

The Land of FAIR PLAY

by Geoffrey Parsons

We the People

of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this CONSTITUTION for the United States of America.

Article

SECTION 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

SECTION 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year from the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch in that State.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may share in them, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including all bound Persons, except Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made every ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch in that State. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may share in them, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including all bound Persons, except Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made every ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch in that State. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may share in them, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including all bound Persons, except Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made every ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch in that State.

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American Civics
from a Christian
Perspective

T H I R D E D I T I O N

The Land of Fair Play

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George Washington read Thomas Paine's inspiring words to his weary men on Christmas Eve, 1776, just before the Battle of Trenton and the turning point of our War for Independence.

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be so highly rated.

Thomas Paine

To The Teacher

The urgent need for teaching the theory and practice of American government to our boys and girls at the earliest practical moment in their schooling is now widely recognized. Far too many young people in our nation's schools fail to complete their high school education. Therefore, to delay the formal teaching of civics until high school is to permit many of our boys and girls to grow up with no accurate knowledge of our governmental structure. In our new realization of the dependence of America upon the understanding and devotion of her every citizen, the desirability of ending this condition has become clear to everyone.

Among the scores of works on American civics, there are almost none that attempt to describe the theory of our government and its essential machinery with the simplicity attempted here. The teaching of community civics in the lower grades has been well developed, and a number of excellent volumes stressing the practical and local operations of government, street cleaning, the fire department, and so on have been published. At the other end stands the many comprehensive, detailed, and technical textbooks, suited to mature high school or college use. It is for the field between that this volume has been designed as the result of much study, observation, and consultation with teachers.

The plan of the book was the natural consequence of its aim. Since the theory, machinery, and services of our national government formed the prime subject to be taught, it seemed essential to begin with this material. It is the opinion of many teachers that this method follows the natural interest of pupils and affords the clearer path. Certainly, the simplicity of the family and of local government is at least visible and sharply defined. With the aid of the playground analogy, the elements of our governmental theory can be made easily understandable by pupils in junior high or high school. Since a clear view of the organic relation of nation, state, and local government was a first essential, a logical chapter arrangement was followed in preference to an arrangement by lessons.

Of the Questions for Further Study, the most important are obviously the ones developing the state laws and local facts of government. The material for answering these questions (the form of ballot used in a state, local boundary line, the names of local officials, etc.) is often not immediately accessible. But the value of these concrete examples is very great. The ideal system is, of course, for the members of the class to obtain the information from election officials, tax assessors, local members of the state legislature, and others. The secretary of state can be contacted at the state capital. One of the standard newspaper almanacs and the state yearbook will often be of use. Time, of course, limits the amount of this local application of theory and law that a teacher can arrange; but it cannot be too strongly urged that the theory of government be as far as possible worked out in concrete laws, maps, ballots, and persons.

The text of the Constitution is included in the volume and frequently referenced in the belief that, only thus, can an appreciation of its basic importance be gained. No detailed analysis of the Constitution has been attempted. In the conception of the writer, it is the fundamental fact of its organic relationship to our citizenship duties that is chiefly important.

Geoffrey Parsons & the Staff of Christian Liberty Press

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The choice before us is plain, Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time is come, it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. America's future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God's government.

Peter Marshall

from *Washington's Farewell Address*:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

George Washington

Chapter 1

The Spirit of America

The Spirit of Fair Play—Every American boy and girl learns on the playground the true spirit of America, which is nothing else than fair play; fair play for everyone, big and little, neither bullies nor cheats allowed. You can sum up the whole object of American government by saying that it seeks to give every American—man or woman, boy or girl, rich or poor—an equal chance. Every boy and girl in America wishes to win, to succeed, to become great and famous. There is more ambition in America than any other country in the world. That is because every boy and girl has a better chance in America than in any other country in the world. Our country is far from perfect; we have our faults and injustices—as has every country. There are cheats and bullies in business as well as play. But we try to keep the game of life fair, and we have succeeded by God's grace in making America the land of opportunity.

