LIMITED GOVERNMENT

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"A limited government is one that levies just enough taxes to provide for national defense and police protection and otherwise stays out of people's affairs."[1]

"The free society is an experiment not a guarantee."
Michael Novak[2]

In her book *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World*, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher[3] described the essential character of American society at the beginning of the twenty-first century in this way: "America is more than a nation or state or a superpower; it is an idea—and one which has transformed and continues to transform us all. America is unique—in its power, its wealth, its outlook on the world. But its uniqueness has roots, and those roots are essentially English. . . . It was from our Locke and Sidney, our Harrington and Coke, that your Henry and your Jefferson, your Madison and Hamilton took their bearings."[4] Of course the men Thatcher cited were strong advocates of limited government. The question before us is whether limited government actually means anything in our time in American culture and politics. The thesis of this essay is that the only way forward is to go backward, back to a commitment to a sharply more limited government than we have in America today.

[1] http://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/limited-government.asp#axzz2B5Fp03Bw. Accessed Nov. 2, 2012.

[2] Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 86. For further Catholic perspectives see Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *The Church and the Market: A Catholic Defense of the Free Economy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2005).

[3] Margaret Thatcher, *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 20.

[4] Phillips, *World Turned Upside Down*, 20. Contrast this view with that of the Obama administration which denies the exceptionalism implicit in Thatcher's accolades.

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In a sense the notion of limited government is self-defining. All governments have some limitations to their exercise of power; but throughout history, some governments have overextended their power to increasingly dominate the lives of the people under their governance. A brief survey of several examples will advance our argument. After the survey, I will propose a case for limited government from the writings of key advocates through history. Along the way I will examine a brief typology of several kinds of limited government. Finally, I will sound a warning about the nature of politics in America today and ask whether we can ever hope for a genuine commitment to limited government.

A Glance at the Past

The history of the West features many examples of governments that extended their reach far beyond the brief definition at the beginning of this essay. I can offer only a few examples, but these will be instructive. We will pay special attention to the kind of dominant governance that illustrates the tendency toward unlimited government.

The Roman Empire

The most obvious example of overreaching governmental control from the ancient world is the Roman Empire. Rome as a political entity endured approximately 1250 years, from 753 BC till AD 476.[5] The first 250 or so years were the period of the Roman *Monarchy*, the next 480 or so years were the Roman *Republic*, and the final 500 years (from 27 BC till AD 476) were the years of the Roman *Empire*.[6] The Empire period can be further divided into the *Principate* (27 BC to AD 284) and the *Dominate* (the remainder of the period).[7]

The first period, Monarchy, saw the city of Rome come to power over its environs as it consolidated its authority under a strong monarchical government with a *statist* economy. The second period, Republic, witnessed the growth of local economies due to trade and the growth of the power of the Senate, made up of representatives from the expanding ranks of conquered peoples: Greeks, Etruscans, Sicilians, southern Italians, Carthaginians, and others. The period of Empire resulted from Octavian's defeat of Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, which eliminated competition to Octavian's exercise of authority.[8] Four years later Octavian

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[5] For an examination of the dispute over the dates of Rome's beginning, see John Nobel Wilford, "More Clues in the Legend (or Is It Fact?) of Romulus," *New York Times*, June 12, 2007. The date of 27 BC is the beginning of Empire in the founding of the *Principate*, but technically Octavian defeated Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.

[6] More precisely, traditional dates are Monarchy or Kingdom, 743-509, Republic, 509-31 (or 27), and so on. Susan Wise Bauer, *The History of the Ancient World: From the Earliest Accounts to the Fall of Rome* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 625.

[7] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, An Abridgement*, ed. D. M. Low (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), 123-38.

[8] Bauer, *History of the Ancient World*, 703-04.

established the *Principate*; that is, he established himself as *Princeps* (Prince) over a newly restarted Roman Republic, but one that historians would denominate as the beginnings of Empire. Under the new order, Octavian (now Caesar Augustus) would be allowed to be *Princeps* and *Pontifex Maximus* (chief priest) for life.[9]

Augustus followed this action by initiating a series of building projects, social reforms, and economic programs that would make Rome the greatest city in the Western world.[10] Over the next decades it became the largest city in the West in size and in influence over the region of the western Mediterranean. At its peak the city of Rome and its emperors ruled over a region extending from North Africa to Germany, from the British Isles to the western steppes of Russia, including much of the ancient Near East. The older Roman ideology, according to which Rome was naturally free and was the instrument for bringing freedom and hope to the rest of the world through its military, "was transferred to the claims of Augustus and his family."[11] Rome believed it was inherently *just* ("Iustitia" became a goddess during the reign of Augustus), and emperors considered Rome's imperial ambitions to be justified. After all, what would be better for the nations of the world than to be governed by Rome?

The city of Rome became the center of a web of control. As a result of its domination, Rome would become the beneficiary of a vast and intricate system of taxation, enslavement, and power over a huge expanse of territory and population. With some fifty to sixty million residents at its peak, the Empire dwarfed any previous power in the West. The city of Rome had been a large city for many decades, with some 150,000 residents in the third century BC. In Octavian's day the city stood at about 350,000, but encouragement to Roman citizens from the hinterlands to move to the city brought its size to perhaps 800,000 by the end of the second century AD.[12] Emperors sought to increase the size of the city for political reasons. As one scholar observes, "The size of Rome hence represented an ideological commitment to a particular historical narrative, a particular notion of emperorship, and a particular idea of empire."[13] A large and thriving Rome gave the emperors a magnificent stage upon which to demonstrate their imperial power, and that stage communicated to smaller provincial cities that they might one day achieve

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[9] Christopher S. Mackay, *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 182-91.

[10] J. A. Crook, "Political History, 30 BC to AD 14," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., *Volume Ten: The Augustan Empire, 43 BC-AD 69,* ed. Alan Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73-93.

[11] N. T. Wright, "Roman Empire," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 695.

[12] Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 96-98.

[13] Raymond Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople: Rewriting Roman History During Late Antiquity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 18.

greatness if they would cooperate with their overlord.[14] Of course, this second notion was nothing short of fiction.

The city of Rome produced nothing. It "conquered other lands, tried to manage their imperial affairs through currency, and imported stuff from these conquered lands,"[15] but it manufactured nothing and contributed nothing to the material world around it. Rather, the reverse was the case. Rome demanded provision from its Provincials and took it in the form of massive-scale taxation. Grain came from conquered North Africa, the breadbasket of the Roman world. Between 200,000 and 400,000 tons of grain per year were required to feed the people of the city. Combined with oil from Greece, wine from Spain, and pigs (which began to be imported in the third century AD), the provisions for Rome amounted to over 700 shiploads per year. The addition of pork to the diet caused Provincials to nickname the citizens of Rome "Piglet" and "Sausage," causing one scholar to note: "The food supply of Rome had become, literally, pork barrel politics."[16] This was redistribution on a massive scale.

If Rome knew anything, it knew how to tax; but Roman taxation was imposed almost exclusively on Provincials. Roman citizens living in proximity to the city of Rome paid no direct taxes to finance its wars, which were the primary expenditure of Empire.[17] In the period of the *Principate* (27 BC-AD 284), public works were paid primarily by leading citizens, Senators, and members of the Equestrian classes. The army was a professional army, and a well-paid one at that, and required enormous resources. In Augustus's day the standing army stood at about 350,000.[18] Local taxes supported local manifestations of the Roman government. "Indirect taxes" (*vectigalia*) such as customs duties, often levied at twenty-five percent of the value of the cargo, helped fill the increasingly voracious need for support of the army. Farmers turned over as much as one-third of their crop to the Roman tax collectors, and Jews paid a Temple Tax, a tax charged even after the Temple was destroyed in AD 70.[19]

Tax collecting in the Provinces was managed with great care. The governing bodies in those places each had their own *fiscus* (basket) into which taxes were deposited and out of which expenses could be taken. The income collected in the *fisci* would be sent on to Rome. In addition to the taxes for regular operations and those collected for support of veterans, there was another fund known as the *patrimonium*, out of which expenses and patrimony would be

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[14] Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 18-24.

[15] Douglas Wilson, *Five Cities that Ruled the World: How Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, London, and New York Shaped Global History* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 98.

[16] Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 10.

[17] Carolyn Webber and Aaron Wildavsky, *A History of Taxation and Expenditure in the Western World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 109.

[18] Webber and Wildavsky, *History of Taxation*, 109.

[19] Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 7.6.6.

issued.[20] Such patrimony toward soldiers, provincial governors, and Senators was vital to maintain the image of a powerful but benevolent Rome. *Benevolent*, however, was not always how client states perceived the Empire. Rome established, and established well, that the one sign that a nation had power over its citizens was its power to tax and to tax *at will*.

If Rome exercised such authority in the period of the *Principate*, it showed its authority to an even greater extent in the period of the *Dominate* (AD 284-476). The third century witnessed the breakdown of Rome's institutions, with a series of Gothic invasions and the dissolution of the *Pax Romana*.[21] The Empire fragmented into as many as six separate kingdoms, and during this period as many as sixty emperors can be counted.[22] But in AD 284 a new soldier emperor came to the throne, Diocletian. He unified the Empire and divided it into a Tetrarchy, ruled by two emperors and two "Augusti," while he maintained the unity of the whole under his direction.[23] In many ways he stylized himself as the new Augustus; but realizing the inherent weakness in the earlier *Principate*, "he created an absolute monarchy, centering all power in himself as a semi-Divine ruler, and making his palace the *domus divina* and his own person sacred; and henceforth the Senate was to be permanently in a subordinate position."[24] Diocletian increased taxation and placed public works under the purview of the emperors, effectively removing the senatorial and equestrian classes from their responsibility to oversee building projects and religious ceremonial. The full power of Roman imperialism would now come to the fore.

