roman excesses,” for example, all well and good. And if someone found another route to the same end, no harm done. But at least we’d be able to talk about worship in categories that hold promise for agreement, categories like “good/better/best,” rather than “I’m faithful and acceptable and you’re a papist pig.”

<sup>1</sup> This has been demonstrated beyond refutation by several scholars; perhaps the best and pithiest work is T. F. Glasson’s *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (Alec R. Allenson, Naperville, IL, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> “The three gifts” are found together in Nehemiah 9:19, 20, and recounted also in Psalm 105:39–41. Compare Psalm 78:14–25.

<sup>3</sup> p. 48, but see all of chapter 7. For a fuller description of the water-drawing and other ceremonies, see Edersheim’s chapter on Tabernacles in *The Temple: Its Ministry and Service as they were at the Time of Jesus Christ*; available on the web at <http://www.mv.com/ipusers/butterfly/temple14.htm#special>.

<sup>4</sup> *Types, Psalms and Prophecies*, 66 (1907; reprint by Klock & Klock, Minneapolis, MN, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Our old friend, John Wesley, got v. 37 exactly right: “On the last, the great day of the feast—On this day there was the greatest concourse of people, and they were then wont to fetch water from the fountain of Siloam, which the priests poured out on the great altar, singing one to another, With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation. On this day likewise they commemorated God’s miraculously giving water out of the rock, and offered up solemn prayers for seasonable rains.”

<sup>6</sup> Cited by Edersheim. In my 1881 edition, it is on 243.

<sup>7</sup> Baron is relying on Edersheim here.

<sup>8</sup> The astute reader will realize that the architecture of the Temple had been modified without benefit of recorded divine command. Where did God command a Court of the Women or a Court of the Gentiles? Tradition is *everywhere* in Scripture, not all of it evil. Here’s a note from *Nelson’s Bible Dictionary* (Nelson, 1986), which reveals that an act of religious worship took place in the Court of the Women: “The inner area of Herod’s Temple contained three courts. The easternmost court was the Court of Women, and it contained the Temple treasury where people donated their money (Mk. 12:41–44).

<sup>9</sup> English translation, 1886, cited by Glasson.

<sup>10</sup> Cited by Glasson, 61.

<sup>11</sup> The first lamented the breaching of the wall (2 Kings 25:3–4), the second the burning of the Temple (*vv. 8–10*), the third Gedaliah’s murder (*vv. 22–25*), and the fourth (the fast of the tenth month) mourned the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar’s siege (2 Kings 25:1; Ezekiel 24:1, 2).