The poorest child can become President. Ronald Reagan, who worked as a radio operator as a young man, lived to become a famous President. Every position, every success, stands open for each boy to try to win. Every girl can learn as much as she can and enter any business or work that appeals to her. Mr. Ray Kroc, who started out working as a soda fountain attendant in his uncle's drugstore in Chicago at the age of fourteen, eventually became the founder of the world-famous McDonald's restaurant chain. He is but one of hundreds of Americans who have won their way to the highest success because they had the freedom to pursue their dreams.

Now it is fair play, and only fair play, that makes this possible; that gives this chance to rich and poor alike. As in games, so in work we try our hardest to win, to succeed. But we play fair. We obey the rules. We give every boy and girl a fair start. We put bullies and cheats out of the game, and we aim to give everyone an equal chance to succeed. That is the spirit of America. No one is a true American who does not try to live up to this standard of fairness.

There is no room for king or noble or any favored class in this free country. Every American is as good as his brains and character and manners, and no better.

Five Reasons for America's Success*

Today in our affluent society, we are enjoying so much of the fruits of this great system of ours that most of us forget just how and why we have become so prosperous. How is it that four and a half percent of the world's population can produce almost one third of the world's wealth? How could the American people in the short span of eight generations have changed an undeveloped wilderness continent into the tremendously rich and powerful nation that we now take for granted?

First, our founding fathers wrote the Constitution, the greatest document to govern people that the world has even seen. Living and working under our Constitution with its Bill of Rights, Americans created the most successful major society in all human history—and they did it all without government aid.

* *Five Reasons for America's Success*, written by Walter Knot of Knott's Berry Farms.

It was built on these five principles:

1. We had a *belief in God*—and this religious background made us reliable and dependable with one another.
2. We had *limited government*—and this limited our national expenses and gave us surplus capital for tools and a good living standard.
3. We had *individual freedom*—every man could work at what he wanted.
4. We had *incentive*—which was simply the right to keep the fruits of our labor.
5. We had *competition*—the thing that makes businessman and employee alike serve his fellow man well.

Five Reasons for America's Success by Walter Knott of Knott's Berry Farms

The thinking of earlier leaders molded our American heritage. For example, Patrick Henry said, "If my family has freedom, and I have not given them one shilling, they would be rich. If they would not have freedom, and I have given them the whole world, they would be poor."

Thomas Jefferson put it more simply, "As government advances, freedom gives way." He was echoed much later by Woodrow Wilson—"Liberty has never come from government. The history of liberty is the history of limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it."

America became a place where the common man could be uncommon; where a man could become whatever his energy, his intellect, and his manhood could make him. This was the challenge, the hope, and the American heritage that touched and inspired hearts everywhere.