Diocletian initiated a persecution of Christians in AD 304, believing that many of the Empire's ills were due to neglect of the traditional gods. All except Jews were ordered to offer the traditional sacrifice. Only Christians refused. The "Great Persecution" lasted seven years, through the reign of Diocletian and into the time of his successor, Gallerius.[25] In 312 the emperor Constantine defeated his rival Maxentius, and in 313 Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which ended once and for all the persecution of the church.[26]

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[20] D. W. Rathbone, "The Imperial Finances," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, *Volume Ten*, 320.

[21] Peter Heather, *Empires and Barbarians: The Fall of Rome and the Birth of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 94-150.

[22] Mackay, *Ancient Rome*, 266-82.

[23] Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985), 122.

[24] "Diocletian," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 483.

[25] Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire: AD 100-400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 90.

[26] The text of the edict can be read in Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 15-16.

Constantine converted to Christianity.[27] He also continued the policies of Diocletian by increasing the size of the Roman federal government. In AD 330 he made the bold move of relocating the Roman capital to Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople. The city of Rome had already ceased to be the seat of imperial power in the West, although it was still the home of the papacy. Moving the seat of power to Constantinople had ripple effects on both cities. Rome quickly declined in population and influence, while Constantinople, or New Rome, did the reverse. By the year 400 Rome had fallen from its peak of 800,000 residents to 500,000, and by 500 to perhaps 60,000.[28] On the other hand, New Rome had around 30,000 residents in 330, but grew to 300,000 by the year 400 and to 600,000 a century later.[29] As we noted earlier, the capital needed size to assert its power, even more so now in the *Dominate*.

The conversion of Constantine changed the way Christians viewed the Empire and the emperor. While some early Christian writers associated Rome with Babylon, the new generation, represented by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, saw Rome and Emperor Constantine in almost eschatological and messianic terms. Eusebius wrote, "On his own, God, the ruler of the entire universe, selected Constantine."[30] In these words, "Eusebius had transformed Constantine from a soldier emperor characteristic of the third century into God's chosen ruler."[31] Eusebius compared Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge against Maxentius with the glorious victory of the Israelites in the Exodus.[32] Eusebius "developed a providential account of history in which God guided Rome's ascent so that the church would acquire worldly political authority through a Christian emperor."[33] The question not yet answered was whether this might in fact be a poisoned pill.

Christian city or not, New Rome was the capital city of a *totalizing* state. Even after the emperor Theodosius issued edicts in 380 and 381 that made Christianity the official religion of the Empire,[34] the domination of the State in taxation, conscription to the armies, and the incessant making of war for the purpose of power and to enlist new slaves to operate its commercial interests continued unabated.[35] One of the images of the state cultivated by the

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[27] Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds., *Conversions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 4-10.

[28] Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 49.

[29] Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 53.

[30] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 8.13.14.

[31] Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 26.

[32] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 8.14.

[33] Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (New York: Vintage, 2007), 43.

[34] The text of the edicts can be found in Bettenson, *Documents*, 22.

[35] Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 183-98.

emperors was the *fasces*. It consisted of a bundle of sticks lashed together with an axe wrapped into the bundle. The *fasces* depicted the idea that there was a single ruling entity, bound together with a group of smaller and weaker entities, with the threat of the *axe* should anyone seek to unbind the bundle. The term *fascism* grew out of this image. Rome was in every way a fascist State; that is, it sought to control as many aspects of the lives of its citizens as possible.[36] As Goldberg puts it, "Fascism is a religion of the state. . . . It takes responsibility for all aspects of life, including our health and well-being and seeks to impose uniformity of thought and action, whether by force or through regulation and social pressure."[37] Rome exercised its will to control as many aspects of its people's lives as possible, given the limitations of communication and travel. Rome set a standard for unrestrained government that would not be duplicated for many centuries.

The city of Rome and the western Provinces declined in the late fourth and fifth centuries. In AD 410 Alaric the Visigoth sacked the city but left it in the hands of its declining rulers. In 476 the Hun prince Odoacre defeated the army of the last emperor in the West, Romulus Augustus, effectively ending the western Empire. The Empire in the East would last nearly another thousand years, continuing to exercise its domination over its people, though by the middle of the seventh century its advances would be checked in the East by the rise of Islam. In 1453 the invading Ottoman Turks overran the city of Constantinople, ending the eastern Empire even as the West had fallen a millennium before. Fascism was dead for the moment, but it would rise again.

France under the Bourbons

After the fall of West Rome and the eventual decline of East Rome (the Byzantine Empire) in the seventh and eighth centuries, "Europe" stagnated both culturally and economically for several hundred years. The twelfth century witnessed the beginnings of a mini-Renaissance of learning with the foundation of monastic schools in the western regions and then with the formation of the universities of Paris, Cambridge, Oxford, and Bologna around the year 1200.[38] In the 1220s a group of Islamic, Jewish, and Christian scholars met in the city of Toledo to prepare translations of Aristotle into Latin.[39] The Greek philosopher's works had been earlier translated into Arabic, an accomplishment that caused a flourishing in Muslim intellectual life in the eleventh century. That trend was now in decline, and Latin scholars were hopeful that repeating the Islamic accomplishment would spark an even greater renewal of intellectual life in

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[36] By the third century even those in the Provinces were allowed to claim Roman citizenship.

[37] Jonah Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 23.

[38] Gordon Leff, *Medieval Thought: From St. Augustine to Ockham* (London: Merlin, 1959), 176-81.

[39] Richard Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims and Jews Discovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Middle Ages* (New York: Harvest, 2004), 15.

the countries of the Roman Catholic West. The effort succeeded, and the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries witnessed a remarkable flood of scholarly activity from such individuals as Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, William of Occam, Bonaventure, John Duns Scotus, Thomas Bradwardine, John Wycliffe, and many others. The areas of their intellectual concern were not limited to theology, but included epistemology, metaphysics, logic, economics, "science" (in a limited way), politics, and many other realms of discourse. The collegiality brought on by the new universities and the access to classical thought made available by the translations of Aristotle accelerated these developments.

A new world of scholarship and technological advance was now on the horizon. Still, progress was slow by today's standards. Exploration of possible new lands was hampered because voyages of exploration were restricted by limited navigational technology. All this would change in the fifteenth century with the invention of the sextant and the astrolabe. Added to the already existing compass, the new inventions enabled daring sea captains to sail away from the sight of land into unknown waters with the full confidence that they would be able to return home. Voyages of exploration led to the discovery of the Western Hemisphere, which in turn led to the acquisition of wealth for the enterprising European nations of Portugal, Spain, England, Holland, and France.[40] From the sixteenth century onward there would be no looking back for the competitive European nations. The only question was, "Which one(s) would come out on top in the competition for global domination?" We know now that England would take the lead by the late eighteenth century, but that was not obvious to everyone else as late as the middle of that same century.

Louis XIV of France (king from 1643-1715) ruled for seventy-two years, though for the first eighteen years he served under regencies. Borrowing from the ideology of Constantine, Charlemagne (King of the Franks 768-814, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire 800-814), and more recently, Philip II (King of Spain 1554-1598), Louis believed that kings ruled by divine right and therefore had unlimited authority. He was able to govern France in this way because (unlike the English and the Dutch), the French had no real parliamentary checks on the king's authority. Louis could do as he pleased; and he did.

Louis knew that he could gain maximum control over his country only if he had a thorough accounting of its wealth, income, resources, and liabilities. He needed people to devise a way for him to gain that information in as complete a manner as possible. As it turned out, he needed only *one man* to oversee this endeavor. Louis's final regent before he assumed rule in his own right had been Cardinal Mazarin. The Cardinal had employed a man named Jean-Baptiste Colbert as financial secretary. Louis retained Colbert's services and placed him in charge of the government's finances, eventually making him a sort of Master of Information for the crown due to his unique gifts for finding things out and serving the king. Louis was an absolutist monarch. For the first time in history, the implications of absolute monarchy for a national economy were about to be applied.

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[40] Many books tell this story. One helpful work is Nathan Rosenberg and L. E. Birdzell, Jr., *How the West Grew Rich: The Economic Transformation of the Industrial World* (New York: Basic, 1986).

Finance Minister Colbert observed that much trade between nations was carried out on the seas.[41] If France wished to get the greatest *advantage* in the acquisition of gold and to get the upper hand in trade, it should go to war with the nation which had the greatest *amount* of trade on the high seas. Under Colbert's advice, France started a war with the Dutch. In 1672 Colbert advised the King to burn as many Dutch ships as the French navy could possibly burn. He believed that France needed the upper hand in trade no matter what the moral cost might be. France had to bring in more gold than any other country, whether by war or trade; and the two practices were not far apart. In *mercantilist* economics, that is, the new merchant economies that had developed since the Crusades and brought about a revival of trade in Europe, in a sense trade *is* war. Nations that had for centuries fought wars with each other over land and possessions now fought each other for gold, in both military wars and trade wars.

Colbert's aim was to make France the greatest nation in the world, and to do so by meticulous management of every aspect of the French economy. The first step in launching such a venture was to control information. Max Weber has noted that state paperwork engendered the need for bureaucracy, which can be defined as "the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge."[42] To centralize a government, one first had to identify its archives and to centralize them.[43] A person in a sufficient position of authority might then control the flow of information—potentially all information—and thereby control the entire economy. This was Colbert's aim, and he established a strategy for doing this at every possible level.[44]

Colbert employed the assistance of intellectuals, merchants, military men, and a host of others in his scheme to have the Crown dominate every area of French cultural and political life.[45] He used intellectuals to develop an intricate system of espionage that enabled him to follow the movements and machinations of nobles, of foreign sailing vessels, of merchants in the colonies, and of church officials, in essence forming "a centralized, internal corps of professional state observers whose writings would have concrete results."[46] Only the Jesuits had ever worked

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[41] Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Dearborn, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 36.

