

The Government of God



Democracy,
Dictatorship, or
Republic?
Part 1

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1. The Forms of Government

Late on a September day in 1787, an old man stepped out of the door of a large and grand building in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As he left the building, along with the thirty or forty other delegates to the constitutional convention, a woman stepped up to him.

"Dr. Franklin," said Mrs. Powell. "What kind of government have you given us?"

Benjamin Franklin, at 81, the oldest and most revered delegate to the convention, looked at Mrs. Powell solemnly before replying, "A republic, if you can keep it."

A republic? Yes, the founding fathers created a republic, but we have not kept it. Today we are told by virtually everyone that the United States is a democracy, and, it is added, that this is what the founding fathers intended. The United States is currently at war in more than 76 countries of the world. The purpose of these wars, we are told, is to protect our freedom and democracy and to spread the democracy of our founding fathers to the rest of the world.

But anyone who believes that the the founding fathers were pro-democracy or that they created a democratic republic is woefully ignorant of history and the writings and beliefs of these men. The fact is that the founding fathers were unanimous in condemning democracy.

James Madison, often thought of as the "father of the Constitution," wrote in the Federalist Papers No. 10 "(D)emocracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they are violent in their deaths."

http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_10.html

Alexander Hamilton agreed. In a speech given in June of 1788 he said, "The ancient democracies in which the people themselves deliberated never possessed one good feature of government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity." <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

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During the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Edmund Randolph said, "...that in tracing these evils to their origin every man had found it in the turbulence and follies of democracy." <http://www.americantraditions.org/Articles/Why%20Our%20Founders%20Feared%20a%20Democracy.htm>

John Adams, the second president of the United States, said, "Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There was never a democracy yet that did not commit suicide." <http://www.americantraditions.org/Articles/Why%20Our%20Founders%20Feared%20a%20Democracy.htm>

Chief Justice John Marshall wrote, "Between a balanced republic and a democracy, the difference is like that between order and chaos." <http://www.americantraditions.org/Articles/Why%20Our%20Founders%20Feared%20a%20Democracy.htm>

Thomas Jefferson, the third president, said "The majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime, abuses its strength, and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundations of society." <http://www.matrixbookstore.biz/tobacco6.htm>

Fisher Ames, a member of Congress during the eight years that George Washington was president, wrote an essay called "the Mire of Democracy." In it, he said that the framers of the Constitution "intended our government should be a republic, which differs more widely from a democracy than a democracy from despotism." *Peter S. Field, The Crisis of the Standing Order, page 86.*

These are just some of the statements that exist from the founders of the United States proving their abhorrence of democracy. Why were they so opposed to democracy? Is not a republic and a democracy the same thing? No, they are very different and we would do well to consider the differences.

A democracy is rule by the majority, in a true democracy the people themselves debate the issues and create the laws as well as execute the punishments. Democracy can become a free for all with confusion reigning. Whatever the majority wants is the law. This means that the minority is not heard and has no voice. If the majority decides a person is worthy of death, that person dies. This implies confidence in the inherent goodness of man and that the majority is always right. There is enormous potential for abuse in this system and the individual who disagrees with the majority is suppressed, degraded, and treated as dirt, because the majority disagrees with him. In a Democracy the majority is the law, the majority is supreme. A democracy is a dictatorship of the majority.

Always in history a democracy has descended rapidly into a dictatorship. A dictatorship is rule by a single individual, or a single group of individuals, or it can be a single party. Even a true democracy is a dictatorship. A monarchy, a diarchy, a triumvirate, or an oligarchy, are all forms of a dictatorship. A country

under martial law is a dictatorship of the military. In a dictatorship the dictator is the law. While most dictatorships have written laws in their lands, this law is subject to the ruler or rulers and can be changed at will. The dictator is supreme. If the dictator says a person is worthy of death, that person dies. The individual loses all dignity in this system and becomes a dispensable pawn to the whim of the ruler. The people are the slaves of the government.

A true republic is different. The power is with the people. A republic is ruled by representatives elected by the people to represent them. The law is supreme and all, even the leaders, are subject to it. A republic does not let the majority rule. Minorities are protected and have a voice. Criminals are tried according to the law and are judged by a jury of their peers. A republic protects the rights of all and the rulers govern by the consent of the governed.

I think Walter E. Williams says it best in his article *Democracy Versus Liberty*. “What’s the difference between republican and democratic forms of government? John Adams captured the essence when he said, ‘You have rights antecedent to all earthly governments; rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws; rights derived from the Great Legislator of the Universe.’ That means Congress does not grant us rights; their job is to protect our natural or God-given rights... Contrast the framers’ vision of a republic with that of a democracy. Webster defines a democracy as ‘government by the people; especially: rule of the majority.’ In a democracy, the majority rules either directly or through its elected representatives. As in a monarchy, the law is whatever the government determines it to be. Laws do not represent reason. They represent force. The restraint is upon the individual instead of government. Unlike that envisioned under a republican form of government, rights are seen as privileges and permissions that are granted by government and can be rescinded by government.” <http://www.creators.com/conservative/walter-williams/democracy-versus-liberty.html>.

When you understand that a democracy, and even a democratic republic, is truly a dictatorship, then we really only have two basic forms of government, dictatorship and republic. One gives absolute power to one individual or group, while the other guarantees freedom and justice to all. The problem comes when these forms of government are not clearly defined and their definitions become mixed. The founders of the United States differentiated between them clearly, but today the terms republic and democracy have become mixed up and the law is whatever the majority think it should be.

If you look at the definition of the word democracy in a modern dictionary you will find that it lists democracy and republic as meaning the same thing. This is the definition we find in the 1913 Webster’s dictionary “Democracy (1): Government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is retained and directly exercised by the people. (2): Government by popular representation; a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, but is indirectly exercised through a system of representation and

delegated authority periodically renewed; a constitutional representative government; a republic. (3): Collectively, the people, regarded as the source of government. (4): The principles and policy of the Democratic party, so called.”

But when we look at the 1828 edition of Webster’s we find a radically different definition. “Democracy, Government by the people; a form of government, in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of the people collectively, or in which the people exercise the powers of legislation. Such was the government of Athens.”

Looking up the word republic in the 1828 edition of Webster’s, we see a clear distinction of definition. “A commonwealth; a state in which the exercise of the sovereign power is lodged in representatives elected by the people. In modern usage, it differs from a democracy or democratic state, in which the people exercise the powers of sovereignty in person. Yet the democracies of Greece are often called republics.”

When we look up the definition in a modern dictionary we find republic and democracy listed as synonyms. But when you consider the statements we quoted earlier, from the founders of the United States, it is clear that they saw a decided difference between the two. For some reason our definitions have become muddled, so we don’t know what we are talking about anymore.

The ancient city of Athens, in Greece, had a democracy at one time. But it only lasted for about 20 years. Those were twenty very turbulent years for Athens, with much unrest and disturbance from the classes who were in the minority and felt that they had no voice in their government. After 20 years of unrest and riots, a dictator from the popular party, took control, and ruled the city with supreme power. But after 30 years the dictatorship became so oppressive that the people rebelled and overthrew it. This time they established a republic, which, confusingly, was also called a democracy. This is why the cities of Greece are often called republics and democracies interchangeably. This republic was stable and lasted 170 years until Alexander the Great’s father conquered the Greek cities in 338 BC.

Bolshevik and Soviet Communism are examples of party dictatorship. Stalin, of course, became an individual dictator under Soviet Communism. What is ironic is that all the communist block, dictatorship, countries called themselves republics. However, the state, controlled by the communist party, determined what the law was and what the rights of the citizens were. For this reason, it is not the names we call these forms of government that are important, it is their definitions. The majority of governments throughout this world’s history have been dictatorships of one form or another.

So what did the founders of the United State think of when they used the term republic? A republic is a government that rules by the consent of the people who are being governed. The government of a republic is run by elected representatives. One of the most important differences between a republic and a

democracy or dictatorship, is the supremacy of law. In a republic, the individual is valued and has rights that cannot be violated by the government, the minority have a voice that is heard.

One of the principles of the republic of the United States was the right to trial by jury. This means that a person accused of a crime is judged by a panel of twelve of his peers. These are people from similar circumstances, who would be better able to understand the situation and influences that would cause the accused to act as he did. The judge simply presides over the trial to keep order and inform the jury of the applicable law in the case. In the case of a Federal crime the accused is judged by a grand jury of sixteen to twenty-three people, unless he waves his right to trial by jury.

A republic recognizes the dignity and intelligence of the individual. It appeals to reason, right and justice. It elevates man to a position of respect and responsibility and recognizes the ability of people to govern themselves and to be reasonable. However, the founders of the United States also recognized that man possesses a fallen nature and will grab power if he can. This is why they created checks and balances in the government to limit the ability of one person to grab dictatorial power.

In order to govern themselves effectively the people must be educated in how the government system works and how to utilize it in the best way to protect the rights of all under the law. For this reason education was a cornerstone of the United States republic.

So, why are we discussing secular government systems in an article on the government of God? It is simply to define our terms and understand the forms of government that exist. Admittedly, in actual usage in history these terms are not as clearly and distinctly defined as we have made them here. It seems that almost all governments have been a mix of republic and dictatorship. But this has always been Satan's tactic, to mix the right and the wrong, the truth and the error, the light and the dark.

