

what it says now

**UNITED STATES
HISTORY IN CHRISTIAN
PERSPECTIVE:
HERITAGE OF FREEDOM**

A Beka Book
Pensacola Christian
College (1996)

Stresses the necessity of the Christian, pessimistic view of human nature to checks and balances in government; does not emphasize that *it is the deity of Christ (which implies corrupt human nature) that establishes the trinitarian principle of shared sovereignty in federalism*; therefore it often confuses states' rights *under* the Constitution with state sovereignty *over* the Constitution, which wrongly equates shared sovereignty with unshared sovereignty; always mistakes nullification for an expression of states' rights; misperceives secession as an exercise of states' rights; flawed premise is that sovereignty cannot be shared, whereas in a trinitarian Constitution it is shared; false logic of this is that by repudiating nullification and secession, the Civil War in effect overturned the 10th Amendment and limits on federal sovereignty

what these Christian school texts might add:

**TRINITARIANISM
in U.S. History**

In trinitarian divine government, a plurality of Persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) shares sovereignty in the Godhead. In constitutional American government, sovereignty is shared to restrain human nature.

deity of Christ
depravity of man

Basically evil human nature requires the divine Jesus Christ to atone for man's sin.
— therefore —

The deity of Christ requires government to be trinitarian in structure, to restrain human sovereignty.

regeneration
constitutionalism

Liberty requires virtuous citizens and the rule of law, based on laws' original intent.

The Great Awakening led Americans to reaffirm the pessimistic view of human nature in government.

As political trinitarians, Americans in the American Revolution rejected subordination of the *many* colonies to the *one* sovereign king. In the U.S. Constitution, they rejected subordination of the *one* Articles of Confederation Congress to the *many* sovereign states. Instead they created a federal system that shared sovereignty between federal and state governments and denied full sovereignty to either.

James Madison, in *Federalist No. 51*, worked from the premise of the pessimistic view of human nature, which is a corollary of the deity of Christ:

But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

Madison wrote this in context of British constitutional history, which drew on Biblical principles and therefore restrained human sovereignty in government.

separation of powers
mixed government
federalism

"Shared sovereignty" is oxymoronic in human government but inescapable in trinitarianism.

Trinitarianism meant states' rights, not state sovereignty; and constitutional, not federal, supremacy.

delegated powers
reserved powers
concurrent powers

Restraints on the exercise of popular sovereignty reflect acknowledgment of divine sovereignty.

The Constitution is silent on the right to secede due to its trinitarian principle of shared sovereignty.

**no right to secede
no ban on secession**

States and nation are equally ultimate, like the three Persons and the one Godhead.

If states could secede, they are sovereign; if they could not, the federal government is sovereign.

Resolving the right to secede destroys trinitarian shared sovereignty, whichever side wins. The Civil War occurred when the seceding South wrongly equated constitutional states' rights *under* the Constitution with unconstitutional state sovereignty *over* the Constitution.

After 1865 the Union was trinitarian in structure but unitarian in logic.

Federal sovereignty over money and banking developed.

Unchecked by the gold standard, welfare-state deficits took hold.

how these Christian school texts might improve:

what it says now:

relate trinitarianism to
CONSTITUTIONALISM & unconstitutionality

These views are constitutionally flawed. ▼	CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY (shared sovereignty)		These views are constitutionally flawed. ▼
state supremacy (decentralized sovereignty)	<i>The Constitution harmonizes individuality (states) and unity (federal government), both equally vital to liberty.</i>		federal supremacy (centralized sovereignty)
Liberty required individuality above all. (Romanticism) John C. Calhoun	Jeffersonianism Jacksonianism Strict construction Original intent States' rights Tariff for revenue	Hamiltonianism Clay's "American System" 1860 GOP Platform Loose construction National bank Protective tariff Federal aid to internal improvements	Liberty required unity above all. (Unitarianism) William Ellery Channing
Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions			McCulloch v. Maryland
Nullification Sovereign states were final judges of constitutionality of federal acts.	States' rights <i>under</i> the Constitution differed from state sovereignty <i>over</i> the Constitution. The Civil War destroyed state sovereignty but not states' rights. States' rights never meant nullification.		No more states' rights By destroying state sovereignty, the Civil War in effect repealed the 10 th Amendment.
Right of secession	Either secession, or its defeat, destroyed a Union where sovereignty was shared. Can a state secede? really asked, Where does sovereignty ultimately lie? If states could secede, they were ultimately sovereign; if they could not, the federal government was ultimately sovereign. The Constitution said nothing of secession because it <i>shared</i> sovereignty: there was no constitutional right to secede, and no constitutional power to stop it.		Defeat of secession "preserved" the Union.
Black codes Southern states abridged constitutional rights of freedmen.	The 14 th Amendment did not restrain the states for the first time. The Constitution had always restrained the states, by prohibiting some state actions, and by delegating certain powers to the federal government alone. But until beginning in 1925, the U.S. Bill of Rights was held to restrain only the federal government, not the states.		Radical Reconstruction The federal government abridged constitutional rights of southern whites.
State banks could emit bills of credit. (<i>Briscoe v. Bank of Kentucky</i> , 1837)	The Constitution forbids states to emit bills of credit. The Constitutional Convention rejected a bid to let the federal government emit bills of credit.		Federal government could emit bills of credit. (<i>Julliard v. Greenman</i> , 1884)

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Rightly connects the pessimistic view of human nature to checks and balances and separation of powers at the federal level; does not relate that to trinitarian shared sovereignty between federal and state governments, in contrast to nullification and secession; fails to distinguish constitutional states' rights *under* the Constitution from unconstitutional state sovereignty *over* the Constitution, *which was exactly the South's error in 1861*; implication of this confusion is that repudiation of nullification and secession in 1865 effectively repealed the 10th Amendment – the very view that this text properly deplores in judicial activist readings of the 14th Amendment's due process clause