[42] James E. King, *Science and Rationalism in the Government of Louis XIV, 1661-1683* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1949).

[43] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Ancien Régime: A History of France, 1610-1774* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991),162-63.

[44] Soll, *The Information Master*, 1-33.

[45] Frances Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Centuries* (London: Warburg, 1947).

[46] Soll, *The Information Master*, 71. See also 67-83.

harder to formulate a system of espionage like that developed by Colbert.[47] Indeed, Colbert had early on trained to be a Jesuit priest.

But there were other issues for Colbert. In mercantilist economics it is expedient for the government to be in control of the economy of the *nation* as well, to the highest possible degree. Colbert built France into the one nation of its time that was actually capable of doing so, far more than England, Holland, or the previously strong but now much weakened Spain.[48] The possibilities of economic control had to do with the previously noted absolutism that underlay Louis's policies. France had nothing similar to the English *Magna Carta*, a regulative device that limited the authority of the monarch. The French *Parlement* held much less authority than its English counterpart, due to the constitutions of France and to recent history. All of this allowed Colbert to run roughshod, with virtually no restraint.

Colbert's power also played into the Crown's interests. Since the Court of the King was a significantly large contributor to economic exchange in France, Colbert had a platform from which he issued strict regulations on such elements as manufacturing. In the manufacture of cloth there were rigid requirements for the number of threads per square inch in various kinds of cloth—not simply for the garments of the Court, but for all textile manufacturing. Colbert applied similar regulations and standards to virtually all industry and even to the production and distribution of food. Government inspectors went around investigating manufacturing plants to be sure they were up to the required standards. He was responsible for helping to organize the tax base of the nation and oversaw the *intendents*, whose responsibility it was to gather taxes from the people.[49] Colbert attempted to "increase the productivity of the French economy in much the same way that a drill sergeant tries to enhance the performance of his soldiers."[50] He built many very good roads in France, but he built them by forced, compulsory labor. He passed laws demanding child labor. Children who did not enter the work force by age of six were fined. France must be productive, even to the point of forcing children to work.

Colbert's accumulation and control of data were enormous. He kept elaborate "inventories, scrapbooks, journals, and ledgers for each tax farmer, region, different tax and different royal expenditure."[51] He required his assistants to master double-entry bookkeeping and to manage all national, regional, and district accounting data using that method. He built his own library to be second in size only to the Royal Library. There, along with an extensive book

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[47] See Alan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth Century America* (London: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Jonathan Wright, *God's Soldiers: Adventure, Politics, Intrigue, and Power—A History of the Jesuits* (New York: Image, 2005), esp. 228-42.

[48] Ladurie, *Ancien Régime*, 178.

[49] Soll, *The Information Master*, 68.

[50] Rondo Cameron and Larry Neal, *A Concise Economic History of the World: From Paleolithic Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 149.

[51] Soll, *The Information Master*, 64.

collection, he kept all his notebooks, journals, and folders containing the data his agents amassed in their efforts to catalogue the economy, the travels of nobles, the state of foreign trade, and information of foreign domestic life—hundreds of thousands of individual documents and collections of material. All the information was organized in such a way that he, the Information Master, could quickly put his hands on just the required piece of paper or ledger. The nineteenth century editor of Colbert's papers offered his opinion that Colbert was obsessed with knowing *everything* that could be known about every nook and cranny of the large and expansive French countryside and city life in the twenty-two years that he served Louis XIV.[52]

Such a project had never before been possible on such a grand scale in a nation as expansive as France. What made it possible was the confluence of several streams: Louis's absolutism, the French system's restraint on local power as over against the monarchy, France's economic health (at least compared to her neighbors) in Louis's early rule, and Jean-Baptiste Colbert's unique genius. Without Colbert, far in advance of any sort of data-storage and quick retrieval system, none of this would have worked. A testimony to that fact is seen in the rapid dismantling of much of the system after his death in 1683.[53] The State remained strong, largely due to the continued shadow of Colbert falling across Louis's administration, but the system broke down without the spider-like man sitting in his library, hunting down papers and issuing orders to hundreds of agents who would go out to fetch new data and issue new mandates with all the authority of the Crown.

In a very real sense, the administration of Louis XIV was Rome *redivivus*. It was the first great *Administrative State* of the modern world. The modern rebirth of Rome had begun with the Renaissance, the very name *renaissance* being testimony to that fact.[54] Yet the stirrings of old Rome in Northern Italy's Renaissance resulted in the restoration of the spirit of Rome's *cultural* achievements, not its *Administrative State*—that would have to wait for Louis and his "Information Master."[55] In Louis, Paris had become Rome, in some ways in a far more controlling and administrative fashion than old Rome could have been. Also contributing to the power of Paris were the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the State and the prevailing theological orthodoxy. In some European countries at the time, notably England, Scotland, the Netherlands, parts of Germany and parts of the Swiss Confederation, Reformation theology was transforming people, government, church, and the economy. Louis did everything in his power to hold the French Protestants, the Huguenots, at bay, preventing them from exerting any significant influence on government or the nation at large.[56]

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[52] Soll, *The Information Master*, 4.

[53] Soll, *The Information Master*, 153-68.

[54] Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 32-38.

[55] Soll, *The Information Master*, 16-17.

[56] Ladurie, *Ancien Régime*, 147-48.

Colbert was successful. Price stability never wavered during his administration.[57] There was no monetary devaluation in the years that he controlled the nation's economy. He led France to develop industrially in a way that it had never done before, in part to try to catch up with the Dutch. In silk manufacturing, in ribbon-making, in printing, and in the manufacturing of silk hosiery on a loom, the Finance Minister took France to new heights, even though those heights were doomed to fade in the later years of Louis XIV's reign.[58] Many nations, then and afterward, could wish for such success over such a lengthy period of time.

There was, however, also a significant amount of *corruption* that stemmed from Colbert's back-room machinations. Much of it attached to Colbert himself, who amassed a huge fortune and an even larger library, at a time when those possessions made a man respectable in the eyes of others, especially of intellectuals, who otherwise considered Colbert to be their inferior. Payments to spies and favorable status given to certain industries or to certain manufacturers were common in Louis's France. Freezing out nobles who were not loyal to Louis, bribes paid to others—all of this was normalized for the French Crown as well. Such practices were done in other European states at the time, but none exhibited the truly dominant Administrative State in the way France did. None of them was as thoroughly *fascist*, in the sense I employ the term in this essay, in the way that France was. In Louis's reign, with Colbert as his chief industrial and financial architect, France was fascist in an unprecedented fashion for a nation of its size. The French never became as financially successful as the Dutch before them or the British after them; but during Louis's early reign, France did control its economy in a far more absolutist fashion than either of those nations. Colbert's death slowly eroded the French king's ability to control his nation's economy, and thus its political fortune slowly faded as well. That economic and political decline would increase dramatically and never recover in the eighteenth century. We all know what came next to France.

America: From Flourishing to Progressivism

The United States of America from the Revolutionary War to the early twentieth century became an economic powerhouse. For the most part it also was un-intrusive of the freedoms of its citizens, with some exceptions during the Civil War (1861-65). At the time of the ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the new country became the first nation in history guaranteeing four basic rights to its citizens: free speech (and press), free markets, free elections (to those who had the franchise, which for some time excluded most blacks and all women), and freedom of religion (no state church; protection of religious expression). In contrast to the two governmental bodies we have examined so far, the Roman Empire (especially the *Dominate*) and

[57] Ladurie, *Ancien Régime*, 169.

[58] Ladurie, *Ancien Régime*, 171-78. The loom itself was a "machine" which was composed of 3,500 metal parts and had been invented at the end of the sixteenth century.

the French monarchy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the federal government of the United States was about as un-fascist as one could imagine.

America was a nation that celebrated and gloried in human freedom and human flourishing.[59] That was its lure to the world. Many factors contributed to American prosperity. "The widespread distribution of land" had powerful consequences, since "one's livelihood was not dependent on the goodwill of another, as was the case presumably with tenants, serfs, indentured servants, wage-workers, or chattel slaves."[60] There were, of course, slaves, mostly in the South by the late eighteenth century. Others made their living in trade, especially seafaring trade. "New England Yankees made themselves one of the world's great seafaring peoples," showing that they had "a remarkable amount in common with the Dutch—another seagoing, predominantly Calvinist people who combined agriculture with commerce."[61] Still others engaged in fur trading, manufacturing, and animal husbandry. There seemed to be an almost infinite number of opportunities for these new Americans.

One of the four freedoms enumerated above, free markets, accounted for such rapid expansion. A free market means small government regulation of trade, low tariffs on goods imported, low taxes on sale of goods, and not preferring one industry or one company over against others. Though there was considerable disagreement on such matters as the *national bank*, how to handle *national debt*, and whether the federal government had any right to *tax* goods and services *within* this country, the early American experiment was closely aligned with Scots philosopher Adam Smith's ideology on the particular issue of markets.[62] Smith (1723-1790) wrote *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, calling for free markets, for the government not to interfere in technological advance, and for employers to develop the division of labor.[63] He called for governments to allow businesses to grow unfettered, and he argued that human productivity was the key to the development of the wealth of any nation, not, as had been previously held by mercantilist economic theory, the stockpiling of gold and silver. Of course it is necessary for governments to impose some health and safety standards, to regulate weights and measurements, and to insure that certain services are made available to the public;[64] but

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[59] Forrest McDonald, *E Pluribus Unum: The Formation of the American Republic, 1776-1790* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1979).

