

## **Which Kingdom is More Precious, Dear Christian?**

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Satan is a cunning adversary and the greatest foe of all Christendom. In the Scriptures our Lord does not speak of Satan lightly, nor dare the Christian ever underestimate Satan's power or ability to seduce one's own soul. Satan therefore is not a harmless little barking dog that we can easily ignore.

Consider how our Lord reveals Satan's great power, strength, and cunning in Revelation. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. Rev. 12 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? Rev. 13 "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" Jn. 8.

This is why we are to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith."

Temptation has always been the tool of the devil. It is his sword and arrows, that at times might be visible or invisible. While Satan cannot see into our heart as God does, Satan nevertheless has an intimate knowledge of the carnal nature of our soul for he is the author of evil. He knows what we want, and he knows how to present it in such a way that we might not even recognize the temptation when it comes our way. Satan therefore does not need to bring before our eyes a beautiful woman, a pile of gold, medals and badges of honor to tempt us. He is usually more subtle than that.

Consider the hour of darkness when Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of His capture. Satan knew Peter's pride and also Peter's self-confidence.....Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Satan also knew the rash and impetuous nature of Peter "...Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

It was then quite easy for Satan to present a host of enemies before the eyes of Peter so that he would be compelled to defend the Lord with the sword. Peter fell into error thinking that Christ the Son of God needed to be defended. Certainly this error was the fruit of pride, self-confidence, and rash thinking. Perhaps Peter thought he had to fight to prove his zeal. But in all of this we must ask, where was Peter's faith that Christ was King of kings and Lord of lords? Where was his trust that the King of kings and Lord of lords could not be bound with cords except it be His will?

Where was his recollection of all the miracles of Christ which revealed Christ's divine power? Didn't Jesus say to the waves "Peace be still". Didn't Jesus walk on water? Didn't Peter walk on water until he took his eyes off Christ?

What Jesus said to Peter that night still rings true in our world today when we see evil and dark clouds forming in the "powers that be". "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

In His zeal for a world of sinners, Christ would not let Peter's sword interfere with His eternal desire to save mankind from sin. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" Peter. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels" Peter? Are these words of Jesus meant only for Peter?

Fear is one of the deadliest weapons in the arsenal of the devil. Fear caused Peter to sink into the water. Fear caused Peter to lash out with the sword. Fear caused Peter to deny his Lord three times before the soldiers. Clearly fear has the power to destroy faith and there are those who for a while believe, but "in time of temptation fall away."

What is happening then in our world today is this: Satan is placing before the eyes of Christendom the visible and "evil" foe of our government. As Christians we all see the same thing. Our government, the God-ordained power that be, appears to be getting worse and worse. There can be no doubt socialism is on the rise, and with the rise of socialism there is loss of freedom. While we are able to do without many freedoms, when freedom of religion is lost, there is open persecution by the wicked in government. Many a Christian then sees the dark clouds forming on the horizon and there is fear. When we fear the foe we reach for the sword.

But this is just how our old evil foe seeks to slay us. By bringing forth this visible foe in front of us, the distracted Christian does not see the roaring lion sneaking up behind. The invisible temptation that we face is really two-fold: the temptation to rebel against "the powers that be" which are ordained of God, or the temptation to make heaven on earth by molding and shaping our government with "Christian laws." In both cases there is a failure to understand the separation of Church and State, and a failure to rightly divide the law and the Gospel. What is worse, the distracted Christian begins to hold in his heart as more precious this kingdom on earth (America), rather than the Kingdom of Grace (True Church) which leads to the Kingdom of Glory (heaven).

In God's Kingdom of Grace however, fear must be overcome by faith. It is not what we see that matters, but what we do not see. Our faith is in the unseen Christ, His forgiveness of sins, even life everlasting. Our hope is in the world to come! "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" Rom. 8.

Which nation is more precious dear Christian, God's kingdom of grace which delivers us to heaven, or the kingdom of this earth, the United States of America? Let us not reach for the sword, but have faith in our Lord who stands beside us! "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" Is. 41:10.