The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church recognized that the United States was a republic and they recognized it's republicanism as a divine principle akin to protestantism. We see this understanding in their interpretation of the two horns of the beast in Revelation 13. They recognized these two horns to be republicanism and protestantism. They understood these to be the principles of civil and religious liberty on which the United States had been founded.

We read in the book "The United States in the Light of Prophecy," by Uriah Smith, "A republican form of government is one in which the power rests with the people, and the whole machinery of government is worked by representatives elected by them. And here, again, we see the fitness between the symbol and the government which is symbolized; for the horns of the two-horned beast have no crowns upon them as do the horns of the dragon and

leopard beast, showing that the government which it represents cannot be monarchical, but is one in which the power is vested in the hands of the people. This is a sufficient guarantee of civil liberty.” *The United States In the Light of Prophecy*, page 73.

“Here, then, are two great principals standing prominently before the people: *Republicanism* and *Protestantism*. And what can be more just, and innocent, and lamb-like, than these? And here, also, is the secret of our strength and power.” *The United States In the Light of Prophecy*, page 77.

We find in inspiration the same idea of the two horns representing these two principles. “The lamb-like horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as ‘coming up’ in 1798. The Christian exiles who first fled to America, sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance, and they determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. The Declaration of Independence sets forth the great truth that ‘all men are created equal,’ and endowed with the inalienable right to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. **Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity.** The oppressed and down-trodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.” *The Great Controversy, 1888 edition, page 441.*

The United States was not a perfect republic, but it was founded on a pure principle. We read in the Testimonies, “These brethren cannot receive the approval of God while they lack sympathy for the oppressed colored race and are at variance with **the pure, republican principles of our Government.** God has no more sympathy with rebellion upon earth than with the rebellion in heaven, when the great rebel questioned the foundation of God’s government and was thrust out with all who sympathized with him in his rebellion.” *Testimonies Vol. 1, page 533.*

While the founders of the United States understood the principles of republican government and the purity of it, they did not fully adopt those principles. Not recognizing the new testament principle that there is “neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female,” *Galations 3:28*, they kept half the population in subjection by allowing only men to vote, and kept the enslaved black race tied to their bonds and excluded from the rights of citizenship. This fatal error on the part of the founders led, years later, to the civil war and the beginning of the usurpation of dragon like power by the federal government.

Revelation speaks of this lamb like beast changing it’s gentle profession and

speaking as a dragon. The dragon represents Rome in its pagan form. What type of government did Rome possess? For a time it was a republic but it degenerated into a dictatorship under the Caesars. This was the reason for Benjamin Franklin's comment, "if you can keep it." No one knew better than the founders of the United States how hard it is to keep a republic. This was why they set up checks and balances in the system.

Today we are taught that the United States is and was intended to be a democracy. A democracy is but one step removed from a despotic dictatorship. In the last thirty years the Protestant Evangelicals have gained control in the government and they have systematically removed all the checks and balances put in place by the founders of this country. Today the president has dictatorial powers. The power of the dragon.

We read in inspiration, "By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, **our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions**, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near. *Testimonies Vol. 5, page 451.*

Ironically the party being controlled by the Protestant Evangelicals, who have united with conservative Catholics, is called the republican party. But it is republican only in name. By removing checks and balances and giving the president unlimited power they have given up the very essence of their innocent and lamb-like profession. The delusion today is that the United States was intended to be a democracy, when nothing could be further from the truth.

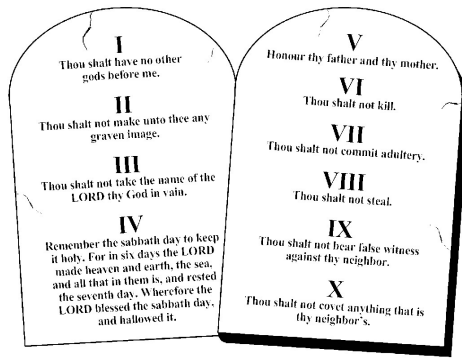
Today the president has supreme power. He is above the law and not subject to it. He has been given the power to determine life or death for US citizens. The civil courts and the right to trial by jury have been swept aside, while their form remains. If the president has you on his list, you will die, with no chance to defend yourself. This is the essence of the dragon. This is the power of the dictator.

So, we see two basic forms of government, a dictatorship and a republic. A dictatorship creates a nation of slaves, subject to the supreme power of the dictator, be that dictator a single person, a group of people, a party, or the majority of the populace. The principles of a true republic provide for the freedom of the individual, liberty and justice for all. Even those accused of a crime have rights in a republic.

But there is another form of government we have not discussed. This form is the theocracy. What is a theocracy? "Government of a state by the immediate

direction of God; or the state thus governed. Of this species the Israelites furnish an illustrious example. The theocracy lasted till the time of Saul.” *Webster’s Dictionary, 1828 Edition.*

A theocracy is where the civil and religious government are united and controlled directly by God. One would assume that, being under the direct authority of God, this would be a divine dictatorship. But is this what we really find in the Bible? Which form of government is according to God’s order? Is not God sovereign dictator of all? Doesn’t He demand 100% obedience from all His creation?



2. The Law

Eric Liddel was born to evangelical missionary parents in China. He became a fast runner and England's hope for the gold medal in the 100 meter race at the 1924 Olympic Games. But when he found out that the heats for this race were to be held on a Sunday, he refused to run, because he believed it was the Lord's day. He entered the 400 meter race instead and won the gold, in spite of the fact that he had never trained for the 400 meter. After the Olympics he returned as a missionary to China and died in a Japanese internment camp during World War II.

The movie "Chariots of Fire" tells the story of the English Olympic team of 1924. Eric Liddel is depicted as a sincere, Bible believing, Evangelical Christian, as he was. But in one scene of the movie Eric's father tells Eric, "God is a dictator, son, He doesn't ask you what you think." This concept of God as Sovereign Dictator of the universe, reigning over all with absolute and arbitrary authority, pervades Evangelical Christianity today. But does the evidence of inspiration support this concept of God's dictatorial theocracy?

We saw in part 1 that there are basically two forms of government, the dictatorship and the republic. The basic difference between these two forms of government are the rule of law versus the rule of arbitrary authority, be that authority a single individual, a party, or the majority of the population. In a republic the people have rights that are inalienable, they cannot be removed, without specific, legal and just cause.

The first thing to consider in establishing which form of government the administration of heaven takes is the question of what is supreme in heaven's government? Is God supreme or is the law supreme? On what is the authority of His government built? Is it built on the law or is it built on His power?

We find a clue to this from Jesus' own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." *Matthew 5:17.*

We find another clue in the sanctuary service which was “the patterns of things in the heavens,” *Hebrews 9:23*. Notice what was in the most holy place. The object toward which the people worshiped and the thing most sacred to all the sanctuary services was the law, written on tables of stone and housed in the golden ark. Every service in the sanctuary and worship of the Jewish dispensation dealt with remedying the fact that man had broken the law.

None of the pagan worship forms held the law as the basis of their worship. In pagan temples and ceremonies it was about an idol that represented an all powerful and divine being whom the people were trying to appease with their sacrifices and offerings. The basic difference in the worship of God versus the worship of the pagan deities was the supremacy of the law. God’s worship dealt with an atonement for a broken law while the pagan worship was all about appeasing an offended dictator.

Here we see clearly the exact same contrast between the religion of Israel and the religion of the pagan world, as we see between the genuine republic and the dictatorship. In both the religion of Israel and a true republic, the law is above all. In all other forms of religion and government, authority and worship are based on arbitrary power.

Why would the law take such a prominent place in the Jewish service as to be the object housed in the Ark of the covenant? The reason for this is that the law is the foundation of God’s government. This is why it is placed within the throne of God, of which the earthly ark was a representation.

“The moral law was never a type or a shadow. It existed before man’s creation, and will endure as long as God’s throne remains. God could not change nor alter one precept of his law in order to save man; for the law is the **foundation of his government**. It is unchangeable, unalterable, infinite, and eternal. In order for man to be saved, and for the honor of the law to be maintained, it was necessary for the Son of God to offer himself as a sacrifice for sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He died for us on Calvary. His death shows the wonderful love of God for man, and the immutability of his law.” *Review and Herald, April 22, 1902.*

The law itself is a transcript of God’s character.

“Be perfect as God is perfect. **The law is but a transcript of the character of God.** Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, page 77.*

“The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth.” *Steps to Christ, page 60.*

When God commands His created beings to keep the law, He is commanding them to become like Himself. If the law is a transcript of God’s character then He Himself must keep it perfectly.

“God cannot lie.” *Spirit of Prophecy Vol. 4, page 319.*

If God cannot lie, wouldn't it follow that He cannot break any one of the ten commandments?

