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Rule of Right, Not Might

THROUGHOUT the long history of mankind, there have been many governments, both good and bad.

They have all maintained their rule by might of one kind or another, and their subjects were lucky when might and right happened to coincide.

A government in which the executive has ultimate authority, as in all dictatorships, backs up its rule with the might of the sword, or with military power. A government in which the legislature has the last word, as in the constitutional monarchies, rules chiefly by the power of the purse, through taxation and fiscal control. These are not necessarily bad.

It is the pride of the United States of America, however, that both the legislature and the executive acknowledge their subjection to a third governmental department, which has no weapon or resource for the enforcement of its decrees except its own convincing explanation of their rightness.

This system prevails in both federal and state government, but we owe its initial establishment to the Supreme Court of the United States—the greatest judicial tribunal the world has ever known.

The Supreme Court has not always been right, but it is always searching for the right, and for nearly two centuries, Americans have been glad to leave in its hands a final check on all departments of government, because we know that in its never-failing search for right lies the surest protection for our liberties.

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