

**GOSPEL AND
GOVERNMENT; THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
THE CHRISTIAN STATE**

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Gospel and Government; The Development of the Christian State by Wilson Lloyd Bevan

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WILSON LLOYD BEVAN

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CHRISTIAN STATE

BY

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JC 341
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Fils of "A Friend"
thro' Domestic + Foreign Masonry
Society

TO VIND
AMERICAN

PREFACE

The Gospel contains no prescriptions as to Government, therefore the title of this work might be considered misleading. It is not a mere paradox. All that it is intended to suggest is that the people who have accepted the Gospel have also developed a type of government which, because those who have created it adhere to the tenets of Christianity, may be called with at least historical justification a Christian government.

The Christian world has adopted democracy and constitutional rule as the highest ideals of government. Why is it that under Islam, Buddhism, and other great religions no advance was made in the conception or practice of government? To answer this query requires an explanation, and the most satisfactory explanation is given by history. Christian doctrines, theories and ethics might be taken as a starting point, and they could be shown to result in the kind of individual and social life that the world to-day is striving to obtain. A more convincing, and a more instructive method, is to abide by the witness of history, and show in historical events and movements the origins and the causes that have made the modern Christian State. People in all civilized nationalities are con-

vinced that their social obligations can be best attained through a certain kind of government. This government must be democratic and representative; its people must have freedom and education: they must practice religious liberty and toleration; they must care for the interests of the less fortunate members of society; these convictions are the product of a long and hard struggle which began in the early days of the Christian Church. They are largely the outgrowth of the persistent effort made by Christians to provide a government for their Church, and to resist the effort of a tyrannical State system, to crush their liberty. The traditions of Roman absolute rule remain strong in the crude society of the Middle Ages. Only through the training received in cultivating self-help and in resisting the excesses of a centralized and autocratic Church system was it possible for the foundations of a modern society to be securely laid. The religious revolt of the sixteenth century gave momentum to the progress of freedom and toleration, and to-day the world is witnessing a movement which gives a heightened value to the ethical and religious aims of State life.

OCTOBER, 1914.

W. L. B.

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CHAPTER I

Attitude of the Early Church Towards the State. The Persecutions.

Unlike the Old Testament the earliest Christian records collected in the New Testament canon give no definite directions on the subject of the political ideals of a regenerated humanity. It is plain that the Old Testament writers approved of a monarchy modified by a clerical oligarchy. This arrangement does not represent the so-called Mosaic code, but it is a fair description of the kind of government that met with the approval of the Jewish people during the longest period of their historical existence. Although they lost their liberty they never lost their attachment to clericalism and it is fair to say in the time of Jesus that the Jews looked forward to the establishment of an oligarchy composed of a king and a council of clerical advisers strong enough to lead him.