“God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. His law is truth—unchanging, eternal truth. His precepts are consistent with His attributes. But Satan makes them appear in a false light. By perverting them he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of God. Throughout his rebellion he has sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being.” *Christ Triumphant, page 291.*

“How wise was the arrangement of God to preserve a knowledge of himself in the earth by giving man **his holy law, which was the foundation of his government in heaven and in earth**, and by connecting with it a system of worship that would be a continual reminder of a coming Saviour. While darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord had a humble few who acknowledged his sovereignty by respecting and obeying **the constitution of his kingdom, the ten commandments**. Through the ages of idolatry and apostasy, the promise of a Messiah kept the star of hope shining in the darkened moral heavens until the time came for Christ to make his first advent.” *Review and Herald, March 2, 1886.*

God's government is constitutional in form, meaning that the law is supreme and must be kept by all. In other words, God's government is a genuine republic. Even God Himself is subject to the law. But how can that be? Think about it a little bit. The highest possible evidence that the supreme ruler of the universe is subject to His own constitution is the fact that Christ had to die for man's transgression. He made Himself subject to the penalty of that broken law, for man. If God was supreme and above His law then He could have changed it to save man but this was impossible for Him to do.

“But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to ‘magnify the law’ and to ‘make it honorable.’ **Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God's law is unchangeable.** Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up his life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable. And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God.” *Great Controversy 1888 edition, page 503.*

God cannot change His law because the law is supreme and above all.

“Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements. There are some who represent it as a grievous yoke, and in contrast to the bondage of the law they present the

liberty to be enjoyed under the gospel.” *Great Controversy page 466.*

“But not so did prophets and apostles regard the holy law of God. Said David: ‘I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts.’ Psalm 119:45. The apostle James, who wrote after the death of Christ, refers to the Decalogue as ‘the royal law’ and ‘the perfect law of liberty.’ James 2:8; 1:25. And the revelator, half a century after the crucifixion, pronounces a blessing upon them ‘that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’ Revelation 22:14.” *Great Controversy page 466.*

“The claim that Christ by His death abolished His Father’s law is without foundation. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from abolishing the law, proves that it is immutable. The Son of God came to ‘magnify the law, and make it honorable.’ Isaiah 42:21. He said: ‘Think not that I am come to destroy the law;’ ‘till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.’ Matthew 5:17, 18. And concerning Himself He declares: ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ Psalm 40:8.” *Great Controversy page 466.*

“The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. ‘Love is the fulfilling of the law.’ Romans 13:10. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: ‘Thy law is the truth:’ ‘all Thy commandments are righteousness.’ Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares: ‘The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’ Romans 7:12. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.” *Great Controversy page 466.*

“Sanctification is obtained only in obedience to the will of God. Many who are willfully trampling upon the law of Jehovah claim holiness of heart and sanctification of life. But they have not a saving knowledge of God or of His law. They are standing in the ranks of the great rebel. He is at war with **the law of God, which is the foundation of the divine government in heaven and in the earth.** These men are doing the same work as their master has done in seeking to make of none effect God’s holy law. No commandment-breaker can be permitted to enter heaven; for he who was once a pure and exalted covering cherub was thrust out for rebelling against the government of God.” *Faith and Works, page 29.*

“God had provided for His people a sanctuary of awful grandeur, befitting the mighty truths committed to their trust. To those faithful exiles the mountains were an emblem of the immutable righteousness of Jehovah. They pointed their children to the heights towering above them in unchanging majesty, and spoke to them of Him with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, whose word is as enduring as the everlasting hills. God had set fast the mountains and girded them with strength; no arm but that of Infinite Power

could move them out of their place. In like manner **He had established His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and upon earth. The arm of man might reach his fellow men and destroy their lives; but that arm could as readily uproot the mountains from their foundations, and hurl them into the sea, as it could change one precept of the law of Jehovah, or blot out one of His promises to those who do His will.** In their fidelity to His law, God's servants should be as firm as the unchanging hills." *Great Controversy page 66.*

When we think of a constitution we think of a document that guarantees the rights of the citizens. Under the constitution of the United States we have the right to self governance through representatives, the right of free speech, the right to worship God according to our conscience, the right to bear arms, the right to trial by jury, and so forth. In the Declaration of Independence the inalienable rights of man are listed as being the rights to life, liberty, and property (Jefferson's original draft was later changed by congress to read "pursuit of happiness" instead of property).

But when we think of the ten commandments we think of a list of do's and dont's. How can this be the constitution of a government? But wait a minute, let's stop and look at this document for a minute.

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." *Exodus 20:3.*
2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." *Exodus 20:4-6.*
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." *Exodus 20:7.*
4. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." *Exodus 20:8-11.*
5. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." *Exodus 20:12.*
6. "Thou shalt not kill." *Exodus 20:13.*

7. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” *Exodus 20:14*.
8. “Thou shalt not steal.” *Exodus 20:15*.
9. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” *Exodus 20:16*.
10. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.” *Exodus 20:17*.

Jesus summed this law up as “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” *Matthew 22:37-40*.

But does this law convey rights to the citizens of God’s government? Yes, it does. When you look at the ten commandments, they easily split into two groups. The first four are man’s duty to God, the last six are man’s duty to his fellow man. The first four are really setting forth rights of God and the last six are setting forth the rights of His created beings.

The rights that belong to God are the right to the worship, love, and reverence of His creatures. Why does God have the right to be worshiped? Because He is the Creator. No other being in the universe has this right to be worshiped.

“As regards our responsibility and influence, we are amenable to God as deriving our life from Him. This we do not obtain from humanity, but from God only. We are His by creation and by redemption. Our very bodies are not our own, to treat as we please, to cripple by habits that lead to decay, making it impossible to render to God perfect service. Our lives and all our faculties belong to Him. He is caring for us every moment; He keeps the living machinery in action; if we were left to run it for one moment, we should die. We are absolutely dependent upon God.” *Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 56*.

God has the right to be God. He has this right because He is the creator, He owns all of creation. He alone has the right to be worshiped. His rights as Creator and Sovereign of the universe are protected under the first four commandments.

What rights are given to His creatures? Created beings are given the right to property. “Thou shalt not steal, and “thou shalt not covet,” both guarantee the right to property. We are promised that the redeemed “shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat.” *Isaiah 65:21-22*. This is clearly the right to property, one of the principles of the divine kingdom.

“Thou shalt not kill,” grants the right to life. Along with this is the right to honor and respect, in the commandment “Thou shalt honor thy father and thy

mother.” We can also add to this the right to the fidelity of our spouse in the seventh commandment.

We find the right to truth in the command “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” We also find the right to liberty in the command not to covet. This is because individual liberty is always restricted by those who covet power and the possessions of others.

“They need to understand that these inestimable blessings are to be enjoyed only in obedience to the law of God. **This law is the preserver of true freedom and liberty.** It points out and prohibits those things that degrade and enslave, and thus to the obedient it affords protection from the power of evil. The psalmist says: ‘I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts.’ ‘Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.’ Psalm 119:45, 24.” *Education, page 291.*

We see plainly that the last six commandments guarantee to all created intelligences the rights of life, liberty, and property, that men everywhere hold dear.

“There are rights which belong to every individual. We have an individuality and an identity that is our own. No one can submerge his identity in that of any other. All must act for themselves, according to the dictates of their own conscience.” *Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 56.*

These commandments give to man a dignity, honor and respect that far surpasses anything man could have devised. God promises that, “I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” *Isaiah 13:12.*

Clearly the government of God is constitutional in form. It fits the first aspect of a true republic, as the founders of the United States understood it. In God’s government law is supreme above all and both God and His created beings are guaranteed rights under that law. In fact, the entire focus of redemption and salvation has been to remedy that broken law.

But is God’s government a constitutional monarchy? To truly be a republic, it must also be governed by a council of representatives. Do we find this council in the government of heaven? Or is God a type of dictator, dictating to His created beings what they shall do and think, albeit, within the restrictions of His law?



3. The Council

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” *Job 1:6-8*.

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.” *Job 2:1-3*.

So far we have considered the various forms of government and have reduced them down to two. One form is the dictatorship, where authority is derived from arbitrary power and the dictator is supreme, be that dictator a single individual, a group of individuals, or the majority of the citizens. The second form is the true republic.

In a true republic the law is supreme, all are subject to it, and there are certain rights granted to its citizens that cannot be taken away without just cause. We saw in our last study that in God’s government law is supreme above all and the entire focus of redemption and salvation has been to remedy that broken law. We have firmly established that God’s government meets the first aspect of a

republic. But there is more to a true republic than the supremacy of law. A republic is governed by representatives of the citizens. The question to be answered now is whether or not God's government is representative or dictatorial in form. God's government is constitutional, but is it a constitutional dictatorship?

In answering this question, let's consider first those two horns on the lamb in Revelation 13. We know these two horns are the principles of Protestantism and Republicanism. The lamb is a representation of Jesus. This symbol in Revelation is lamb like, meaning it resembles Jesus and we saw in part 1 that the Spirit of Prophecy calls these principles pure and right. If this beast resembles the lamb by abiding by two principles that are pure, it would follow that the principle of republicanism is one of the principles of the lamb's government.

Remember the story of Job and how the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord? In this story the veil is pulled aside from heaven and we catch a brief glimpse into the inner workings of God's government. Who were these "sons of God," who presented themselves before God at certain times and what were they doing? We know from the story that this meeting of the "sons of God" occurred on a regular and frequent basis.