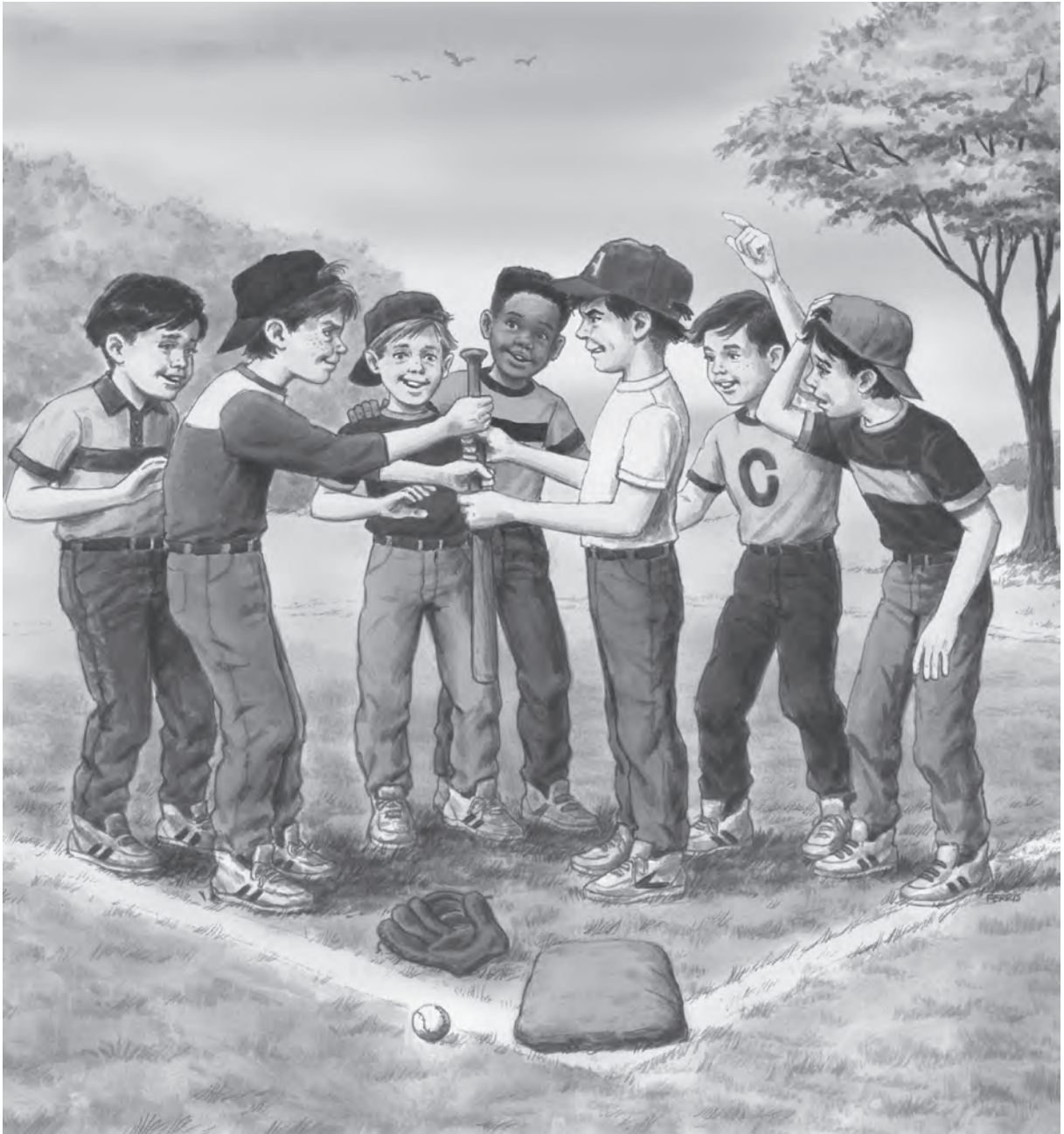
That freedom that our founding fathers gained for us is the cornerstone upon which this nation is built. We, in America, have been able to deliver in unbelievable abundance what Marxism, collectivism, socialism, and fascism can only promise. But freedom rests, and always will, on *individual responsibility, courage, and faith*. It was exactly these qualities that have made the United States the most prosperous nation the world has ever known.

For two centuries—due to the individual strength of each citizen—we have guarded and nurtured our hard-won freedom. Gradually, though, as we have become more prosperous, we have also become less willing to shoulder individual responsibilities. More and more, we have government do what the individual should do. Either we will again assume the responsibility required by freedom or that light will go out in America. And if it does, it will go out all over the world. If the wealth, luxury, and leisure that our system has brought us make us smug and complacent, willing to load our responsibilities on our government, we will lose—and deserve to lose—all these fruits of freedom.

American Civics from a Christian Perspective

Questions on the Text

1. What is the spirit of America?
2. What is the object of our government?
3. Why is there no nobility in America?
4. List five reasons why the United States is successful.



Chapter 2

The Captain, the Umpire, and the Rules

Captain and President—When a group of boys wish to start a ball team, one of the first things they do is to choose a captain. No team can play well without a captain, and a good one. He decides where each one shall play, directs the practice, makes out the batting list, and gives orders in a game—when to play up for a batter, when to change pitchers, and so on. He is the general of the forces in the field, and a good captain of a ball team is quite as important as a good general in a battle.