## Three Kingdoms, One King

God in His almighty power rules simultaneously over three kingdoms: His Kingdom of Power, His Kingdom of Glory, and His Kingdom of Grace. Since Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, it follows in the kingly office of Christ nothing is outside the scope of His rule. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." All visible and all invisible creatures are under Him. "He left nothing that is not put under Him" (Heb. 2:8). The teaching that Christ rules all things is also found in the Old Testament. Daniel 7:13-14 says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Moreover, even when God became incarnate, adding to the divine a human nature, Christ still rules according to both natures, human and divine. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Pieper writes, "Scripture exempts no territory in the universe from the dominion of Christ; the officium Christi regium extends over all relations and situations in the universe."

Our catechism says, "As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads it to glory."

Briefly, let us discuss the three kingdoms Christ rules. His Kingdom of Power includes things in heaven and things in earth, "the unbelievers (who refuse to accept the Gospel of grace), together with the fallen angels, and the irrational creatures (to whom the Gospel does not apply), Christ rules by His omnipotence" (Pieper, Vol. II, p. 385). Here God's enemies, the devil and the evil angels are also included. Remember the devil needed God's permission to afflict Job and the "Legion" of Mark 5 said to Christ, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not". Note also in God's Kingdom of Power, He also rules over the beasts of the earth, the sun, moon, and stars (Joshua 10:13). Concerning the irrational beasts of the earth we might recall the two bears which came out of the woods tearing up the forty two children in Elisha's day, or the hornets which drove the ungodly nations out of Canaan (Ex. 23). God had power over these creatures and He used them to fulfil His will against the ungodly.

Christ rules also over His Kingdom of Grace. This is nothing more than the believers on earth, the True Church, the Invisible Church, Mt. Zion, the Spiritual Israel, the Holy Christian Church on Earth, the Church Militant. We know this is an invisible kingdom for our Lord says, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say Lo here or Lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you." These are they who have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb, called out of the darkness into His marvelous light. These are they "who have accepted 'the Gospel of the grace of God' (Acts 20:24), He rules in grace through the revealed Word" (Pieper p. 385, II). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Jn. 10

While the beginning of our eternal life begins here on earth in this vale of tears by faith in Christ Jesus, "this corruptible must put on incorruption". Let it also be here said that the Kingdom of Grace is not synonymous with the Visible Church on earth, which includes both believers and unbelievers.

The third kingdom is God's Kingdom of Glory above, the Church Triumphant. The cross leads to glory. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" Rev. 14:13. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" Ps. 116:15. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" Heb. 11:13. The Kingdom of Glory is where the thief on the cross went upon death. "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" Heb. 12:22. Not only are God's triumphant saints in this Kingdom of Glory but also the good angels.

Concerning these three kingdoms over which Christ rules Pieper said, "What a glorious subject is here presented to the preacher! Let him not be content with merely enumerating the three Kingdoms and presenting a hasty sketch of them, but in describing them let him -as one of our fathers put it -"Pull out all stops" (Pieper, Vol. II, p. 386).

While this nation, these United States is indeed a precious kingdom, our Lord does not desire it be more precious to us than His Kingdom of Grace. We can lose our salvation if we do not repent of loving one more than the other. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." When Lot's wife turned back to look upon her treasure, the burning Sodom and Gomorrah, she was turned into a pillar of salt. There will never be heaven on earth, nor should we expect it or look for it. The Church on earth knows there is a better world to come and the love of this world will only destroy our love for Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" Col. 3:1-4. Since He is our risen King that rules from His throne of glory above, since He yet rules His Kingdom of Power in the best interest of His Church, we need not be filled with fear and panic when we see evil forces at work in our own government.