There is an interesting passage in Luke that gives us a clue as to who the sons of God might be. "Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." *Luke 3:38*.

There are other passages which refer to all of God's followers as "sons of God." But it would not be reasonable to think that this meeting in heaven took place with the followers of God on this earth. The passage in Luke indicates that there is a special designation and distinction that belonged to Adam alone as the son of God. He was the first created being on this planet.

The Spirit of Prophecy calls these sons of God angels. "The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous." *Darkness Before Dawn, page 5*.

But further on in Job it indicates that there is a distinction between these sons of God and the angels. We read of creation in Job 38, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." *Job 38:7*.

The morning stars would be the angels, for we read in *Revelation 1:20* "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches:"

If the morning stars are the angels, who are these sons of God? Inspiration tells us that there are more worlds which have not fallen into sin as this one has.

"The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and

lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, ‘We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth.’ Then I saw two trees, one looked much like the tree of life in the city. The fruit of both looked beautiful, but of one they could not eat. They had power to eat of both, but were forbidden to eat of one. Then my attending angel said to me, ‘None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree; but if they should eat, they would fall.’” *Early Writings, page 39.*

Just as on this earth, before the fall, Satan has access to these unfallen beings only at the forbidden tree, which is present on each planet.

“Here he will be confined, to wander up and down over the broken surface of the earth and see the effects of his rebellion against God’s law. For a thousand years he can enjoy the fruit of the curse which he has caused. Limited alone to the earth, he will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen.” *Early Writings, page 290.*

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise and honor and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan has brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is mediating in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by His mediatorial work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?” *Messages to Young People, page 254.*

Let’s put these pieces together now. First, we know that each planet was created with a tree of life and a tree of knowledge. Second, we know that Satan has access to each planet at the tree of knowledge. Third, we know that Adam, the first created being on this planet, was given dominion over it and was made king of this world. Fourth, the Bible calls Adam the son of God, and distinguishes this designation from that of the angels of God. Fifth, there are other sons of God who come before Him on a regular basis for a meeting of some kind.

If the other created worlds follow a similar pattern to this one, as it appears they do, then the first created being on each one would have the dominion of that planet and be designated the son of God. From Job we see that these sons of God gather together periodically before Him in heaven. It would appear that they form a sort of regular representative council to which Satan comes and presents himself with them.

Why would Satan even be permitted into this heavenly council after being cast out of heaven? Satan was cast out of heaven and His angels with him. The only way he could gain access again was to become the representative of a planet. “Adam and Eve were placed on trial and failed. . . . Satan deceived Eve, and she disobeyed God. The holy pair, not resisting temptation, were brought under Satan’s jurisdiction. The enemy gained supremacy over the human race, bringing in death, the penalty of disobedience.” *Christ Triumphant, page 289.*

When Adam fell, he yielded his dominion of this earth to Satan and Satan became the representative of this planet at the council, where he used his place there to accuse the followers of God on earth. This is portrayed in the story of Job and that of Joshua the high priest.

“In the presence of the unfallen worlds, in the presence of the universe of heaven, in the presence of the angry adversary who has painted them in robes of blackness and moral defilement, urging that they be given into his hands, Jesus answered Satan’s malignant charge whereby he accused them before God day and night. To those who stood before Him, earnestly watching the controversy and marking the determination of Satan to destroy the righteous, Jesus spoke, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.’ Manuscript 27, 1894.” *Christ Triumphant, page 186.*

“Mighty issues for the world were at stake in the conflict between the Prince of light and the leader of the kingdom of darkness. After tempting man to sin, Satan claimed the earth as his, and styled himself the prince of this world. Having conformed to his own nature the father and mother of our race, he thought to establish here his empire. He declared that men had chosen him as their sovereign. Through his control of men, he held dominion over the world. Christ had come to disprove Satan’s claim. As the Son of man, Christ would stand loyal to God. Thus it would be shown that Satan had not gained complete control of the human race, and that his claim to the world was false. All who desired deliverance from his power would be set free. The dominion that Adam had lost through sin would be recovered.” *Desire of Ages, page 114.*

By His death on the cross, Christ won the victory and Satan was again cast out of the heavenly councils. This is the conflict John is talking about in Revelation 12.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” *Revelation 12:7-9*

While we have always understood this passage to be referring to the war in heaven before the creation of the world, the Adventist pioneers did not

understand it thus.

Speaking of Revelation 12, Uriah Smith says, “It is held by some that this war took place when Satan, then an angel of light and glory, rebelled in Heaven; and that the ‘casting out’ of which John speaks, was his expulsion from Heaven at that time. But we are unable to harmonize this view with the testimony before us... Again, there seem to be a number of instances in which Satan is spoken of as defeated or cast down. One was his first rejection from Heaven; another when Christ overcame him at his first advent; and there will be another in the future when he is cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up for a thousand years. And on each successive occasion, we behold a regularly increasing limitation of his power. He falls a degree lower in every succeeding combat.” *Thoughts on Revelation, 1881 Edition, page 256-257.*

Remember that *Thoughts on Revelation* was not the result of Smith’s private study and interpretation of Revelation. It was the result of the studies of the Sabbath School class in Battle Creek, while led by Uriah Smith, this class included other prominent SDA leaders, including James White. Smith merely edited their conclusions into book form. So this bears the weight of the opinion of the leaders of the Adventist work at that time and is of greater weight than if it was merely Smith’s private opinion.

Years later, Stephen Haskell expanded on this concept in his book *The Seer of Patmos*. “Our little planet became the center of interest among the angels, and the beings of unfallen worlds. According to the government of heaven, representatives from each world meet in council at the gate of heaven as the men of earth, for centuries after Adam was driven from the Garden, brought their offerings to the gate of Paradise. Among the sons of God who gathered there, Satan came also. Satan was a son of God by creation, and likewise, because of the earth over which he had usurped power, and bore sway. As a representative of the earth, he claimed the right to meet at the gate. There, in the midst of the heavenly assembly, he stood an accuser of the brethren. The case of Job and that of Joshua are examples of the complaints which he brought against the government of God. Over and over again, angels had listened to the accusations made against the men of earth. When Christ was living here as a man, the heavenly host watched the deep-laid plots for His overthrow; they saw the jealousy among Jewish rulers, the cruelty of the Romans; and as the cross was approached, the pain which pierced them was akin to that of their suffering Master... When from the depths of anguish, the dying Son of man exclaimed, ‘It is finished,’ in spite of the sympathy which could scarcely bear restraint, a shout of victory rang through heaven. Christ’s ‘ear caught the distant music and the shouts of victory in the heavenly courts. He knew that the death knell of Satan’s empire had sounded, and the name of Christ would be heralded from world to world throughout the universe.’ ‘And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused

them before our God day and night.’ Wonderful triumph! One loses much of the force of Christ’s life, unless he sees the actual triumph at the cross... This was a dark hour for the disciples, who stood blinded by grief beside a sealed sepulcher; but angels, who knew the power of eternal life, witnessing the exaltation of the Son of God and the final casting out of Satan, sang halleluiahs. No longer would Satan, ‘the prince of this world,’ be admitted to their councils. No longer could he accuse the brethren in their presence. ‘Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.’ This was at the time of the crucifixion; and while joy rang through heaven, and the strains echoed and re-echoed again at His ascension, the world was not yet free from the wiles of the devil. Having been cast to the earth, he put forth redoubled efforts to overthrow the truth, as it was heralded by followers of the Man of Nazareth.” *Seer of Patmos, pages 219-221*

Yet, these leaders of God’s church were not without inspired testimony as a foundation for these opinions. In the *Desire of Ages*, this very idea is confirmed. “There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. **The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled.** The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.” *Desire of Ages, page 834.*

So, when Adam fell, Satan took over the representation of this world in the council. But Christ fought with him and by His death won this world back. Now Christ, the second Adam, represents this world in the heavenly councils. What an awesome thought! The ruler of the universe is the human representative in the governing councils of heaven! Satan is cast out and can no longer accuse. It was all legally right and done with order and perfection.

Could it be that it was not God who arbitrarily cast out Satan from heaven? Could it have been the decision of the council of representatives?

“When Christ ascended and laid open before the heavenly intelligences the scene of the conflict and the fierce attacks that Lucifer made against Him to prevent Him from accomplishing His work on the earth, all the prevarications and accusations of him who had been an exalted angel were seen in their true light. It was seen that his professedly spotless character was deceptive. His deeply laid scheme to exalt himself to supremacy was now fully discerned. . . . **When the issue was finally settled, every unfallen being expressed indignation at the rebellion. With one voice they extolled God as righteous, merciful, self-denying, just. His law had been vindicated.**” *Christ Triumphant, page 291.*

“**In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan’s power;** for it was God’s purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. The

heavenly universe must see worked out the principles which Satan declared were superior to God's principles. God's order must be contrasted with Satan's order. The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, perfect, eternal." *Review and Herald, September 7, 1897.*

God is the executive, the presiding officer, if you will, of the council. He carries out the decisions made by the representative council. He does not make the decisions and act on His own. It was the council that accepted Christ's sacrifice and ratified His taking His place in their midst as the representative of this earth. At each point in the plan of salvation the council has been involved in the decisions. God is often spoken of as having made these decisions Himself, but we think this is because He is all knowing and knows beforehand what decision will be made. But he doesn't tell the council this, He lays before them enough evidence for them to make the correct decision and then let's them decide. In this way the liberty and rights of all are protected.