The President of the United States is the captain of the country. He does for the whole country very much the kinds of things that your captain does for your baseball team. The country selects him to be their general, their leader. If we are good Americans, we will select a godly and wise President. The President of the United States has a tremendous task and all sorts of things to do. It is a much more difficult thing to lead a nation of approximately 310 million men, women, and children than to lead a team of nine ball players. But he is chosen by the people of the country much as you choose your baseball captain, and he leads the people much as your captain leads you.

Umpire and Judge—Next is the umpire. You can play a small game without an umpire, but there is likely to be trouble and dispute over close decisions, and no big game is ever played without an umpire. He belongs to neither team and is chosen to call balls, strikes, fouls, and outs fairly, without favoring either side.

Our judges are umpires chosen to make fair decisions in the matters of business and life. They are elected because they are fair-minded men, and fitted to hear both sides of a dispute and decide fairly which man has broken a law. If a player in a baseball game spikes a fielder intentionally, the umpire punishes him by putting him out of the game. Just the same, if a person knocks you down and steals your wallet or purse, the judge punishes him by sending him to jail.

Rules and Laws—This brings us to the question of rules, of laws. Have you ever seen the printed rules of baseball? They make up many pages of fine print. Most of them you know without thinking—how many strikes a batter is allowed, which way to run around the bases, and so on. But other rules, especially some of the newer changes, puzzle the most experienced players. The umpire is trained to know all the rules and to hold the players to them.

Now stop and think what a hopeless mess a game of baseball would be without rules that everyone had to follow. Each player would be doing as he pleased, a boy who was a bully could stay at bat all day if he wished to, and a boy who wished to cheat could be as unfair as he cared to without anyone to stop him. There would be no fair play for anybody.

It is rules and obedience to them that make fair play possible. The laws are nothing more than the rules of life, by which every honest man and woman is glad to live. Most of them every boy and girl knows and obeys without thinking because they are the simple rules of right and wrong. It is a crime to steal; it is a crime to attack anyone. You can see that life would be

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a wild scramble without laws based upon the Bible and courts to enforce them. Thieves and cheats would have an open field, and fair play would be utterly impossible.

Freedom Through Laws—That is what American freedom means. It is not freedom to do exactly as we please, for that would produce anything but real freedom. It is freedom to do our utmost to succeed, provided we play fair as defined by God's law and the United States Constitution. As a matter of fact, no one who lives in the same city or county with other people can be entirely free to do what he wishes. Someone has said that "only a fish is wholly free," and that is about true. What America tries to do is give just as much freedom as possible and give it to everyone alike. The result is that America is the freest country in the world, because its people are blessed with a constitutional form of government that recognizes the inalienable rights of citizens to enjoy God-given liberty.

Who makes the rules and laws of fair play? In baseball, it is men chosen by the big leagues who meet once a year. In our government, it is our lawmakers, or legislators, the Congress that meets every year in Washington, D.C.; and these are chosen by the votes of every registered voter just as is the President.

The Three Branches of American Government—That is the main outline of our American government, and you see how much its plan resembles the plan of a baseball game. You cannot have a successful baseball team without (1) a leader; you cannot play a baseball game peaceably and fairly without (2) an umpire; and you cannot possibly play without (3) rules. That is the precise theory of our government. We call these three parts the executive, judicial, and the legislative branches of our federal government.

What Government Does—The rules of baseball relate to only one thing, a baseball game. Government touches our whole daily life, waking or sleeping. It also affects our business, health, safety, and happiness. It includes all those things that we can do best together: the building of roads; fire and police protection day and night; the delivery of mail; the coining of money;



Liberty Enlightening the World is more commonly known as the **Statue of Liberty**. This large statue was presented to the United States by France in 1886. The statue is 151 feet tall; it is 305 feet, including its pedestal and foundation.

fighting a common enemy with military forces; and so forth. In a savage country, every man carries a club and is his own policeman. In a civilized country, all unite and hire a policeman to act for all. It is more convenient and more efficient. Government is the organization we use to do all these things in common. So, the reach of our government is very wide. This reality occasionally creates problems, for those in power sometimes forget where their power and authority came from—*the people!* When government agencies seek to rule without the consent of the governed, it is the right, it is the duty of every American to reestablish the limits of the government's authority through protest, court action, or the ballot box. The key to keeping the government fair is by each citizen diligently requiring that government operate within its limited sphere of authority.