[60] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, The Oxford History of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37. This does not apply to all Americans, since some were slaves, etc.

[61] Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 47.

[62] Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 212-17.

[63] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, 1965).

[64] Wayne Grudem, *Politics: According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 274. One of those services included the construction of highways, bridges, and canals so that goods and services could be brought to market, a plan championed by Henry Clay and known since as the American System.

beyond some important regulations, government should not manipulate the economy. This was the belief of the Founders.[65] In the nineteenth century, more than any other place on earth, America would be the nation that proved Smith was right.

America was a burgeoning powerhouse of economic activity. In early nineteenth century America, the birth rate exploded. The 1800 census recorded just over 5.3 million Americans. By 1810 there were a little over 7.2 million citizens. In 1820 the number stood at a staggering 9.64 million. No nation in history had ever witnessed such growth. While some of the growth was due to immigration, most of it was from the vigorous expansion of large families that went with economic and religious intensity. One Congressman from the period put it like this: "I invite you to go to the west, and visit one of our log cabins, and number its inmates. There you will find a strong, stout youth of eighteen, with his Better Half, just commencing the first struggle of independent life. Thirty years from that time, visit them again; and instead of two, you will find in that same family twenty-two. That is what I call the American Multiplication Table."[66] It was indeed, and that multiplication would continue unabated for the whole century.

Signs of change, however, were dawning almost from the opening of the twentieth century. "Progressive" voices in the media were complaining about the disparity of income between the captains of industry (the so-called "Robber Barons") and the people who worked for them. New departments of social sciences began to show up on college and university campuses, departments heavily influenced by German intellectuals, especially in sociology, psychology, and political science. The guiding lights at these schools were Comte, Freud, and Hegel. Hegel's influence was especially prominent in the field of political science.

Hegel contended that history was driven forward by a powerful subterranean force that he called the *Geist*, a force that was causing to emerge a new kind of political reality marked by *justice* and equity in *all ways*.[67] Hegel believed that the State itself was becoming "rational." Such rationality demanded the fusion of government and civil society into an organic whole, thus creating a new kind of nation in which government was no longer thought of as a threat to the rights of individuals. A similar belief was common among the Founders and provided the basis for their constitutional conviction that government should be *limited* and divided into three inviolable branches.[68] The Founders agreed that government ought not to be a threat, but they would not have agreed with Hegel (or Woodrow Wilson, the man who would import Hegelianism into American politics) that the hope of the nation lay in an all-encompassing State that itself had evolved to the point of being inherently just. Quite the opposite!

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[65] William J. Bennett, *America: The Last Best Hope,* vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 143-53.

[66] Quoted in Johnson, *History of the American People*, 283.

[67] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*. The *Geist* should not be seen as comparable with or as a counterpart to traditional Christian views about God, except perhaps in some kind of purely pantheistic sense, as the *Geist* for Hegel is completely immanent in this world.

[68] John Marini, "Progressivism, Modern Political Science, and the Transformation of American Constitutionalism," *The Progressive Revolution*, 221-22.

Hegel's new idea of governmental power would be used on *behalf* of the people and would create genuine freedom, construed in ways not previously imagined. "Government would free men of economic necessity thereby creating the possibility of genuine human freedom."[69] The enlightened class who were sympathetic with these new ideas about the State would provide the "technical rationality" to carry this project out, and would do so by making use of the *research university*, which would undercut the older philosophical mindset that undergirded the liberal arts system in the American university. The new university, working with the new political bureaucracy, "of necessity, becomes the institutional heart of the administrative state."[70] This "Administrative State" would provide the leadership needed to take the country in a direction unfathomable to previous generations. Of course the state would have to be granted sweeping powers. It should come as little surprise that Wilson once kept Congress in continual session for a year and a half.[71] Not even Lincoln had been able to pull that off during the Civil War.

Theodore Roosevelt brought some of these new ideas into the political arena. He was president during a time of financial crisis, the Panic of 1907, and he lashed out at "Robber Barons" and the system that allowed some to be enormously successful and justified the poverty of others. But Woodrow Wilson took it much farther. Previously a university professor with a Ph.D. in political science, Wilson had studied under former students of Hegel. Wilson's conception of *democracy* entailed a dramatically different understanding from that of the Founders, and he readily admitted the fact. He was very clear about the difference. The rise of the new social sciences in the nineteenth century made it inevitable that the Founders' approach had to be rejected, based as it was on philosophical and religious convictions that no longer prevailed. "The theoretical foundation of the new disciplines rested upon a rejection of the philosophic authority upon which early American political thought was based."[72] These new social sciences, unlike the natural sciences, were predicated on the assumption that "History, not nature, provided the meaningful knowledge as regards politics and society."[73] Wilson's concept of the nature of man, the nature of society, and the nature of nature differed widely from that of Washington and Jefferson.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt would take these changes even further. Given a sort of *carte blanche* by the crisis of the Great Depression, FDR swept into office in 1933 with a bevy of new programs that would ostensibly rescue the nation from its economic woes, but only by granting sweeping and unprecedented powers to the federal government. His election was made possible

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[69] Marini, "Progressivism," 222.

[70] Marini, "Progressivism," 222.

[71] Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism*, 105.

[72] Marini, "Progressivism," 223.

[73] Marini, "Progressivism," 225.

by the terrible economic situation and former president Herbert Hoover's apparent failure to remedy it. Hoover had failed to understand one thing about business downturns—that they serve *essential purposes*. "They have to be sharp. But they need not be long because they are self-adjusting. All they require on the part of governments, the business community, and the public is patience."[74] Even more than Hoover, Roosevelt would fail to understand the same principle. In his first campaign speech FDR appealed to a person he labeled "the forgotten man." Roosevelt claimed that Big Business and Big Businessmen were to blame for the Great Depression. These greedy men, trading stocks in New York, playing with the destiny of the poor man, the old man, the union worker—these greedy men had plunged the country into economic chaos, and now, any man in need of government assistance was in fact, "the forgotten man."

One member of Roosevelt's "brain trust," Ray Moley, suggested the metaphor, one he had read at some point. Ironically, Roosevelt and Moley completely misused the metaphor. The image actually comes from a lecture by Yale philosopher William Graham Sumner. In Sumner's speech the "forgotten man" was not the poor man or the man in need of assistance, but the *average taxpayer*. Sumner said that if person A sees something wrong and that person X is suffering, and person A goes to person B to discuss the problem, A and B then propose a law to help X. But then it is person C who actually pays the taxes to help X. Sumner argued that C is the "forgotten man," the man nobody notices, but the one who actually gets it done. Roosevelt used this plaintive and heart-wrenching metaphor about the *forgotten man* to point out the need of the man on the soup-line, and the plea was effective. The problem was that he and his speechwriters got the point completely wrong.[75] The misunderstanding serves as a parable for how Roosevelt and his New Dealers got the whole thing wrong, and how easy it is for governments to continue to do so.

The new president inaugurated his New Deal legislation, a plethora of government programs intended to address the country's economic woes. On March 5, 1933, FDR convened a special session of Congress. He issued a series of Presidential Proclamations, closing the banks and keeping them closed for about a week.[76] Roosevelt took this action because bank runs had devastated many banks during the years of the Depression. Then he attempted to enact one new policy after another. What should we do? Anything. When you are drowning, you will reach out for anything that might save you. But what if what you grab actually ensures that you will remain in the water for a good deal longer? In the first hundred days of FDR's administration, Congress passed fifteen major bills that dealt with almost every aspect of the U.S. economy. Many were contradictory, and most were later ruled unconstitutional.[77] The effort was billed as

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[74] Johnson, *History of the American People*, 735.

[75] Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 12-13.

[76] Shlaes, *Forgotten Man*, 157-58.

[77] H. W. Brands, *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 223-65.

the New Deal, but it differed very little from some of Hoover's last-ditch efforts to manipulate the economy. Rexford Tugwell, one of Roosevelt's key advisors, later admitted this fact. "We didn't admit it at the time, but practically the whole New Deal was extrapolated from programs that Hoover started."[78] The New Deal was begun by Hoover;[79] Roosevelt was just a new *dealer*.

The idea was that the new administration could accomplish what Woodrow Wilson, Progressive that he was, had wanted to do but was unable to pull off. Wilson had wanted America to take the lead in forming a *new world order* by using the disruption caused by the Great War. In order for America to take that lead, it would have to become a fundamentally different country than it had been in the long nineteenth century.[80] The Great War seemed to provide the necessary catalyst. "Hence all fascistic movements commit considerable energy to prolonging a heightened state of emergency."[81] Never waste a crisis! But at the end of the war, Americans wanted nothing to do with the new League of Nations, and they were content to continue being the kind of republic they had become following their own remaking at the end of the Civil War. Americans were not enamored with the new Progressive ideas fostered by Wilson, and the "heightened state of emergency" had passed in America, though not in Europe. The Great Depression created a new opportunity for Franklin Roosevelt. The key was to seize control of the economy by dominating every sector of it and utilizing it for the purpose of the *Administrative State*. Walter Lippmann actually told Roosevelt in a meeting at Warm Springs, Georgia, Roosevelt's retreat location, "The situation is critical, Franklin. You may have no alternative but to assume dictatorial powers."[82] He nearly did.

