



A Better Guide Than Reason: Federalists and Anti-Federalists (Library of Conservative Thought)

M.E. Bradford

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In this seminal volume, M. E. Bradford defines the Old Whig political tradition in American thought, showing that the inheritance of the prescriptive anti-federalists still lives. For Bradford, important elements in our heritage from the American Revolution have been systematically hidden from our view by anachronistic and partisan scholarship. He believes that other, more ideological components have been emphasized at the expense of the rest. Here he attempts to return us to our heritage.

A Better Guide than Reason is a unique book due to its unusual focus on the Declaration of Independence. Bradford shows that neither equality of condition nor full equality of individual rights for every inhabitant is foreseen by that document, only constitutional equality. For this reason, many scholars have seen a contradiction between the Declaration of 1776 and the Constitution of 1787. Bradford believes that the American Revolution was fought against concentrated power, and asserts that the Declaration is violated whenever such powers are granted in its name.

Russell Kirk, in a poignant new introduction, depicts Bradford as "a formidable and learned champion of the permanent things in our patrimony of culture and politics." He discusses Bradford's view that Patrick Henry and John Dickinson were the real heroes of the American Revolutionary period. This volume is of continuing interest to historians, political scientists, and American studies scholars. Professor Jeffrey Hart has called the book "a masterful phenomenology of the American and Western Spirit."

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