Questions on the Text

1. What does the President do for us?
2. What do our judges do for us?
3. Why do we have laws?
4. Are Americans free to do whatever they wish?
5. Who makes our laws?
6. What are the three branches of American government?
7. Why do we have a government, and what does it do?

Questions for Further Study

1. What makes a good captain in a game?
2. Do you know the names of any famous captains of ball teams?
3. Who were our Presidents during wars?
4. Can you state six rules from either baseball, football, basketball, or in any other team sport?
5. Have you a copy of a baseball guide containing the rules in full?
6. Can you state some of the penalties for breaking the rules in a baseball game?

Chapter 3

The Team

Constitutional Republic—All these are important: the captain, the umpire, and the rules. But you cannot play ball without a team. After all is said, it is the whole team that wins a game or loses it. It is the team that does the work.

Now in a well-run ball team, this is recognized and the team runs things. The captain is chosen by vote of all the players. The most important questions are put before the team for decision. The captain runs the team not to please himself or any one or two players, but for the whole nine. That is the American way. It is the democratic way. It is the way the American nation is governed.

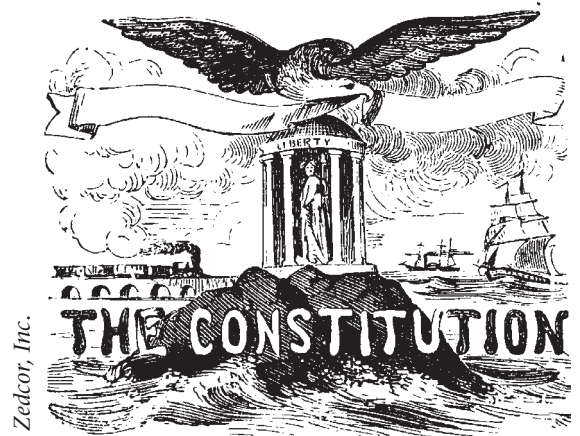
Despotism—You all may have seen teams that were not run in this way—in which one boy, something of a bully, got together with some other boys and made them do as he wanted. These timid boys lacked the spirit to stand up for their rights. Whether the captain thought he was doing the right thing for the team or not, the boys had to live with what the captain said. This is not the American way.

This is how a despot rules, with absolute power. Even when a despot thought he was being helpful, he still ruled without the consent of the people. In the past, many monarchs, like the Czars of Russia or King Henry VIII (1491–1547) of England, governed in this way. Today, despots are more likely to be premiers, presidents, or generals than kings. Former President Saddam Hussein (1979–2003) of Iraq and current President Hugo Chávez (1954–) of Venezuela are examples of modern despots. We usually call such despots *dictators*.



Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq from July 16, 1979 until April 9, 2003.

Anarchy—Suppose, on the other hand, you tried to run a team without any leader. Probably no boys were ever foolish enough to attempt this plan, but suppose some boys did. You can imagine what confusion and quarrelling there would be and how poor a game such a team would play. Every boy would do as he pleased and boss just as many other boys as he could. We saw how important rules and an umpire are. Take away the captain, too, and you have exactly the condition known as **anarchy**, which means *the attempt to run a country with no government whatever*. Certain theorists, impressed by the defects of government, have urged anarchy as a solution to all our troubles. But, as you can see, the remedy would be far worse than the disease. We would have a whole nation of despots, everyone ruling himself as he pleased and just as many of his friends and neighbors as he could. The mere fact that people are by their nature sinful and corrupt rules out the possibility of a successful government being operated on the premise of each person doing what he feels is right.



