

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

4/7/2017

In our study today let's see if we can define what the keys to good government really consists of.

I. A TRUTH OUR FOREFATHERS KNEW VERY WELL

- A. Most of our forefathers were in agreement with a pertinent passage of Scripture which sets forth the success or defeat of a nation; "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" (Proverbs 29:2)
- B. Our forefathers spoke to this great truth;
 - 1. Delegate John Francis Mercer affirmed: "It is a great mistake to suppose that the paper we are to propose will govern the United States. It is the men whom it will bring into the government and interest they have in maintaining it that are to govern them. The paper will only mark out the mode and the form. Men are the substance and must do the business."
 - 2. A century before the founders, William Penn when creating the government of Pennsylvania said; "Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them; and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined too. Wherefore governments rather depend upon men than men upon governments. Let men be good and the government cannot be bad...But if men be bad, let the government be never so good, they will endeavor to warp and spoil it to their turn."
 - 3. Declaration signer Samuel Adams stated; "He who is void of virtuous attachments in private life is, or very soon will be, void of all regard of his country. There is seldom an instance of a man guilty of betraying

his country who had not before lost the feeling of moral obligations in his private connections...The public cannot be too curious concerning the characters of public men.”

4. Signer and penman of the Constitution Gouverneur Morris said; “There must be religion. When that ligament is torn, society is disjointed and its members perish. The nation is exposed to foreign violence and domestic convulsion. Vicious rulers, chosen by vicious people, turn back the current of corruption to its source. Placed in a situation where they can exercise authority for their own benefit they betray their trust. They take bribes. They sell statutes and decrees. They sell honor and office. They sell their conscience. They sell their country...But the most important of all lessons is the denunciation of ruin to every State that rejects the precepts of religion.”
5. Signer of the Declaration John Witherspoon stated; “Those who wish well to the State ought to choose to places of trust men of inward principle, justified by exemplary conversation. Is it reasonable to expect wisdom from the ignorant? Fidelity from the unfaithful? Diligence and application to public business from men of careless life? Is It reasonable to commit the management of public revenue to one who hath wasted his own inheritance? Those, therefore, who pay no regard to religion and sobriety in the persons whom they sent to the legislature of any state are guilty of the greatest absurdity and will soon pay dear for their folly.”
 - a. A google of our legislators in Washington will verify what Mr Weatherspoon said so long ago.
 - b. According to a Roll Call survey of vehicles parked on Capitol Hill and at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, as of mid-March, lawmakers were carrying at least \$15,000 in outstanding tickets — ranging from expired meters to speeding camera violations — and potentially thousands of dollars more.

- c. Foreign diplomats owe over half a million dollars in unpaid parking and traffic tickets in Washington, D.C., and Russia is at the top according to a new report. (Politico)

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUALLY THEN AND NOW

A. America's rise as a successful nation was a wonder to many foreigners

1. How could a group of farmers and merchants defeat the world's greatest military power?
2. How had America established a government so quickly which was the envy of the world?

B. Many foreigners traveled to America to investigate.

C. Mr Edward Kendall came to America in 1808 from Great Britain to investigate the "why" of American success.

1. When returning to Great Britain he published a three volume work, "Travels in America."
2. Here is his description of election day in Connecticut; "At about eleven o'clock his excellency Governor Jonathan Trumbull entered the statehouse and shortly after took his place at the head of a procession which was made to a meetinghouse or church at something less than half a mile distance. The procession was on foot and was composed of the person of the governor, together with the lieutenant governor, assistants, high-sheriffs, members of the lower house of assembly, and, unless with accidental exception, all the clergy of the State...The pulpit or, as it is here called the desk, was filled by three if not four clergymen; a number which, by its form and dimensions, it was able to accommodate. Of these, one opened the service with prayer; another delivered a sermon; a third made a concluding prayer, another and a fourth pronounced a benediction. Several hymns were sung; and, among others, an occasional one (special one for that occasion.) The total number of singers was between forty and fifty. The sermon, as will

be supposed, touched upon matters of government. When all was finished, the procession returned to the state house.”

- D. God was at the center of politics which produced Christian Statesmen and a God fearing nation.
- E. Laws without law abiding citizens and leaders will corrupt a nation.
- F. Consider Israel as an example—They had great civil laws which came directly from God but note some of their rulers.
 - 1. Ahab
 - 2. Jezebel
 - 3. Manasseh
 - 4. Jeroboam
 - 5. Rehoboam
- G. In the Great Awakening Rev Charles Finney said; “The Church must take right ground in regard to politics...The time has come that Christians must vote for honest men and take consistent ground in politics...God cannot sustain this free and blessed country which we love and pray for unless the Church will take right ground. Politics are a part of a religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to the country as a part of their duty to God. It seems sometimes as if the foundations of the nation were becoming rotten, and Christians seem to act as if they thought God did not see what they do in politics. But I tell you, He does see it, and He will bless or curse this nation according to the course that they take.”
- H. To function as a nation we must remember and adhere to our text verse; “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn” (Proverbs 29:2)