"This work of opposition to the law of God had its beginning in the courts of heaven, with Lucifer, the covering cherub. Satan determined to be first in the councils of heaven, and equal with God." *Review and Herald, January 28, 1909*

"We must remember that though they have lost their first state, the fallen angels are wise above the wisdom of earth; for they have been in the councils of heaven." *Pamphlet 20, page 3.*

"It is only by a clear discernment of spiritual things that the original apostasy can be understood... **Christ, as commander of heaven, was appointed to put down the rebellion.** Satan and all his sympathizers were cast out of heaven." *Review and Herald, May 30, 1899.*

"In the councils of heaven God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.'" *Youth Instructor, July 20, 1899.*

"In the councils of heaven, hope was furnished for the fallen race. Jesus Christ offered his life as a ransom for the lost, as the price by which he might purchase the right to re-create the sinner, and form again the image of God in the soul." *Signs of the Times, December 12, 1895.*

"In the councils of heaven it was determined that Christ should die for the sins of the whole world. He laid aside his royal crown, his royal robe, clothed his divinity with humanity, that he might touch humanity, and yet he was not received by the world." *Signs of the Times, April 16, 1894.*

"The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man's instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host, the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among

us' (John 1:14).” *Lift Him Up, page 166.*

“In the councils of heaven it was decided that the mother of the Redeemer should be a pure, pious virgin, though poor as far as earthly riches were concerned.” *Upward Look, page 94.*

“ ‘Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven’ [Matthew 5:17-19]. This is the judgment pronounced in the councils of heaven” *Manuscript Releases, Vol. 21, page 195.*

“As he shows by his unselfishness that he loves his neighbor as himself, the Lord says of him in the councils of heaven: ‘He is My faithful steward. I can trust him to handle My goods.’” *Signs of the Times, December 15, 1909.*

“The councils of heaven are looking upon you who claim to have accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, to see you make known the salvation of God to those who sit in darkness.” *Review and Herald, February 12, 1895.*

“The direction of Christ to Moses was, ‘Make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount.’ Did you ever think of it in this connection? Well, God has a pattern for his work, and it is for you and me to follow that pattern. Only when we do this, will our work be acceptable to God.” *General Conference Bulletin, February 4, 1895.*

It may have been at the point where Satan was cast out the second time and banned forever from the heavenly council that all the angels were issued the golden ID cards to present at the gate in order to enter the city. We know about these cards from inspiration:

“There is perfect order and harmony in the holy city. All the angels that are commissioned to visit the earth hold a golden card, which they present to the angels at the gates of the city as they pass in and out.” *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White, page 97.*

If the council appointed Christ, accepted His sacrifice, and cast Satan out, then it must have been the council who made the decision to issue these ID cards in order to keep Satan and his angels out of the heavenly courts.

It was this defeat and being cast out from the council and unable to accuse the people of God directly that infuriated Satan. This is why he attacked the church of Christ on earth like he had never attacked it before. This is the reason why such fierce persecution has raged since Christ’s first advent. Satan was “wroth with the woman,” determined to wipe out God’s people from the earth. This is what Satan is consolidating his forces for. He plans to wipe out Christ’s followers on earth and then to do battle with heaven and take the throne of God by force. This battle, the third and final battle in the great controversy, will be the battle of Armageddon and ends, of course, with the destruction of Satan and his forces in the lake of fire.

But getting back to this representative council. How often does it meet? It appears from Job that they meet on a regular basis and fairly frequently. Isaiah gives us a clue. “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” *Isaiah 66:23*. Could it be that the meeting during the new moon is a business meeting? It is possible and in keeping with the perfect order of heaven.

If it is indeed true that the universe is governed by a representative council, and there is every reason to believe that it is, what awesome respect God has for His created intelligences! He does not expect His creation to follow His arbitrary rule, He does not rule by force of power, although He certainly could. He expects His creatures to take part and use the brains and the reasoning power that He gave them. He doesn't say “Come now, and I will tell you what to do.” He says, “Come now, and let us reason together.” *Isaiah 1:8*.

If God's government was based on the arbitrary rule of a supreme dictator, He would have made His creatures robots and unable to resist His authority. But He did not do this.

“God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule.” *Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 49*.

One of the great principles of true republican government is rule by the consent of the governed. This principle is embodied in the government of God. His created beings yield willing, intelligent, and unforced, consent to His government. They understand and acknowledge freely how fair and equitable is the government of heaven.

So, we see the government of God is a republic made up of representatives of all created beings. Founded on law as the supreme authority, and governing by the consent of the governed. The rights and opinions of each being, protected and of value in the councils of heaven. What perfection! What fairness! What equality! What value does this give to the lowest of His creatures!

God is all knowing, all powerful, above all, He could have created an arbitrary government based on His power, but He did not. He has granted to His creatures the rights of self rule and a republican theocracy.

“The government of the kingdom of Christ is like no earthly government. It is a representation of the characters of those who compose the kingdom.”

Maranatha, page 370.

What a future He has planned for man. To bring him in as part of His government to take the place of Satan and his angels, who fell from the council.

We read in *Daniel 7:27* “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

The words kingdom and dominion in this verse both mean to rule. This would mean that the redeemed man is destined to take part in the ruling council of heaven.

“It was God’s purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family if they would show themselves obedient to His every word. Adam was to be tested, to see whether he would be obedient, as the loyal angels, or disobedient. If he stood the test, his instruction to his children would have been only of loyalty. His mind and thoughts would have been as the mind and thoughts of God.”

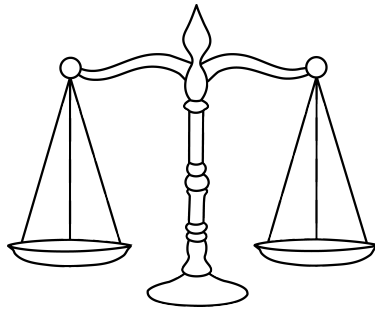
Christ Triumphant, page 26.

This was God’s purpose in the beginning and He is still planning to fulfill it through redemption. Those who are redeemed of the human family will one day take the place of the fallen angels in the councils of heaven.

“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” *Isaiah 13:12.*

As we catch a glimpse of the beauty and perfection of this order, we are lead to exclaim with the Psalmist “Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.” *Psalms 86:8-10.*

But there was a third part of true republican government that we talked about, and that was the jury trial system. The right to be judged by your peers, by those subject to similar conditions as yours, those who understand your situation. Are we being judged by an arbitrary, all powerful, and vengeful judge? Or by a jury of our peers?



4. The Jury

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold... and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come...” *Revelation 4:6-11*.

We have been considering government, with the purpose of discovering how God’s government operates and ultimately how His church should operate. So far we have reduced the various forms of government down to two. We have chosen to call these two forms the republic and the dictatorship. The basic difference in principle between these two forms is where they obtain their authority. The dictatorship is based on the authority of power. If I have more power than you do, then I have the right to rule over you. This is Satan’s concept and is the very concept he charges God with following. But the authority of a republic is not based in power, it is based in law and in the rights of the individual. Rather than being ruled by the person or persons with the most power, the republic is governed by representatives of the citizens of that government, under law. In a true republic, the law is supreme, above all, and is binding even on the leaders.

We have studied the government of heaven and discovered that it has the elements of a true republic. The law is supreme above all, decisions are made by a council of representatives, God rules by the consent of His creatures. But what happens when that supreme law is broken? Law without a penalty is worthless. The penalty of breaking the law is death. “For the wages of sin is death;” *Romans 6:23*, and sin is the transgression of the law.

“The law is the transcript of God’s character. It presents his righteousness in contrast with unrighteousness. By the law is the knowledge of sin. The law makes sin appear exceeding sinful. It condemns the transgressor, but it has no

power to save and restore him. Its province is not to pardon” *Review and Herald July 25, 1899.*

The law demands 100% obedience and death is the penalty. As long as everyone obeyed the law there was no problem. There was perfect harmony and happiness. But when the law was broken by Lucifer, there was a problem, and when Adam and Eve fell through his deception, there was an even bigger problem. Someone had to determine the guilt of the transgressor and mete out the penalty. The government of heaven needed what it had not had before, a judiciary, a court of justice. The law allowed for no forgiveness.

It is just like the law of gravity. It doesn't matter if you step off the cliff by one yard, or by one inch, the law decrees that you will go down. It doesn't matter if the power cord is only one inch away from the socket, if it isn't plugged in the light will not work. The moral law of the universe is no different. It demands 100% obedience, or death.

After bearing long with Lucifer, the governing council of heaven decided that he must be cast out. But he had been so deceptive that many council members were not sure that his accusations were not correct, so it was decided to give him a chance to demonstrate his claims of a better and improved government to see if his claims were true.

“Christ, as commander of heaven, was appointed to put down the rebellion. Satan and all his sympathizers were cast out of heaven.” *Review and Herald, May 30, 1899.*

When Lucifer was cast out there was left a great void in heaven and it was decided to create man to eventually fill that void.