Oligarchy—Sometimes it is not one boy who runs a team but three or four boys. Perhaps they have more money than the others and can buy bats, balls, and masks, and therefore think they have the right to tell the others what to do. Perhaps they are older and stronger than the rest. Well, that is not American, either. When it comes to electing a captain or deciding any important matter, every player on the team ought to have his say. Big or little, rich or poor, they are all players; it is their team, and they ought to run it together. That is the theory of America. It is government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

When, instead, a few individuals put their ideas over the rest, you have what is called an **oligarchy**, which is defined as *a government by the few*. Occasionally a ruling class is the best, but usually they only think they are because they are the richest and the most powerful. Even if they happen to be the wisest and finest, it is un-American because our theory of government provides citizens with the power to remove leaders who fail to rule justly, without having to overthrow them by way of violent revolution. The Communist government of the People's Republic of China is a contemporary example of an oligarchy.

One form of oligarchy is known as **aristocracy**, which means *government by the best*. An aristocracy is made up of a privileged minority (often called nobles or the nobility) who have usually inherited their positions of power and wealth. Members of an aristocracy generally rule a country along with a monarch. Few countries today have a very powerful aristocracy. An example of a powerful aristocracy is the Saudi family that rules in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

England, America, and Germany—A typical aristocracy was England at the time of the American War for Independence. George III was not a despot because the nobility and upper classes of the country shared the power of governing with him. But the working people of England had nothing to say whatever in the government. Power belonged only to nobles and landowners. A **limited monarchy** is another name for such a government since the power of the monarch or king is not absolute, but is limited by the power of others.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the England of today is either a despotism or an aristocracy. It is a **democratic monarchy**, and its government is almost as democratic as our own. It is a limited monarchy in which the limits have swallowed the monarch, who simply is a figurehead to symbolize the unity of the nation and represent it on state occasions. The real head of England is the Prime Minister, who acts for the people of England just as our President acts for the American people. That is the normal growth of governments, away from despotism, through limited monarchies, to individual liberty. England has reached democracy in fact, but not in name. The federal or central government has much of the power of a despot.

The people of Germany, like so many of the people of Europe, are governed by a type of **democratic socialism**. Such governments are quite similar to an aristocracy in that they contain a large and powerful central government and rule their people through bureaucratic and arbitrary regulations.

The People's Rule—In America, the only rulers are the people. As we have seen, they elect a President to lead them, legislatures to make new laws or rules for them, and judges to act as umpires for them when laws are disputed. But the President, the legislatures, and the judges are simply the agents of the people to carry out the wishes of the people. The Constitution of the United States, the highest law of the land, begins with the words: "We, the people of the United States ... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

American Civics from a Christian Perspective

When a criminal is arrested or punished, the order reads not in the name of the judge or the officer, but in the name of “the people.”

“Of the people, by the people, for the people” was Abraham Lincoln’s description of the American system of government, and it is the best description there is.

A Republic—America is a republic that contains democratic forms. It has democratic form because the people rule it. It is a republic because the people rule it through representatives. The other kind of popular rule is sometimes called a “pure democracy,” and in it the people meet and run their government directly without electing any officers to act for them. This sort of democracy is possible only in a small community like ancient Athens or a modern New England town. But in America, we have joined together under the Constitution, which clearly states the people rule through elected representatives. Therefore, the United States of America is not a “pure democracy,” but rather a Constitutional Republic that contains certain democratic systems.

Questions on the Text

1. What is a democracy?
2. What is a despotism?
3. What is anarchy?
4. What is an oligarchy?
5. What is a limited monarchy?
6. What sort of government does England have?
7. What sort of government does Germany have?
8. Who are the rulers in America?
9. What is a “pure democracy” and what is a republic?



Questions for Further Study

1. Can you name any other despots other than the Czars of Russia?
2. Can you name any limited monarchies?
3. How many republics can you name?
4. Are there any monarchies in the western hemisphere and republics in Asia?
5. What type of government currently exists in the People’s Republic of China?