Franz Pieper writes: It is very comforting to know that the sun, moon, and stars, the air, fire, and water, the devils, and all our enemies obey the will of Christ no less than the Church and the holy angels. It is very comforting to know that Christ rules the universe in the interest of the Kingdom of Grace, or the Church. In other words: everything in heaven and earth must serve the one purpose of gathering and preserving the Church. The kingdoms of this world are "the scaffolding used in the building of the Church." Matthew 28:18-19: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." (Pieper, Vol. II, p. 387)

Mark this point well dear concerned and troubled citizen of these United States: not only does Christ as a King reign over all His enemies, He rules them in such a way that His precious Church, His Bride which He has espoused to Himself with His own blood..... will be kept and preserved in the true faith unto life everlasting. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ" Phil. 1:6. If the devil could not lay a finger on Job without God's permission, and the "Legion" in the possessed man was terrified at what Christ might do to them, isn't the King of kings and Lord of lords well able to do with our government what He will? Is it even possible that ANY government on earth be outside His all-encompassing power? Is there....*can* there be any rogue state beyond His control? Can any evil ruler on earth lift a finger against God's anointed, except God first allow it? If God allows it, isn't it for our own good? "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." I Pet. 5:7

Christ rules over ALL His enemies -anything less would be a weak and impotent God. If we were to entertain the thought for a moment that perhaps some exceptionally wicked enemies were beyond His control, could this god be God? Isn't such a lesser god less than Almighty? Such a god would be like the Roman gods who were constantly warring against one another, playing tricks and games on each other. Even man's natural knowledge without the light of the Scriptures will testify that God must be able to do whatever He wants with His enemies. He brings them to power, and takes them out of power. In Proverbs 8 the Lord says, "I have strength. By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Even when the kings of the earth are united against Him, Psalm 2 says, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. ....Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." This Psalm is all about Christ our King, His salvation for sinners, and what He does with the rulers who oppose Him. Therefore as we struggle with the wayward direction of our government, let us be children who simply trust and conclude "God is yet ruling over these powers that be, and He has promised me that all He does is in my own best interest. I will therefore cling to Him in faith as my Savior, trust in His strength alone, and look for that better world to come."

The kings of this earth are nothing more than pawns in the divine hand of God. God is THE divine Chess Player, if you will. Who was Pharaoh of the Exodus, or Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians, if not pawns whom the King moved about on the board as it suited Him? Doesn't a King always protect His bride? God hardened Pharaoh's heart only so His name would be glorified among His people. God used the ungodly Nebuchadnezzar to punish the idolatrous Israelites. The Lord said, "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I

given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant" Jer. 27. Need we speak of how God used Pilate? When Jesus was about to be crucified, Jesus said to him, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." For the salvation of sinners God long ago ordained Pilate to be the instrument of Christ's atoning death. In Acts four Peter prayed, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" Acts 4.

Luther writes, "God looks upon kings as children look upon playing cards. While they are playing, they hold the cards in their hands; thereafter they fling them into a corner, under the bench, or into the rubbish. God also acts in this way with potentates. While they rule, He considers them good; but as soon as they overdo it, He "puts down the mighty from their seats" (Luke 1:52) and lets them lie there as discards" (What Luther Says, #1764)

God is always at a minimum a thousands moves ahead of the devil. Satan was defeated before he first was created! God from eternity chose and elected to give Himself, His only-begotten Son for the salvation of sinners. Before the world was even formed the Son of God speaks from eternity regarding His Heavenly Father, "Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and My delights were with the sons of men" Prov. 8 Their delight, the delight of the Father and the Son, was this one and only way of salvation. "Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love" Jer. 31:3. The delight of the Father was to give His Son to redeem the world. The delight of the Son was to give His life a ransom for many. Hence from this big picture which reaches back into eternity, telescope and zoom to the day the enemies of Christ nailed the Son of God to a tree! At that moment the devil said, "Check", but God said, "Checkmate." If God then is so brilliant and omniscient that He can plan out our salvation to the very last detail so that even His enemies become His footstool, need we fear the powers that be which are ordained of God? "If Christ be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth!" Therefore, even if these United States suddenly became a truly Christian nation so that the president and all citizens were true believers, would we want to live here? Is this where you would stay when He yet lives up there? "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

### **The Purpose of the Church and the Purpose of the State**

Luther summarized nicely the different purposes of Church and State. "It is the work and the glory of the ministry to make real saints out of sinners, living souls out of the dead, saved souls out of the damned, children of God out of servants of the devil. Just so it is the work and the glory of temporal government to make human beings out of wild beasts and to keep human beings from turning into wild beasts." Again, "There are two kingdoms, one the kingdom of God, the other the kingdom of the world.....God's kingdom is a kingdom of grace and mercy, not of wrath and punishment.

