

Beacon of Freedom

For centuries, nations have used lighthouses to guide ships through the night. Without light sailors found it perilously difficult to navigate the seas while avoiding rocks, reefs, and shoals. Lighthouses were situated near these dangerous bearings, and each was outfitted with a beacon at the top. These beacons emanated a radiant light that would pierce any darkness, fog, or storm. They would shine out as a warning to change course and avoid disaster.

It was the duty of the keeper to maintain that beacon of light. If he failed in his duty even once, how many ships would run aground and break to pieces in the night? The keeper had a grave responsibility: he held in his hands the fate of every sailor upon the seas, and he was required to fulfill his responsibility to those men. He would brave the weather of the night; he would toil to climb the several hundred steps leading up to the lantern room; he would light that lantern every night of his life. He would not fail those who so depended on him. He would fight through the difficulties at any cost to put a flame in that beacon.

Our United States Constitution is the lighthouse. It is a warning to those upon the raging seas of politics not to come too close to the deadly rocks of tyranny and unlimited government. It shines as a beacon, bright and steady, through any fog of political gridlock and through any storm of conflict and upheaval. Our Constitution shines as a symbol of hope to all nations that if they alter their courses, they can be free of tyranny and sail upon the calm, open seas of peace.

This lighthouse, our Constitution, must have a keeper. All of us, as Americans, are the keepers of this lighthouse. We have a continual duty to those looking for guidance to keep our beacon burning brightly. We will face all kinds of political weather; we will sometimes grow tired of politics and wish to have nothing more to do with it; we will have days when it seems too hard to mount those never-ending steps to light the beacon of freedom. But despite these

difficulties, we must persevere. We owe a duty to America. We must urgently warn her of the dangers ahead. But we can only send out a strong warning signal by upholding our Constitution.

As citizens of the world's greatest country, we owe a duty to ourselves and posterity to uphold this God-granted gift of liberty. Constitutional law attorney Michael Farris explains that at the time of the Founding Fathers, "the American people...[believed] it was a violation of basic human dignity for anyone other than the people or their own elected legislative representatives to decide the rules that everyone must obey."¹ Thus, the Founding Fathers drafted the United States Constitution on the very principle of self-government, the idea that the people provide the highest source of authority. Self-government is the most fundamental right we have as Americans. It is a right that we must celebrate, for without self-government our nation can easily devolve into a state of fear and tyranny.

Self-government, however, is not just our right; it is our responsibility. After all, the Preamble to the great document itself clearly states that "We the People of the United States ... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."² It's not a passive statement like "We the People approve of this Constitution" or "We the People will follow this Constitution." It is an active, definitive declaration that "**We** the People do **ordain** and **establish** this Constitution." Ultimately, the people have supreme authority over the government through their elected representatives. That is the unique foundation of the American republic.

At the Virginia ratification convention, George Nicholas defended the Constitution by stating that "an enlightened people will never suffer what was established for their security to be perverted to an act of tyranny."³ We can ensure the continuance of our system of government and our Constitution if we become an enlightened people. The Founders devised our

¹ Farris, Michael P. *Constitutional Law for Enlightened Citizens*. Purcellville: Home School Legal Defense Association, 2006. Print. Pg. 7.

² The Constitution of the United States of America.

³ Farris, Michael P. *Constitutional Law for Enlightened Citizens*. Purcellville: Home School Legal Defense Association, 2006. Print. Pg. 3.

representative government specifically to be held accountable to the people, but an uninformed populace cannot and will not maintain this bulwark of liberty. Dwight D. Eisenhower confirmed Nicholas' words when he advised that "politics ought to be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of a free people."⁴ We must uphold our duty to the Constitution, to liberty, and to posterity.

We must be vigilant. As lighthouse keepers, we must tend the beacon of freedom and keep it burning brightly. Just like the keepers of the old days held the fates of those sailors in their hands, so we, too, hold the fate of America and liberty in ours. Each of us must pledge, today, at this very moment, that we will keep this country's light shining brightly, that we will climb the necessary steps, that we will brave any conditions, to ensure that our democratic society can always see the light and lessons of the United States Constitution.

⁴ Grant, George. *The Patriot's Handbook*. Elkton: Highland Books, 1996. Print. Pg. 13.