“The loyal angels mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels. He was to have the favor of God, and he was to converse with angels, and they with him. He did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience.” *Signs of the Times, January 9, 1879.*

“The news of man's fall spread through Heaven—every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All Heaven was in agitation. The angels were grieved at the base ingratitude of man, in return for the rich blessings which God had bestowed upon him. A council was held to see what must be done with the guilty pair. The angels feared that they would put forth the hand, and eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate a life of sin.” *Signs of the Times, January 23, 1879.*

When man fell, all heaven was filled with sadness for they knew that man

must die.

“The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. The world that God had made was blighted with the curse of sin and inhabited by beings doomed to misery and death. There appeared no escape for those who had transgressed the law. Angels ceased their songs of praise. Throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin that sin had wrought.” *Patriarchs and Prophets page 63.*

Jesus then offered Himself to pay the penalty. He went into conference with the Father and it was decided to put their plan for salvation into action.

“Sorrow filled Heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender; the whole family of Adam must die. The heart of the Son of God was touched with pity for the lost race. Upon his lovely countenance rested an expression of sympathy and sorrow. Soon he approached the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father, and he seemed to engage in close converse with him. The anxiety of the angels was intense while Jesus thus communed with his Father. Three times he was shut in by the cloud of glory; the third time he came forth his countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express. He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that he had been pleading with his Father, and had offered to give his life a ransom, and take the sentence of death upon himself, that through him man might find pardon; that through the merits of his blood, and obedience to the law of God, man could again have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.” *Signs of the Times January 30, 1879.*

“At first the angels could not rejoice, for their Commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. He told them that he would stand between the wrath of his Father and guilty man, that he would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive him as the Son of God. He would leave all his glory in Heaven, appear upon earth as a man, become acquainted by his own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset; and, finally, after his mission as a teacher should be accomplished, he would be delivered into the hands of men, and after enduring almost every cruelty and suffering, that Satan and his angels could inspire wicked men to inflict, he would die the cruellest of deaths, hung up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. And not merely would he suffer bodily pain, but mental agony. The weight of the sins of the whole world would be upon him. He told them also that after his death he would rise again the third day, and ascend to his Father to intercede for wayward, guilty man.” *Signs of the Times January 30, 1879.*

“The angels prostrated themselves before their beloved Commander, and offered to give their lives. Jesus told them the transgression was so great that the life of an angel could not pay the debt; his life alone could be accepted by his

Father as a ransom for man. But the work of the angels was assigned them, to descend with strengthening balm from glory to soothe the Son of God in his sufferings, and to minister unto him. Also, their work would be to guard the subjects of grace from the evil angels, and the darkness constantly thrown around them by Satan.” *Signs of the Times January 30, 1879.*

“With a holy sadness Jesus comforted and cheered the angels, and informed them that hereafter those whom he should redeem would be with him, and ever dwell with him; and that by his death he should ransom many, and finally destroy him who had the power of death. And his Father would give him the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, and he should possess it forever and ever. Satan and sinners should be destroyed, never more to disturb Heaven, or those who should inherit the new earth. Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that his Father had accepted, and rejoice that fallen man could be exalted again, through his death, to obtain favor with God and enjoy Heaven.” *Signs of the Times January 30, 1879.*

The angels accepted the plan and authorized Jesus to carry it out.

“The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man’s instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, page 259.*

The law was broken and the penalty was death but a way had been found in the heavenly council for man to be redeemed. But man had to accept the salvation offered and meet the requirements. Some would accept it and some would not. Now there had to be a way to determine who was safe for heaven and who wasn’t. This was when heaven’s judiciary and the jury came into being.

In order to help man understand what was required for his sins to be forgiven, the sacrificial system was instituted at the gate of Eden. Adam, as head of his family, was the priest and carried out the sacrifices. Later his sons followed him in this and then their sons followed them, and so on in the patriarchal system, until Israel left Egypt. Now that there was an entire nation, God had Moses set up the sanctuary.

The services of the sanctuary depicted the events which would take place in the judiciary process of heaven. The victim, or lamb, was Christ, who died for our sins. The high priest who offered the blood in the tabernacle was also Christ. But the priests who served and judged the people represented the redeemed.

“The saints will rest in the Holy City and reign as kings and priests one thousand years; then Jesus will descend with the saints upon the Mount of Olives, and the mount will part asunder and become a mighty plain for the Paradise of God to rest upon.” *Early Writings, page 51-52.*

We read in Revelation of twenty-four elders and four beasts, or living creatures, who were depicted to John as being very close to the throne of God. Who are these elders and creatures and where did they come from? Notice that

the four and twenty elders are dressed in white robes and have golden crowns on their heads. Both of these things are emblems of a battle fought and a victory gained. From this we can assume that they were once part of earth and gained the victory over Satan. They are in heaven in advance of the rest of the redeemed for some special purpose. Later on in Revelation the twenty-four elders tell us who they are in their song to the lamb. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, **and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” *Revelation 5:9-10*.

In Matthew 27:52, we read of a company who was raised with Christ. “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

The spirit of prophecy tells us that this multitude went to heaven with Jesus. “As Christ arose, He brought from the grave a multitude of captives. The earthquake at His death had rent open their graves, and when He arose, they came forth with Him. They were those who had been co-laborers with God, and who at the cost of their lives had borne testimony to the truth. Now they were to be witnesses for Him who had raised them from the dead... those who came forth from the grave at Christ’s resurrection were raised to everlasting life. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. These, said Christ, are no longer the captives of Satan; I have redeemed them. I have brought them from the grave as the first fruits of My power, to be with Me where I am, nevermore to see death or experience sorrow.” *Desire of Ages, page 786*.

So the twenty-four elders are obviously representing this great multitude who returned to heaven with Jesus, but what are the four beasts? A better translation of this would have been, four living creatures. But who are they? We notice that these creatures join in the song of the twenty-four elders, so they also must be of that number taken from the earth with Christ. The likeness of these beasts represent the characteristics of those redeemed. They possess the courage of the lion, the strength and perseverance of the ox, the reason of man, and the swiftness and discernment of the eagle.

What are these redeemed ones doing? Notice that they are intimately connected with the government of heaven, being represented as being close and even within and round about the throne of God. They seem to be closely connected with the sanctuary service that is going on and are also represented as sitting on thrones as kings and priests unto God.

We find in 1 Chronicles 23 and 24 an interesting passage on how David arranged the service of the temple. He divided all the Levites into twenty-four courses and all the priests into twenty-four courses and all the singers into twenty-four courses. These courses were to serve month by month in rotation.

One course serving, then returning home, while the second course served.

Since David planned out the temple and its service under divine inspiration, we can assume that it was all a representation of the perfect order and plan of heaven. The twenty-four elders shown to John in the heavenly courts would represent the twenty-four courses of the great multitude, following the plan of Solomon's temple in Israel.

But what are they doing, what is their work? We are told that they are reigning on thrones with Christ. What does this mean? We are also told that the hosts of the redeemed will reign on thrones and judge the nations during the thousand years after the second coming.

“During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection, the Judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this Judgment as an event that follows the second advent. “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’ [1 Corinthians 4:5.] Daniel declares that when the Ancient of days came, ‘Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.’ [Daniel 7:22.] At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: ‘I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.’ ‘They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.’ [Revelation 20:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3.] It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, ‘the saints shall judge the world.’ [Revelation 20:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.] In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.” *Great Controversy, 1888 Edition, page 660.*

“Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and his people. Says Paul, ‘Know ye not that we shall judge angels?’ [Revelation 20:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.] And Jude declares that ‘the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains-under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day.’ [Jude 6.]” *Great Controversy, 1888 Edition, page 661.*

If all of the redeemed will be taking part in deciding the penalties to be meted out to the wicked, it would stand to reason that these redeemed from the earth at Christ's resurrection are also taking part in the judgment. They are judging those who have professed Christ and determining who is to be included with the righteous. They are a jury, if you will, a jury of peers, those who have lived here and experienced our trials. They are the ones who are judging us!

But is not God the judge? Yes, but notice that there is also a judge in a jury trial but He presides, to keep order and to answer any legal questions the jury may have about the particular law in question in the trial. Then the judge

announces and executes the decision of the jury. The lawyers, the defense, and the prosecution, all present their cases before the judge, but the jury makes the final decision. It would appear that this is the very system on which God is also operating. How fair is that? To be judged by those who have lived on the earth, who have experienced this world and its trials?

But how was the jury picked? Well, Enoch, Moses and Elijah, were in heaven before Christ's advent. We know that Enoch and Elijah were translated without seeing death.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." *Genesis* 5:24.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." 2 Kings 2:11.

Moses died, but was raised a few days later. "His eye was not dimmed through age, yet he was upon that mount to die. The angels buried him, but the Son of God soon came down and raised him from the dead and took him to heaven." *Testimonies, Vol. 1, page 659.* (See also Jude 1:9, Revelation 12:7, and Matthew 17:3.)