Something very similar was happening in two depression-ravaged nations in Europe—Italy and Germany. When Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933, Mussolini had already been enacting coercive economic policies in Italy for several years. At the same time Adolf Hitler was beginning his sweeping plan of renovating the entire German economy, which was in even worse condition than the economies of Italy and the United States since war reparations had been in place since the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.[83] Once Hitler was in power he established "State capitalism" as a way to reward the industrialists, who profited further from the Nazis' attempt to

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[78] Quoted in *The Reader's Companion to American History,* ed. John A. Garraty and Eric Foner (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 514.

[79] Johnson, *History of the American People*, 740.

[80] The phrase "long nineteenth century" refers to the argument of some historians that the nineteenth century really lasted from 1789 till 1914.

[81] Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism*, 43.

[82] Jonathan Alter, *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 5.

[83] Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), 166-205.

exterminate the Jews, many of whom were financially successful.[84] This "State capitalism" was only a reworked form of Socialism, an intellectual project worked out in the nineteenth century mostly by German thinkers.[85]

Roosevelt was a great admirer of both Hitler and Mussolini in 1933 and for a number of years afterward. Today we think of both the German and Italian revolutions as fascist in nature, and from our vantage point, *fascist* means something evil and sinister. But the term *fascist* did not have an evil connotation at the time. In 1933 and even in 1937, plenty of American intellectuals were glad for America to follow in those fascist footsteps as quickly as possible. After all, there were examples of semi-benevolent fascist regimes in the past, such as Rome and France. At first it appeared that Italy and Germany were merely modern versions of the same kind of fascism. Of course, in America one needed a serious motivation to follow such a new course. The Great Depression gave the new president that opportunity. His response was New Deal legislation, a sweeping remaking of the American political economy.

Those of us who came along after these events grew up with the assumption, "Well, of course the government regulates plane fares and charges radio and television stations fees and controls what they can broadcast. Has it not always been that way?" The answer is, "No! It came in with the New Deal." It came in under a president who believed that the Administrative State had the right and the ability to govern almost *every* detail of the economic life of the nation. In his second inaugural address, Roosevelt said that he was seeking "unimagined power."[86] Like Woodrow Wilson, he believed he had the best and brightest advisors, people who could understand how to command the economy. Unlike Wilson, Roosevelt was a poor judge of character and intelligence, in spite of the fact that he regularly referred to his "brains trust." "In fact this too is largely myth."[87] There was no intellectual center to Roosevelt's program. There was no *program*; there was only a variety of attempts to try things to see if they would work. This president admired what was happening in Italy and Germany under Mussolini and Hitler, places that were trying to carry out the Hegelian ideal that we discussed earlier, at least in the 1930s. He wanted to see the same kinds of things happening here. European fascism appeared to be having good results; why could not the same thing happen here?

An analysis of all the New Deal legislation would be germane to our argument, but we are not able to pursue such an evaluation in this essay. It is sufficient to say that in America, after the New Deal, and to an even greater extent after Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation, America joined the ranks of ancient Rome, Bourbon France, and other governments

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[84] Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism*, 57.

[85] See the trenchant discussion of Germany as the root of Socialism in Friedrich Hayek's famous book/essay, *The Road to Serfdom*, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-12. The book was first published in 1944.

[86] Shlaes, *Forgotten Man*, 10.

[87] Johnson, *History of the American People*, 760.

in history that attempted to control every possible aspect of their citizens' lives. Americans from the nineteenth century would not have recognized their country in the twentieth century. Of course even New Dealers and Great Society advocates could not have envisioned what awaited America in the twenty-first century. What ever happened to limited government? It is to the theoretical framework of that question that we will now turn.

The Case for Limited Government

There has been a long and detailed defense of the notion of limited government in history, even as there has also been a long defense of unlimited government. Here we will be able only to sketch the outline of the defense of limited government. Our survey will examine the work of both philosophers and theologians, a necessary combination since for a good deal of the intellectual history of the West there was little if any distinction between these two disciplines.

Aristotle

The Western case for limited government goes back at least to Aristotle (384-322 BC). His mentor, Plato, had argued in *Republic* for an over-arching State, one that controlled economic and family life in a heavy-handed manner, and one that allowed for very little human freedom or initiative. For Aristotle the primary association for the necessities of life is the family.[88] Plato, to the contrary, argued for the abolition of the family. Aristotle noted that families live in villages or cities, they engage in actions that are aimed at some good, and when their material culture has advanced to the point that they are capable of enacting government, eligible individuals participate in the process of governance.[89] For Aristotle, man is a "political animal," that is, a creature who lives in a *polis*, a city.[90] Living in a city is perfectly natural to being human, and so freeborn men will desire to have a say in what happens in the governing structure of the *polis*.[91] Of course not all Greeks had the franchise. Women, slaves (a large part of the population of most Greek city-states) and men under twenty years of age had no say in the governing of the *polis*. Freeborn men had an obligation to participate in governance. But what kind of governance was appropriate?

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[88] Richard McKeon, *Introduction to Aristotle*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 584. This work includes Book Three of Aristotle's *Politics,* 591-659.

[89] McKeon, *Introduction*, 586.

[90] *Polis* for Aristotle meant more than the city limits of a particular town; it included the surrounding rural and village environs.

[91] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.1-2.

Aristotle traveled widely, at least within the confines of the Greek world, and he knew of many kinds of governments. He contended that there are three kinds of unjust governance and three kinds that are acceptable.[92] Democracy, tyranny, and oligarchy are all bad forms of government. Democracy, meaning pure democracy, is bad because it can degenerate into "mob-ocracy," which had happened when a majority of the *demos* of Athens voted down Socrates, resulting in his suicide. Oligarchy is unjust because it is rule by a small group of men who have only the virtue of inherited wealth and power and because the rest of the *polis* has no role in governance.[93] Tyranny was the rule of one over all others, with no place for shared governance.

Three forms of governance had merit for Aristotle. A monarchy is acceptable so long as the king shares governance with a representative aristocracy. An aristocracy is a just form of government as long as the men of the *polis* have some share in the governing. A polity, or what we would call a representative democracy, is also a plausible form of rule since the *demoi* elect respectable representatives and do not simply vote *en masse* for all legislation. Whether the people of any given *polis* choose a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a polity depends largely on matters such as geography, the size of the polis, history, and other such variables.

What is characteristic of Aristotle's position is that it does not dictate that only one form of government is proper, as Plato had arbitrarily argued in *Republic*. In addition, Aristotle's approach calls for shared governance across the citizenship of the *polis*. This is in keeping with an idea Aristotle argued in his Nicomachean Ethics, the idea of the "Golden Mean," the right balance in all things.[94] It is in contrast to Plato, who had contended for absolute rule by the Philosopher-kings (or queens), the "Gold" in society, a governance carried out by the Administrative class, the "Silver," and enforced on the rest of the *polis*, the "Bronze." Aristotle believed this arrangement was both unjust and impractical. For all his intellectual blindness and the flaws he shared with others in his day, Aristotle was nothing if not pragmatic. His approach to politics was a decided advance over other theories of the time. But of course a change in the Mediterranean was not far away. It would be known as Christianity.

Augustine

We have already discussed Rome and its domination of the West through much of the first half of the first millennium AD. Aurelius Augustine (AD 354-430), a citizen of the Empire, made many contributions to the church, but one of the most important was his philosophy of history, woven together with a theology of politics found in his great work, *The City of God*. Augustine contended that the two cities, the City of Man and the City of God, first presented

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[92] Aristotle, *Politics*, 3.6-13.

[93] Aristotle argued that Sparta had this form of governance, and all Greeks of course hated the Spartans.

[94] Michael V. Wedin, "Aristotle," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50.

themselves in opposition to one another when the Satanic rebellion took place.[95] When God made the first couple, their life was one of complete love and happiness.[96] They were given only one prohibition. They had the full capacity to violate the prohibition, since they were made with free will; and violate it they did.[97] Because of their sin, their own nature and the nature of their offspring was changed for the worse, so that "bondage to sin and the necessity of death were transmitted to their posterity."[98] This is a crucial element to understand in all of Augustine's mature theological writings.[99] Man, created with the gift of free will, still retains the power of choice, but even that has been tainted by sin.[100] Man was created to love God supremely and to love himself only secondarily; but now, apart from the aid that comes from the grace of God, man loves himself supremely.[101] Such is the nature of sin, that as much as anything else it is constituted of tainted love.

It is no surprise that after Adam's son Cain murdered his own brother, Cain founded the first city. Augustine believed that had there been no sin, there would never have been a political State, for although man is naturally sociable, he is not naturally political.[102] Men were intended to be lords over herds and flocks, but not over other men. Now, governed by the impulses of self-love, men have a lust for mastery, what Augustine calls *libido dominandi*.[103] The State is a manifestation of all of this, and can only be so. Whereas Plato and Aristotle considered the state to be natural, Augustine saw it as sinful even at its best. Even good judges, because they do not know men's hearts, have to resort to force to discern the truth. The wisest of them can only pray to be released from their responsibilities.[104]

God in his infinite wisdom and foresight knew that all of this would happen. He determined within himself that he would provide an alternative to the sinful city of self-love. Those who are not members of the elect are citizens of the *civitas terrena*, or even of the *civitas diaboli*, while the elect are members of the *civitas dei*. The members of each city are unified by

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[95] Augustine, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, 11, 15, 20.

[96] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.10.

[97] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.13.

[98] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.1.

[99] Paul Rigby, "Original Sin," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 107.

[100] Augustine, City of God, 14.11.

[101] Augustine, *City of God*, 15.1.

[102] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.5.

[103] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.15, 14.13; Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 1, 23.

