

**QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.-V. THE  
AMERICAN CITIZEN'S MANUAL.  
PART II. THE FUNCTIONS OF  
GOVERNMENTS (STATE AND  
FEDERAL)**

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**WORTHINGTON C. FORD**

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**The American Citizen's Manual, Part I. The Functions of  
Government:** considered with special reference to national, State,  
and local governments, the electorate, the civil service, etc., etc., etc.  
Edited by **WORTHINGTON C. FORD.**  
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*QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.—V.*

THE  
American Citizen's Manual

PART II

THE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENTS

(STATE AND FEDERAL)

BY

WORTHINGTON C. FORD



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# American Citizen's Manual

[PART II.]

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## CHAPTER I.

### PROTECTION TO LIFE AND PROPERTY.

The primary object of government is to protect the life and property of its subjects; and all the functions of government are intended to be used for attaining this object. In a society advanced in civilization, where the interests, occupations, and standing of its members are so different, it is natural that questions of right and of privilege should continually arise; and unless there was the proper machinery to define and realize these rights, the society would soon break up in discord. It must be recognized that in a society for every right that a member possesses there is a corresponding duty; that freedom is never separated from responsibility. Thus if I wish my property to be respected, I must respect the property of others; if I am to remain uninjured, I must not do hurt to my neighbor. And while at first sight it seems that by incurring such obligations, by entering into a society the liberty of the individual is lessened, a closer and more just examination will show that it is increased, and unless these

obligations were assumed, liberty could not exist. For every man would be forced to devote his whole time and energies to defending his life and property, and in such a condition little or no advance could be made in civilization.

Government is instituted to give that protection to life and property which could not be obtained so efficiently by any other means ; and the whole powers of government are directed to this end. Thus the constitution of Alabama recites that "the sole and only legitimate end of government is to protect the citizen in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property ; and when the government assumes other functions it is usurpation and oppression" (art. i, § 37). "All men," say many of the State constitutions, "are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights ; among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties ; that of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property," etc. These rights are protected by a general provision in the Federal Constitution : "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."<sup>1</sup> And so jealously is the liberty of the citizen guarded that the Constitution, as will be shown, expressly defines what is meant by "due process of law."

In what manner government has protected the

<sup>1</sup> The constitution of Kentucky says that "absolute, arbitrary power over the lives, liberty, and property of freemen exists nowhere in a republic—not even in the largest majority."