In it there is only forgiveness, consideration for one another, love, service, the doing of good, peace, joy, etc. But the kingdom of the world is a kingdom of wrath and severity. In it there is only punishment, repression, judgment, and condemnation to restrain the wicked and protect the good. For this reason it has the sword, and Scripture calls a prince or lord 'God's wrath,' or 'God's rod' (Is. 14:5-6)." (Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 46, p. 69f., from "An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants.")

Simply put, the work of the state is to keep the peace. They have the right to enact laws, judge and punish those who have broken the law, exonerate the innocent, tax its citizens, wage just wars, even do things which promote the best interests of its people. Joseph stored up large amounts of food for the good of the Egyptians and later charged them for the same in years of famine.

Romans 13:3-4 makes clear the purpose of the State. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The tool of the State is naturally the sword. Those subjects who break the law must be punished, for without the law there is no order but only chaos. Since the fall of man, only the sword of the government is able to outwardly keep wickedness in check. Were it not for the power God has given to the government, wickedness would not be restrained and men would slay one another till the last man standing. Moreover, without government to restrain the ungodly, the Gospel would not have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people.

The authority of the State comes from God Himself, hence we must see government is good in itself, beneficial to all. Like marriage, God has instituted the State for our own good. Thus, there is really no such thing as an "evil" government, but there are (and always will be) evil sinners who occupy their God-given office and abuse it. This is an important point in our discussion because we dare not say that since we have an "evil government" we ought not obey but rebel. God doesn't allow us to rebel against our parents if they are sinners, so why should we think we can rebel against our rulers since they are sinners too? "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Like the State, God has likewise established the authority of the Church, but for a far different purpose. The purpose of the Church (Kingdom of Grace) is to preach the Gospel for the salvation of souls. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The building tool of the Church is the Means of Grace and not a sword of steel. Franz Pieper writes, "Those who resort to other means than the Word and the Sacraments to build the Church are disobedient to Christ's instructions. And they are acting the part of fools; means selected by human wisdom do not build, but only destroy the Church" (Pieper Vol. II, 388).

By the Means of the Gospel the Holy Spirit, "calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." He will "give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true." It is not the business of the Church to make this world a better place to live, but our calling is to preach the Gospel to every creature. "Go ye therefore and teach [make disciples] of all nations.....Lo I am with you alway!" Mt. 28.

Walther makes the distinction between these two kingdoms perfectly clear. "Church and State are, according to God's Word, as different from each other as heaven and earth. The State is a kingdom of this world, hence an earthly kingdom; the Church however is 'not from hence,' not an earthly kingdom, it is, as the Lord so often says, the 'kingdom of heaven' upon earth. The State is an external, physical, visible, kingdom, the Church an internal, spiritual invisible kingdom, for, as Christ says with plain words, 'the kingdom of God cometh not with observation.....The State has as its members all who allow themselves to be taken up externally into its association, bad and good, ungodly and pious, unbelievers and believers, non-Christians and Christians; the Church, on the contrary, has only those as members who are Christ's sheep, who hear His voice and from their hearts believe on Him. The State has for its purpose only the earthly welfare of men, protection of the body, property, and honor of its citizens, and external quietness, peace, discipline, and order in this world; the Church, on the contrary has for its purpose the peace of men with God, protection against sin, death, devil, and hell, eternal righteousness, eternal life and eternal blessedness. The State has as its norm the light of nature or of human reason; the Church has the light of the immediate divine revelation embodied in the Holy Scripture. The State has for laws those which it makes itself; the Church gives no laws, but only urges the eternal laws of God. The State reproveth only the outward evil deed; the Church reproveth also the ungodly attitude of the heart. The State allows everything which its earthly purposes demand or at least permit; the Church allows only what God in His Word declares allowable. The State commands on its own authority and hence demands obedience to its commands on the basis of its official power; the Church commands nothing on its own authority and demands obedience only to the commands of Christ. The State has as its means and weapons the bodily sword and external power of compulsion; the Church has the sword of the Spirit, namely the Word of God and the power of conviction through this Word." (C.F.W. Walther, *Brosamen*, p. 498. This translation is by Wallace H. McLaughlin, in *Orthodox Lutheran Theologian*, Dec. 1954, pp. 149-153 which is a translation from a series of articles titled "Walther as a Theologian" by Franz Pieper, which appeared in *Lehre und Wehre* Dec. 1889, pp. 361-368.)