[104] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.6.

allegiance to a common object of love. In Augustine's terminology "love" or "loves" means "a variety of attitudes toward things we possess, as well as a wide range of human appetites and aversions toward things we do not possess."[105] Each city exhibits a different kind of love. The citizens of the City of Man (or "Earthly City") are marked by self-love, while the love of the citizens of the City of God is directed primarily toward God.[106] These are "fundamental orientations of the members of the two cities."[107] The one city glories in itself, while the other city glories in God.[108] Previous philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle thought of man as finding his place in life and saw man's distinctive contribution as occurring in the city (the City of Man in Augustine's scheme). By contrast, the African Father rejected that idea and contended that man finds his true home only in the City of God.

True community occurs when people gather around something that they all love together. Love of an object spontaneously gives birth to a society of those who have the same object of love. "He who loves God is, by that very fact, brought into a social relationship with all those who love him."[109] The City of God is not to be equated with the church, because not all persons in the visible church are regenerate.[110] "The church is not a perfect society, but a body in which saints and sinners are 'mixed' (*corpus permixtum*)."[111] The City of God on earth is but a prelude to the heavenly city that awaits in the new heavens and new earth. For Augustine, "heaven is not longed for because the apparent goods of earth are bad but because they are not good enough."[112] And for him the final eternal state is physical—the new earth.

Justice is the goal of government. "True justice exists only in the society of God, and this will be truly fulfilled only after the Judgment. Nevertheless, while no society on earth can *fully* express this justice, the one that is more influenced by Christians and by Christian teaching will more perfectly reflect a just society. For this reason, Christians have a duty toward government."[113] This is not exactly the same goal that Eusebius previously expressed with

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[105] Paul Weithman, "Augustine's Political Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 235.

[106] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.24.

[107] Weithman, "Augustine's Political Philosophy," 236.

[108] Augustine, *City of God*, 6.12.15-19. See Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 310.

[109] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L. E. M. French (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 172.

[110] Ernest L. Fortin contends that Augustine "occasionally equates the City of God with the church." Fortin, "Civitate Dei, De," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 199.

[111] Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1985), 205.

[112] Edward R. Hardy, Jr., "The City of God," in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, ed. Roy W. Battenhouse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 273.

[113] Robert E. Webber, *The Church in the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1986), 71.

regard to Constantine, seeing him as the vicar of God in this world. The "idea of a Christian empire such as Eusebius of Caesarea had envisaged can never be a perfect reality on earth."[114] *Just* government is the goal, though one unattainable in this age. Even though a Christian State will still be tainted by sin and depravity, Christian rulers can give to subjects examples of godliness and humility.[115]

Though Augustine's thinking does not offer what we would today call a theory of political science, it does represent the longest and most sustained treatment of the role of the State from any Christian writer for a long time to come, and it set forth an ideal of government that "Christian Kings and Magistrates" sought to follow for centuries. The manner in which they acted did not always live up to the African Father's ideal. In the Middle Ages another Christian thinker would articulate a somewhat different assessment of the possibility of a Christian State.

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was a thinker who came along just after the works of Aristotle had been translated into Latin, thus sparking the Scholastic Movement of the thirteenth century. He was only one among a group of scholars across Europe at the time, but his work would have the most lasting effect of any of them. Thomas pursued many topics, both theological and philosophical, but his observations on politics and governance would become very influential.

With the publication of Thomas's *Summa Theologica*, the Christian world received not only its most comprehensive account of Christian doctrine to date, but also "the most coherent account of Christian political life."[116] Borrowing from Aristotle, Thomas expressed the idea that humans are political animals and that "political life can contribute to human perfection."[117] Thomas's approach is based on the idea that the Incarnation of Christ makes possible a truly Christian State, with a truly Christian monarch; that is, it makes such a thing a *possibility*.[118] His view is somewhat more optimistic than that of Augustine, although Thomas did not deny Augustine's view of sin. He keyed off to a certain degree on the kind of State that Charlemagne had established—a Christian emperor governing in a heavy-handed manner, but with a desire to glorify God in what he did. Certainly Charlemagne's rule was an early attempt at something like Thomas's position, though he may have inadvertently made it clear that in the end it is not

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[114] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 305-06.

[115] Augustine, *City of God*, 5.24.

[116] Lilla, *Stillborn God*, 46.

[117] Lilla, *Stillborn God*, 46-47.

[118] Paul E. Sigmund, "Law and Politics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 217-31.

entirely possible in this present age. The intrusion of Aristotle into the picture is likely what makes Thomas's political theology more sanguine about the possibility of a Christian State.[119] Later, both Calvin and the Puritans of Boston would borrow elements of this position to construct their own political theologies.

Thomas was insistent on the authority of the pope in all things spiritual. What of the pope's authority in temporalities? Here the Catholic Doctor appears to have left conflicting accounts. In *The Governance of Rulers* he contended that the pope has jurisdiction over all kings and others in authority, while in the *Summa Theologica* he stated that civil rulers are subject to the papacy only in spiritual matters.[120] In good Aristotelian manner, he held to the importance of natural law, a teaching that would enable European Christian intellectuals to develop an understanding of law that goes beyond the Bible but is still "Christian," since natural law is also Divine law.[121]

John Calvin

John Calvin (1509-1564) was among the second generation of the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Converted to the gospel and away from Roman Catholicism in the early 1530s, in 1536 he found himself in the city of Geneva, where he was conscripted to assist in the reforms that were taking place in the churches of that city. These reforms were root and branch; not simply religious reforms, they had an impact on Geneva's economy, on social relations, and on politics. Calvin had a vision to formulate all of life in accordance with Scripture and in a manner that would glorify God in all of life.

On political theory, Calvin's ideas were complex and in many ways new. He opposed the notion of fusing secular government and church government. Calvin "advanced a doctrine of separation of church and state, [but] not separation of religion and state."[122] Calvin's approach to State government is that it should be both *respected* and *limited*. Government should be respected because it is appointed by a sovereign God, but it should be *limited* because those who govern are sinful men who will be tempted to use government for their own selfish purposes. In his famous Princeton lectures on Calvinism, Abraham Kuyper stated that the Calvinistic "political faith" is based on three assumptions: only God is sovereign in the destiny of nations; sin has broken down God's direct governing of men, necessitating human rule; and man never

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[119] Lilla, *Stillborn God*, 47-48.

[120] Sigmund, "Law and Politics," 219.

[121] Sigmund, "Law and Politics," 225.

[122] G. Joseph Gattis, "The Political Theory of John Calvin," in *Politics and Public Policy: A Christian Response*, ed. Timothy J. Demy and Gary P. Stewart (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2000), 97.

has authority over other men except that which is given by God.[123] How did the Genevan Reformer work out these ideas?

Civil government is a force for good and is the instrument God uses to keep society from descending into chaos. If not for civil government, depraved men will act in whatever manner they wish, since they know they will go "scot-free."[124] God governs through human rule. Since this is the case, it ought to be *godly* men who bear the task of governing, men serving as "vicars of God" (or, God vicariously).[125] Calvin wrote this section of the *Institutes* partly as a critique of what he perceived as Anabaptist anarchists, "who would have men living pell-mell like rats in straw."[126] Government is necessary, and the best governors are godly men.

Government had not merely a negative but a positive role in Calvin's thought. Government exists "to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church, to adjust our life to the society of men, to form our social behavior to civil righteousness, to reconcile us with one another, and to promote general peace and tranquility."[127] So magistrates ought to be chosen both for their judicious *wisdom* in governing and for their *piety*. Their task is not merely to keep the unruly from having their way, but to promote goodness and righteousness in society.

Calvin was opposed to revolution and rebellion. He did condone *resistance*, but not *rebellion*, contending that if a nation has a wicked ruler, it may be God's way of punishing the people for their sins. As a biblical example he cites Nebuchadnezzar from the book of Daniel.[128] Calvin believed that if a ruler treated his people unjustly, lesser magistrates should take the matter in hand and deal with it.[129] He went so far as to say that the lesser magistrates *must* take this issue in hand. If they do not do so, "their dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that, by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardians."[130] Although revolution was not permitted, resistance

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[123] Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1931), 85.

[124] John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 4.20.2. It is in Book 4, Chapter 20 of *Institutes* that Calvin devotes attention to the question of civil government.

[125] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.6.

[126] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.7. We are convinced that Calvin's understanding of the Anabaptists was defective, based only on the radical tendencies of some revolutionaries who had caused considerable *angst* in Europe through political unrest and war.

[127] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.2.

[128] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:20.25-29.

[129] W. Fred Graham, "Calvin and the Political Order: An Analysis of the Three Explanatory Studies," in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, ed. Robert V. Schnucker, 51-61.

[130] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.31.

was permitted. The limitations to resistance are profound, but they betray Calvin's strict convictions about the sovereignty of God.[131] Some of his followers would later extend the notion of resistance by "lower magistrates" to include the possibility of rebellion in *limited* and *extreme* instances.[132]

What kind of government would be best suited to these ends? Like both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas before him, Calvin believed it was possible to construct a *political theology*. To position him relative to the two previous thinkers, Calvin was as fully committed to the doctrine of depravity as Augustine, though he had higher hopes for government. He was less sanguine about the possibility of a godly monarch than was Thomas, but he held out that a Christian State *could* be formed.[133] In a manner reminiscent of Aristotle, Calvin did not believe there was only one kind of appropriate government; but he did believe that some were better than others.[134] Because of sin, it was dangerous to entrust power to one person alone or to only to a few elites. In his lectures on Amos 7, Calvin excoriated governing authorities in England and Germany, noting particularly that Henry VIII was a "blasphemy." Of the German Lutheran nobles, he likewise asserted that they should not "become chief judges as in doctrine as in all spiritual government," but should use their temporal power to "render free the worship of God."[135] Rulers should be godly men, but they should enforce only orthodoxy, not doctrinal uniformity.