"Elijah was a type of the saints who will be living on the earth at the time of the second advent of Christ and who will be 'changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,' without tasting of death. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. It was as a representative of those who shall be thus translated that Elijah, near the close of Christ's earthly ministry, was permitted to stand with Moses by the side of the Saviour on the mount of transfiguration. In these glorified ones, the disciples saw in miniature a representation of the kingdom of the redeemed. They beheld Jesus clothed with the light of heaven; they heard the 'voice out of the cloud' (Luke 9:35), acknowledging Him as the Son of God; they saw Moses, representing those who will be raised from the dead at the time of the second advent; and there also stood Elijah, representing those who at the close of earth's history will be changed from mortal to immortal and be translated to heaven without seeing death." *Prophets and Kings, page 227.*

These three must have a work to do in heaven. Doesn't it make logical sense for them to be involved in picking the jury? But who picked these three men? It must have been the sons of God in representative council who were involved in this, and suddenly we realize just what was happening in that council chamber in heaven when the name of Job came up. They were in the midst of determining who was fit for the jury. This is why Satan accused Job the way he did and God told him to test him, not for the benefit of God, God already knew Job would be faithful, but the council had to see, to make an informed decision. What a God! What order! How fair is that?

There is nothing arbitrary about God's government. But do we have any authoritative evidence for this? We know for certain that there is a representative

council. “There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.” *Desire of Ages, page 834.*

“But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, ‘It is finished,’ He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, ‘I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.’ John 19:30; 17:24.” *Desire of Ages, page 834.*

“The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ’s toiling, struggling ones on earth are ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ Ephesians 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. ‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Psalm 85:10. The Father’s arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ Hebrews 1:6.” *Desire of Ages, page 834.*

“With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.’ Revelation 5:12.” *Desire of Ages, page 834.*

It wasn’t just the Father who had to accept the sacrifice, the council ratified it.

“By the representatives of the (Jewish) nation God was denied as their Ruler. **By worlds unfallen, by the whole heavenly universe, the blasphemous utterance was heard,** ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ The God of heaven heard their choice. He had given them opportunity to repent, and they would not.” *Youth’s Instructor February 1, 1900, SDA Bible Commentary Vol. 5 page 1149.*

“In the presence of the unfallen worlds, in the presence of the universe of heaven, in the presence of the angry adversary who has painted them in robes of blackness and moral defilement, urging that they be given into his hands, Jesus answered Satan’s malignant charge whereby he accused them before God day and night. To those who stood before Him, earnestly watching the controversy and marking the determination of Satan to destroy the righteous, Jesus spoke, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.’ Manuscript 27, 1894.” *Christ Triumphant, page 186.*

“Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” 1 Corinthians 6:3.

No wonder Satan hates a true republic, for it is the government of God. The government of heaven is a government of perfect order, with law supreme. A government by representatives with God as the executive, ruling by the consent of His created beings. A full jury system doing the work of judging sinners. The government of God is a free and perfect republic. He is not a dictator, making arbitrary decisions involving the life or death of His creatures. He lays before them the evidence and then lets them decide the answer. By contrast, the government of Satan is a totally despotic dictatorship of slavery. This is the conflict raging in this world, the conflict between true government and false government, between truth and error, freedom and slavery, life and death.

Satan has always attempted to mingle the true with the false and this is the reason why there is so much confusion on the subject of government and in particular on how the church is to be governed. But understanding how God’s government in heaven depends on the cooperation and involvement of His created beings helps us to understand what Christ meant when He said, “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” *Matthew 18:18.* We are also to cooperate with heaven in it’s government.

“It is essential... to understand the practical working of the machinery and the spirit and grace required to keep all parts working harmoniously. Each should realize that a divine hand is moving to bring order out of confusion, that every line of the work may bear the divine impress. When women who are in any way connected with this work treat it as a common matter which does not particularly concern them, their influence tends to cheapen the work in the estimation of believers and unbelievers. They belittle that which heaven recognizes as of great importance. They treat lightly subjects that are taken up in the councils of heaven.” *General Conference Bulletin, February 4, 1895.*

“Heavenly intelligences preside in every business meeting. Members from the royal assemblies of the heavenly courts are present to listen to every plan under consideration, and to imbue the minds of those who see the necessities for the time, and lay out the lines of work to be done. Holy angels impart wisdom, they

inspire minds, and aid in working up plans, that the message of warning may go to the regions beyond. They bring before the workers the evangelical and eternal principles that must characterize the work,—principles that will impart greater moral power, and give the work greater importance and efficiency, that in all its features it may bear the divine similitude.” *General Conference Bulletin, February 4, 1895.*

“The direction of Christ to Moses was, ‘Make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount.’ Did you ever think of it in this connection? Well, God has a pattern for his work, and it is for you and me to follow that pattern. Only when we do this, will our work be acceptable to God.” *General Conference Bulletin, February 4, 1895.*

“The truth in its sanctifying power is to go to the world; prophecy must be fulfilled. All the aspirations, all the motives and power of influence, every jot and tittle, is to make a place for itself, and find its proper, dignified position. Never in any sense is it to be brought down to a low level, becoming mingled with common things. There are some who, through the impression of the Holy Spirit of God, have had glimpses of the holy character of the work and the necessity of its standing in its sacred dignity before the world. These laborers are struggling with all their power to arouse the human instruments to look heavenward, to catch the divine inspiration, to realize that they may represent the purity, the virtue and holiness of a work that is under the supervision of God himself. All who do appreciate these things will make every effort in their line of work, that they may have the co-operation of God and of angels to carry the work forward and upward, every year reaching greater and more perfect success according to the counsels of heaven.” *General Conference Bulletin, February 4, 1895.*

But there is more. The council was present when the earth was created. The council watched eagerly as Christ walked the earth and they were there to open the gates of heaven when He returned in triumph as the representative of this world. But when Jesus comes the second time to claim His redeemed, the entire council, representing all the worlds of the universe, the angels of heaven, and the Jury, along with the Father Himself, will come with Him. We read in Revelation 8:1, “there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

“As I realize how much has been done for us to keep us right, I am led to exclaim, Oh, what love, what wondrous love, hath the Son of God for us poor sinners! Should we be stupid and careless while everything is being done for our salvation that can be done? All heaven is interested for us. We should be alive and awake to honor, glorify, and adore the high and lofty One. Our hearts should flow out in love and gratitude to Him who has been so full of love and compassion to us. With our lives we should honor Him, and with pure and holy conversation show that we are born from above, that this world is not our home, but that we are pilgrims and strangers here, traveling to a better country.” *Early Writings, page 113.*



5. The Sovereignty of God

There is a story about two little girls. The father of one little girl always told her to obey and do exactly what he said at all times. The father of the other little girl always told her to use her head and try to figure things out for herself. He required her to obey but he also encouraged her to think about and try to figure out the reasons for what he was asking her to do or not to do. When these two girls were about eight years old they became friends with each other.

One day they were walking home from school together when a strange man approached them. He said that he was a friend of their fathers and that he had asked him to pick them up. The first little girl immediately got into his car, but the second little girl turned around and ran for her life. She told her father what had happened and he called the police. The little girl was able to describe the car and the man and he was quickly apprehended and the first little girl was rescued.

When asked why she had gotten into the car, the little girl responded that she must always obey her father and the man said that her father wanted her to go with him. When the second little girl was asked why she turned and ran she said, “At first I was going to go with him, but then I thought, no, my father wants me to think and use my head. I don’t know this man, I have never seen him before. How do I know that my father sent him? My father never said anything about sending someone to pick me up. If he really wanted me to go with this man, he would have told me

himself. This man is a liar. So, I turned and ran.”

Today, there is a popular concept in the evangelical world called the sovereignty of God. This concept makes God a dictator. In fact, this is openly stated in the film “Chariots of Fire.” In one scene Eric Liddel’s father tells Eric, “God is a dictator, son, He doesn’t ask you what you think.” This concept says that man has no choice in his salvation. God orders everything, makes all the decisions, rules arbitrarily and dictates everything to His creatures. The doctrine of predestination is a part of this concept. This idea makes God into an absolute dictator, giving His creatures no freedom of choice.

According to John MacArthur, “No doctrine is more despised by the natural mind than the truth that God is absolutely sovereign. Human pride loathes the suggestion that God orders everything, controls everything, rules over everything. The carnal mind, burning with enmity against God, abhors the biblical teaching that nothing comes to pass except according to His eternal decrees. Most of all, the flesh hates the notion that salvation is entirely God’s work. If God chose who would be saved, and if His choice was settled before the foundation of the world, then believers deserve no credit for their salvation.”

<http://www.gty.org/resources/Articles/A167/Gods-Absolute-Sovereignty>

The issue here is not really who deserves credit for our salvation, for there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. The issue is God’s arbitrary and dictatorial control.

This doctrine says that we must submit our wills entirely and completely to God’s direct control, we are not to use our reasoning power but to submit all to God. But this concept is inconsistent with what we find in scriptures. While it is true that God overrules the decisions of men to result in good for His cause, He never forces anyone to do His will. This is very clearly illustrated in Daniel 10 where Gabriel tells Daniel, “Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom

of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.” *Daniel 10:12-13*.