Calvin argued for a "system compounded of aristocracy and democracy."[136] By *aristocracy* he did not mean a hereditary class, but a class elected by their fellows.[137] That was the very kind of government existing in Geneva when he arrived. While Calvin often found himself at odds with key leaders of the Little Council (the highest ruling council in the city), he always defended the type of government found in the city.[138] Citing David in the Old Testament, Calvin contended that rulers had the right to go to war when facing wickedness or in self-

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[131] William R. Stevenson, "Calvin and Political Issues," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 181-86.

[132] John Witherspoon would urge Jefferson, Washington and others that their rebellion against King George fell within Calvin's argument.

[133] Lilla, *Stillborn God*, 70.

[134] Gattis, "Political Theory," 99-100.

[135] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, 5 vols., 2:349-50, quoted in Gattis, "Political Theory," 101.

[136] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.7.

[137] Gattis, "Political Theory," 100.

[138] David W. Hall, *Calvin in the Public Square: Liberal Democracies, Rights, and Civil Liberties* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 71-77.

defense, but never simply to wreak vengeance or to inflict undue cruelty.[139] Magistrates were to protect their people from robbers and invaders and to use force if necessary; if they did not do so, they were as bad as the robbers or invaders.[140]

One of the great questions raised by historians is whether Calvin's views were the basis of later *Republicanism*, such as that which prevailed in the American experience in the 1770s and 1780s. The best answer seems to be that Jefferson and Madison worked out an approach to government consistent with (but not identical to) some Calvinist ideals, especially in regard to human depravity and the need for limited government.[141] Calvin favored the idea of *decentralization* in governance, an idea consistent with Jeffersonian politics. One scholar has argued that a synthetic reading of Calvin shows that he held to five principles—"fundamental law, natural rights, contract and consent of people, popular sovereignty, resistance to tyranny through responsible representatives"—what this interpreter calls the "five points of political Calvinism" that would later be a description of Republicanism in essence.[142] But Calvin would likely not have favored the exact system we now have in the United States. As one historian has put it, "Modern Democracy is the child of the Reformation, not of the Reformers."[143] Modern Republicanism is a sort of working out of the basic ideas that come from the Reformation, but it is not found explicitly in the Reformers' teachings.

Taxation is of course a place where economics and politics come together. Though it is often not the case, one might hope that taxation theories would be based on an overall world-and-life-view. Calvin recognized that taxes were allowable, even necessary, but only within prudent limitation. Taxes should "support only public necessity."[144] He feared that sinful components within government would impose inordinate taxation simply for their own purposes. "To impose them upon the common folk without cause is tyrannical extortion."[145] Overly heavy taxation represented governmental theft and extortion, a theft as reprehensible as burglary. As we pointed out above, taxes were not to be used to support the indolent, who were not to be supported at all, nor even those who were justifiably dependent on public support, as *they* were to be cared for by free-will offerings.

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[139] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.10.

[140] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.11.

[141] See the helpful discussion in D. G. Hart, "Implausible: Calvinism and American Politics," in *John Calvin's American Legacy*, ed. Thomas J. Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 65-88.

[142] Herbert D. Foster, "International Calvinism through Locke and the Revolution of 1688," *American Historical Review* 32 (April 1927): 487, quoted in Jeffry H. Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 81.

[143] George P. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 7.

[144] Hall, *Calvin in the Public Square*, 78.

[145] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.13.

Here was a real advance over previous understandings of a Christian State. What about the possibility of forming a government that is not explicitly tied to the church at all? That question leads us to Locke.

John Locke

The concept of limited government in Augustine, Thomas, and Calvin is salient, but in all three thinkers the concept is tied to a symbiosis between church and State that was problematic to many. Even in Calvin's day, a group of Christians began to emerge all over Western Europe who sought to unravel the relationship between these two institutions by protesting the one common element in European society that linked church and State—infant baptism.[146] Their basic argument was that infant baptism was an unbiblical idea, but their secondary concern was that since all European governments required christening within the first thirty days of a child's life, infant baptism had in effect become the single practice that knitted church and State together in such a way that the rejection of the authority of one necessarily implied the rejection of the authority of the other.

Social expectations, legal enactments and interpersonal relationships all built on this foundation. So to deny that the paedo-baptism[147] of all was legitimate and to insist on a later baptism of only a few could not be simply a personal decision with the goal of pursuing greater spiritual fidelity. It inevitably also entailed a stinging indictment of the Christian faith of the others and of the legitimacy of the civil state.[148] Forming an alternative church was thus tantamount to *sedition*. This issue would have to be unraveled before further progress could be made in developing a notion of limited government for the world of the future. Along with scattered Anabaptists, the one man who did most to effect divorce between church and State was John Locke.

In 1665, England sent a diplomatic mission to Cleves—a Prussian city, a Lutheran city. One member of the delegation was a young scholar who had written treatises defending the authority of government over all areas of life, especially over religion. He had accepted the view promoted by the Tudors of the previous century and the Stuarts (and the French Bourbon kings) of his own time that any kind of religious dissent was dangerous and threatened to undermine society. In Cleves, the young John Locke (1632-1704) found a city in which several Protestant

[146] See, for instance, Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism: An Interpretation* (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1973) and Chad Brand, *Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian's Library, 2012), 113-28.

[147] *Paedo-baptism* is the term for infant baptism.

[148] James R. Payton, Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 164-65.

faiths existed peacefully alongside Roman Catholicism. As he put it, "They quietly permit one another to choose their way to heaven."[149] Locke's world was transformed overnight.

Locke's visit to Cleves brought about a paradigm shift in his thinking. "Over the next few years it gradually dawned on the young scholar that religious dissent is not the cause of political conflict over religion. Rather, the *outlawing* of religious dissent is the cause of political conflict over religion."[150] Locke would make a major contribution in the development of a philosophical commitment to religious liberty in England and the Western world, as well as to the nature of government in general.

Toleration of religious opinion was nothing new. The Romans, as we have shown, tolerated the religious views of the provinces, after a fashion. The Dutch had been tolerant of religious diversity, while having a State Church that was successively Roman Catholic and then Reformed. They even had a term for it: "Go Dutch." To "Go Dutch" meant to "go the easy way," that is, the tolerant way, since the Dutch allowed Jews, Anabaptists, and other movements the freedom to live and practice their faith in the Low Countries.[151] Locke now saw that real religious liberty, not mere toleration, was one of the lynchpins to an overall commitment to limited government in general.

Locke's more general political theory, seen especially in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, was founded on his belief in the social contract and his view of human nature. Locke was convinced that men would recognize the need for a social contract with one another in order to secure their own peace and safety. The state of nature is potentially a state of war (Hobbes would say that it *is* a state of war), so Locke argued that reasonable men would avoid this at any cost. "To avoid this state of war (wherein there is no appeal but to heaven, and wherein every the least difference is apt to end, where there is no authority to decide between the contenders) is one great reason of men's putting themselves into society, and quitting the state of nature: for where there is an authority, a power on earth, from which relief can be had by appeal, there the continuance of the state of war is excluded, and the controversy is decided by that power."[152] In other words, men would freely form the social contract because they would know that this is the only reasonable way to live.

Having made the social contract, what should persons in society together do with it? Locke next made the point that all men have been given the property that belongs to them, and none should take it from them. "Everyman has a property all his own: that property is his own person. This nobody has a right to but himself. The labor of his body and the work of his hands,

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[149] John Higgins-Biddle, "Introduction," in John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity: As Delivered in the Scriptures* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), lxxxv.

[150] Greg Forster, *The Contested Public Square: The Crisis of Christianity and Politics* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 143.

[151] George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 347-48 and *inter alia*.

[152] John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (New York: Hackett, 1980), 3.21.

we may say, are properly his."[153] Once we have removed something *legitimately* (generally through labor or purchase) from the state of nature, it belongs to us. "The supreme power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his consent. . . . For I have truly no property if anyone can by right take from me what he pleases against my consent."[154] The principle applies as much to government as it does to seizure by any individual.

What kind of government would be best suited to these ends? In his *First Treatise of Civil Government* Locke refuted the ideas of Sir Robert Filmer, whose book *Patriarchy* argued for divine right kingship and that the citizens of England should see themselves as the "children" of the king. (Remember that King Charles II did believe in divine right kingship.) The *Second Treatise* devotes one chapter to refuting these ideas (chapter 6), rejecting the idea that an "absolute prince" or "czar" or "grand seignior" ought to be recognized.[155] Then, in a style reminiscent of Aristotle, Locke surveys various forms of government, including "perfect democracy," "oligarchy," and monarchy, concluding that none of them fits the pattern of the just government he has been describing. Instead, Locke opts for the notion of "commonwealth."[156] The commonwealth form of government has as its highest and most important branch of government the *legislative*. "The legislative is not only the supreme power of the commonwealth, but sacred and unalterable in the hands where the community have placed it."[157] Then again, he states, "In a constituted commonwealth there can be but one supreme power, which is the legislative, to which all the rest are and must be subordinate."[158] Neither the executive nor the judicial can trump the legislative or act contrary to it. The role of the executive is to stand as the proxy for the legislative when it is not in session and always to comport its actions in a manner consistent with what has been laid out by the legislative, who are the true and most immediate representatives of the people. This is limited government. Though Locke believed that his ideas were consistent with New Testament teaching on governance (but not with the Old Testament, and he accused Calvin of appealing more to that part of the Bible),[159] his ideas were not dependent on any part of the Bible, but rather were derived from a rational consideration of the human condition. Though the Protestant Reformers did not hold this conception of government, they prepared the way for it. Luther's emphasis on vocation and on the priesthood of all believers set the stage for a new form of individualism. Calvin's political theology and his emphasis on such matters as fundamental law, natural rights, contract, and

[153] Locke, *Second Treatise*, 5.27.

[154] Locke, *Second Treatise*, 11.138.

[155] Locke, *Second Treatise*, 6.91.

[156] Locke, *Second Treatise*, 10.132.

[157] Locke, *Second Treatise*, 11.134.

[158] Locke, *Second Treatise*, 13.149.

[159] Forster, *The Contested Public Square*, 155.

consent of the people were part of Locke's lexicon. As we noted earlier, "Modern Democracy is the child of the Reformation, not of the Reformers."[160] Locke is thus the person who brings about a confluence between the Reformation tradition and the Enlightenment. His view on limited government is perhaps the best expression of that confluence.

Conclusion[161]

Obama, Bull Moose, and the White Queen

Some might think it is alarmist to consider the politics of the American economy as fraught with apocalyptic overtones. Is it really necessary to warn Christians and others of the impending possibilities of a government and political system gone viral on the heady promise of utopian visions fostered by governing elites? I think so.

In 2010 Angelo Codevilla, a world-class scholar, distinguished professor, and prolific researcher at the Stanford-based Hoover Institution, wrote in his book *The Ruling Class* that our system of governance has been co-opted by a class of politicians from the right and the left who are out of touch in the extreme with ordinary Americans.[162] The hopes of voters that somehow, someday they will elect a group from one party or the other who will change all this and "clean up" Washington (especially) and/or state capitals, are repeatedly dashed on the shoals of the prevailing mindset of the professional ruling class. Hence the promising young solons, the RINO and country-club Republicans, the yellow-dog Democrats, the Tea Partiers, the blue-dog Democrats, the mugwumps of old, the New Dealers, Fair Dealers, Square Dealers, Whigs, Libertarians, Bull Moosers, "Occupiers" (maybe), and on and on go to Washington and other places and get caught up in the prevailing winds. Overwhelmingly, the wind blows more and more toward a soft totalitarianism that promises anything to keep the voters pacified while the ruling class rules—either already telling us or planning to tell us what food and drink we and our children will be allowed to consume, what light bulb to buy, what toilet to flush, what car to drive, what fuel to use, what temperature to set, what medical insurance we *must* buy for whom and including what unconscionable products, what medical care we can have, what doctor to see, what school to attend and what textbooks will be used, whether we can go on living or must die, *ad infinitum*. This is no "future shock" scenario; it is everyday life!

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[160] Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas*, 7.

[161] This conclusion is an abbreviated summary of the Epilogue in Chad Brand and Tom Pratt, *Awaiting the City: Poverty, Ecology, and Morality in Today's Political Economy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2012), e-book, and the forthcoming Chad Brand and Tom Pratt, *Seeking the City: Christian Faith & Political Economy, A Biblical, Theological, Historical Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2013).

[162] Angelo M. Codevilla, *The Ruling Class: How They Corrupted America and What We Can Do about It* (New York: Beaufort, 2010).

The present situation did not arrive overnight. In the late nineteenth century Otto von Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor of a newly unified German State, implemented one of the first truly modern forms of social insurance. He was a follower of Marx and/or Metternich, depending on the whim of the moment. He is not considered to be among the "liberal" or "progressive" elites of that time or any other. Nevertheless, his reforms served as the model for things still on the horizon of the next century in the West. In 1881 he remarked in defense of his policies, "Whoever has a pension for his old age is far more content and *far easier to handle* than one who has no such prospect." His purpose in social "reform" (establishing the first *Socialstaat*) was not to empower the people but to make them more subservient and manageable and to increase the power of the State. He secretly longed to be known as "the king of the poor," an eponym first sought by Frederick the Great before him.[163]

These ideals were furthered by Richard Nixon. A politician once thought by his supporters to be a true conservative, whose politics could be trusted to resist the encroachments of the New Dealers and social welfare establishment, he was a secret admirer of Nietzsche. He referred often to the philosopher's *Beyond Good and Evil* as a guide to electoral politics. Nixon believed (as he read Nietzsche) that America was in the time of its decadence, enervated by wealth and unable to strive for greater things. Consequently, he shaped policy and proposed "solutions" that paved the way for supposed "conservatives" to support policies and propose ideas the Iron Chancellor would applaud. Nixon is the author of "conservative" support for Great Society spending that reached 40% of the budget in his term (28% in LBJ's), high tariffs, wage and price controls, greater government regulation (the EPA), elimination of the gold standard supporting the currency, and a proposal as part of his Family Assistance Plan to guarantee a minimum income unconnected to work or achievement (though this was never enacted).

In light of the foregoing it should not be thought shocking that George W. Bush, in the name of "compassionate conservatism," pushed and got the greatest entitlement expansion since the Great Society legislation, the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, and recruited Senator Edward Kennedy, arguably the most reliably liberal Democrat Senator of the past fifty years and the "last lion" of the house of Kennedy, to help enact the No Child Left Behind "education reform." Later Bush would orchestrate "bailouts" for huge businesses thought "too big to fail."

Now the Obama administration has put governance in the hands of thirty-to-thirty-five "czars" (depending on who's doing the counting) and encourages them at this writing to promulgate rules (at numerous agencies), in defiance and without the consent or authorization of Congress, all the while declaring on the campaign trail, "We can't wait" [for Congress to act].[164] Is it any wonder that his czar for medical care, Kathleen Sebelius, with great forethought and

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[163] See Michael Knox Beran, *Pathology of the Elites: How the Arrogant Classes Plan to Run Your Life* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010), 106-108; and A. J. P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman* (New York: Vintage, 1967).

[164] Compare this to Locke's insistence that legislative must be the strong branch of government.

apparent political calculation, ruled that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare or Affordable Care Act for short, depending on one's perspective) disallowed non-coverage of "preventive health" involving birth control of any kind? This means that no entity except actual churches, not their schools, agencies (charitable or otherwise), or affiliates of any kind not organized specifically as "churches," is exempt from providing such "care" regardless of the stated mission and/or faith/doctrinal position of the entity. The rule applies to all forms of contraception and sterilization procedures including those considered abortifacient. The later interpretation that said the entities themselves do not have to pay for this insurance, but their insurance providers must make it available for no charge, only placed an accounting procedure between the entities and their provision of abortifacient "preventive health" for their employees.

At this writing, millions of Evangelicals and Catholics have joined in verbal protest and are now, for the first time in the author's experience since the 1960s, suggesting seriously that the time for civil disobedience has come. Many on the political right swell the chorus, regardless of their sense of conscience on contraceptive practice, in the name of liberty and particularly religious freedom. On the left and in the predominant media many seem puzzled that the issue has caused such a stir, remarking in the vein of at least one observer, "Maybe the Founders were wrong to guarantee free exercise of religion in the First Amendment, but they did."[165] Nancy Pelosi had previously defended the provision in the Act for abortive services by questioning loudly, "This conscience thing." A number of pundits and polls have demonstrated semantic creep in their language by observing that the Constitution "allows" one to "worship" in freedom—implying in context that it does not "guarantee" this "right" nor does it hold out for "practice" of one's faith in the public square.

The "ruling class" on the right, Republican presidential contenders, campaign defending "Romneycare," minimum wage rules indexed to inflation, "earmarks" additions to legislative bills, and "taking one for the team" in place of voting stated convictions. Theodore Roosevelt made it plain that he understood and practiced the politics of the "ruling class" when he stated a century ago, "I believe in power. . . . I did greatly broaden the use of executive power. . . . The biggest matters I handled without consultation with anyone, for when a matter is of capital importance, it is well to have it handled by one man only. . . . I don't think that any harm comes from the concentration of power in one man's hands."[166] Roosevelt intended his declaration as a statement of his moral purpose and intention to enact and propagate "social reform." President Obama kicked off his re-election campaign in 2011 with a speech in Osawatomie, Kansas (birthplace of Bull Moose-ism), channeling the Rooseveltian Bull Moose party's aspirations for the "new nationalism." He, like Roosevelt before him and numerous others we have documented throughout this work, is a man enamored with the power of his office and is apparently

[165] This from MSNBC reporter Melinda Henneberger of the *Washington Post* speaking to Chris Matthews. Quoted in Mark Steyn, "The Church of Big Government," *National Review*, March 5, 2012, 26. She was telling Matthews how she talks about this issue to her "liberal friends."

[166] Quoted by Jim Powell, *Forbes* online. http://www.forbes.com/sites/jimpowell/2011/12/08/obama-and-teddy-roosevelt-both-progressives-both-clueless-about-the-economy/.

unimpressed with the Founders' sense of the depravity of all men and their need for separation of powers to prevent just such concentrations.

C. S. Lewis years ago seemed to be warning of a terrible time and place where perpetual winter prevailed at the behest of the White Queen/Witch, Jadis, who deplored Christmas and was defeated only when the sacrificial Aslan returned from among the dead to defeat her. His *Chronicles of Narnia*,[167] couched in the guise of children's stories, teach far more than fairy tale lessons. In our opinion if the real world of ruling class, czarist fantasies continues to set the agenda, a long winter threatens the political economy and constitutional liberties of an enervated and supposedly secure populace with no Christmas in sight. Lewis was prescient: "Of all the tyrannies, tyranny sincerely expressed for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent ideological busybodies."[168]

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[167] C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978).

[168] Quoted by George Grant in David W. Hall, *Welfare Reformed*, 167-8.