The danger of this concept is that if you think you have submitted your mind to God and that He has taken entire control of it, then it follows that every impression you receive is from the Holy Spirit and you should follow it without question. This concept circumvents man’s reason and turns him into a slave. This work of dictatorial control and circumventing reason is Satan’s work, not God’s, and the being that takes control of a mind thus enslaved is Satan, not God.

But are we not to have our wills under the control of God’s will? We certainly are, and what is God’s will? **“He that abideth in Christ is perfected in the love of God, and his purposes, thoughts, words, and actions are in harmony with the will of God expressed in the commandments of His law.** There is nothing in the heart of the man who abides in Christ that is at war with any precept of God’s law. Where the Spirit of Christ is in the heart, the character of Christ will be revealed, and there will be manifested gentleness under provocation, and patience under trial. ‘Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.’ Righteousness can be defined only by God’s great moral standard, the Ten Commandments. There is no other rule by which to measure character.” *Signs of the Times, June 20, 1895*.

What is it that demands 100% obedience? It is the law. The law, of course, being the transcript of His character and the embodiment of His revealed will, God and the law are virtually inseparable, but it is still the law that is supreme. It is the the law that demands the death of the sinner, not God. It is the law that allows no salvation, that demands the penalty. It is God that provides a way of escape for us and salvation from the penalty. On the cross God’s mercy and the law’s justice met together. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” *Psalms 85:10*.

“After Satan brought sin into the world, he tempted man to set

himself in rebellion against the authority of God. He inspired him with hatred against God because of the results that followed sin. He suggested that God was arbitrary, destitute of mercy and benevolence, because the penalty of the law fell upon the transgressor. When fallen man views God in this light, he casts aside his authority as a moral governor. God has a right to enforce the penalty of the law upon transgressors, for law without a penalty would be without force. God's law is the foundation of all law and government. The fact that Christ suffered the penalty of the law for all transgressors, is an unanswerable argument as to its immutable character, and it will justly condemn those who have sought to make it void. When the curse fell upon the beloved Son of God, who became sin for us, the Father made it manifest that the unrepenting transgressor of his law would have to suffer its full penalty. The word of God declares, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' The law of God was upheld and vindicated by the Son of God. The death of Christ, as an expiatory sacrifice, opens a way whereby the sinner may be pardoned, and turn from the path of transgression into the path of truth and righteousness, while at the same time it vindicates the honor and unchangeableness of the law. In the plan of salvation, justice and mercy clasp hands together." *Signs of the Times, July 14, 1890.*

The Jesuits also believe and teach this concept of God's sovereignty. They carry it to an even greater level by causing each individual to wholly submit their mind to the control of another man and that man to the control of another, all the way to the top of the order. This is what they call "spiritual formation." Who controls the mind of the man at the top? Certainly not God. Thus reason is circumvented, man must submit his will to the control of another, he must submit without question, to a man made creed. All this is wrong and contrary to the order of heaven. "God never designed that one human mind should be under the complete control of another human mind." *Christian Education page 7.*

Thinking that God is a dictator and exercises absolute and arbitrary rule over His created beings, the organizations formed by the evangelicals are structured in the pattern they think they see in

heaven. Thus hierarchies are formed with top down control. Dictators are put at the top to lead and control. A single person is given kingly authority and granted the right to dictate what others will do and believe. This is all contrary to the order of heaven and in line with the government of Satan.

But this is not the picture of heaven we see in the scriptures. God does not arbitrarily decide anything. “Christ came to our world to become our sacrifice. He came to discover to our eyes the gems of truth, to place them in a new setting,—the frame-work of truth. He brought out of the treasure-house of God things new and old, that we might be able to trace down the links in the great plan of salvation. Through the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish dispensation, we are pointed forward to Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. When Christ came, it was to engage in the conflict with the enemy of God and man, on this earth, in the sight of the universe of heaven. But why was it necessary to wage the warfare in the sight of other worlds?—It was because Satan had been an exalted angel, and when he fell, he induced many angels to join him in his revolt against God’s government. He worked in the minds of the angels as he works in the minds of men today. He made a pretension of loyalty to God, and yet he argued that angels should not be under law. He inculcated his ideas, his rebellion and enmity, and hatred of God’s law originated in the minds of the angels in heaven through his influence. He caused the fall of man through the same temptations with which he had caused the fall of angels; and in the world where he proposed to work out his principles of rebellion, the battle had to be fought, that all might behold the real nature and results of disobedience to God’s great moral standard. He represented God in a false light, clothing him with his own attributes. Christ came to represent the Father in his true character. He showed that he was not an arbitrary judge, ready to bring judgments upon men, and delighting in condemning and punishing them for their evil deeds. The Lord proclaimed his character to Moses in the mount. ‘And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And

the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” *Signs of the Times, November 18, 1889.*

God does not want robots, with no will or reasoning power of their own. If this is what He wanted, this is what He would have created. He wants intelligent, reasonable beings, who consent intelligently to His government and choose, of their own free will, to take part in it. Jesus came to reason with men. He told James and John, “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” *Luke 9:56.*

God designs for us to use our brains, not submit them to another to use and control, not even God takes total and absolute control of our minds. “An upright character is of greater worth than the gold of Ophir. Without it none can rise to an honorable eminence. But character is not inherited. It cannot be bought. Moral excellence and fine mental qualities are not the result of accident. The most precious gifts are of no value unless they are improved. The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime and must be **the result of diligent and persevering effort**. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them.” *Patriarch and Prophets, page 223.*

“True success in any line of work is **not the result of chance or accident or destiny**. It is the outworking of God’s Providences, the reward of faith and discretion, of virtue and perseverance. Fine mental qualities and a high moral tone are not the result of accident. **God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them.**” *Prophets and Kings page 486.*

God desires to commune with us, not to direct us as robots. He says “come now and let us **reason** together” *Isaiah 1:18*. He demonstrates, not only infinite love, but infinite respect for the beings He created and their intelligence. Just as a father gives his child a set of blocks and then watches to see what he builds, God does the same, He gives us things and then watches to see what we will do with them. This is illustrated in the experience of Adam.

“And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; **and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them:** and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” *Genesis 2:19.*

“While we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought, the word of God does not condemn a proper self-respect. As sons and daughters of God, **we should have a conscious dignity of character**, in which pride and self-importance have no part.” *Review and Herald, March 27, 1888.*

“Says the apostle, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.’ James 1:5. But God will not impart to men divine light while they are content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God’s help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained. **Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves.** All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.” *Patriarchs and Prophets, page 248.*

But isn’t God sovereign of all? Yes, He certainly is, and He certainly could have created a universe of robots, bound to a dictatorial government, but He did not do this. This fact, that He has not chosen to be a dictator, but to rule by the consent of His creatures and to involve them in His government, makes Him an awesome God. That He should condescend to involve the beings He has created, not only in the government of heaven, but also in the very plan of salvation, is amazing.

But why has the Christian world so completely misunderstood the government of God? It is because Satan is at war with this government. He deceives men by attributing to God’s government

the principles of his own government. This is the way he has always worked. From the beginning of his rebellion he has made war against the law and desired to set himself up as supreme dictator.

Satan has no love or respect for the intelligence of man. He circumvents our reasoning at every opportunity. He doesn't want man to use his brain. He demands 100% obedience to himself and makes men his slaves. He delights to make Christians believe that these attributes are the attributes of God. If we believe that God is a dictator, controlling our every thought and action and impression, then Satan steps in and begins giving us thoughts and impressions that we will follow as the dictates of God.

Remember the father of those two little girls? One exercised arbitrary authority, while the other taught reason and careful thought. It was the second girl, the one who used her brain, that was safe and became the means of saving her friend.

Satan has always tried to circumvent reasoning. He desires arbitrary control and dictatorial power, but he charges these very traits on God's government. We read of his rebellion:

“Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels... Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light—misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction... Thus while working to excite opposition to the law of God and to instill his own discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he was ostensibly seeking to remove dissatisfaction and to reconcile disaffected angels to the order of heaven... But angels who were loyal and true maintained the wisdom and justice of the divine decree and endeavored to reconcile this disaffected being to the will of God... But such efforts as infinite love and wisdom only could devise, were made to convince him of his error. His disaffection was proved to be without cause, and he was made to see what would be the result of persisting in revolt. Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong... A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of

ruin into which they were about to plunge. But His mercy was misinterpreted. Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority... No angel could successfully oppose the law of God, which was as sacred as Himself... God's government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Lucifer had concluded that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also all the worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great. By disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood, he had gained an advantage... The very work which he himself was doing, he charged upon the loyal angels. It was his policy to perplex with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah... God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not —flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels... It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all... The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked... For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability

of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty... Though 'clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne.' Psalm 97:2, R.V. And this the inhabitants of the universe, both loyal and disloyal, will one day understand. 'His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.'

Deuteronomy 32:4." *Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 38-42*

Thus has Satan always worked and still works today. He attributes his own dictatorial methods to God and then takes the position of the dictator. He claims that God arbitrarily decides the destiny of each individual before they are born, that they are either saved or lost and cannot themselves make a choice. Then, this arbitrary judge burns the lost, who had no choice, forever in hell. What a horrible God this is! How could anyone love a God that would do this to His creatures? But this is the God that millions of evangelical Christians believe in and it certainly is not the God of heaven.