Thus let us summarize: the purpose of the government, God's Kingdom of Power, serves only to preserve an external peace and order in the world. Its sword is of steel and it rules only by force. On the other hand, the purpose of God's Kingdom of Grace is to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ which liberates men from the bondage of sin through the merits of Jesus Christ our blessed Savior. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."



## **A More Perfect Understanding of the Term "Christian Nation"**

The term "Christian Nation" is used in different ways. For example, when the majority of citizens in a nation profess Christianity, we speak of such as being a Christian nation. There were several Christian nations in Luther's days (Catholic and Protestant), and the United States is presently known as such though our current president has said otherwise. When we as Americans speak of the founding of our nation it is also common to point to the Christianity of our forefathers and how we were founded as a Christian nation. Many lament how our nation has lost its roots of Christianity and society as a whole has fallen into the cesspool of immorality with the rise of pornography, abortion, promiscuity, adultery, illicit drugs, and the homosexual movement. Indeed we lament these sins as well and there can be no doubt things have gone from bad to worse. The Bible does however say, "There is no new thing under the sun" Ecc. 1:9.

Concerning the term "Christian Nation", while many of our founding fathers were indeed professing Christians, only God really knows who the true believers were. That term "Christian" is a spiritual term, while the term "nation" is temporal. This is not in any way to speak ill of these remarkable men, but only an appeal to the truth of the Scriptures: that the True Church is invisible. Only God can look upon the heart and see whether or not one's faith is in Christ or good works for salvation. Regarding our founding fathers and presidents, many were Masons whose doctrine is salvation by works and not by grace. The Concordia Cyclopaedia of 1927 states: "Does Freemasonry teach salvation by works? Ans. "It inculcates the practice of virtue, but it supplies no scheme of redemption for sin. It points its disciples to the path of righteousness, but it does not claim to be 'the way, the truth, and the life.'" (Encyclo., p. 641) "It is the object of the speculative Mason, by a uniform tenor of virtuous conduct, to receive, when his allotted course of life is passed, the inappreciable reward, from his Celestial Grand Master, of 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'" (Lexicon, pp. 450. 451)

As for the questionable Christianity of some of our forefathers, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of our nation and author of the Declaration of Independence, was a humanist. He held reason to be a superior authority to everything, including the Bible. "Thomas Jefferson referred to Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and John Lock as 'my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced'". (wiki.menticello.org, The Jefferson Encyclopedia) He hung their portraits in the parlor of his home. Jefferson also made his own bible. "He cut and pasted pieces of the N.T. together to compose a version that excluded any miracles by Jesus, thereby focusing on 'the pure principles which he taught' and which have since been published as the Jefferson Bible" (wikipedia). Just a few years ago it was also discovered through DNA tests that he fathered children through a slave which he never married. Naturally these founding fathers have long since perished and "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment". We dare not usurp God's judgment and pronounce them in heaven or hell. Again the True Church is invisible. Nevertheless there is certainly enough evidence to bring into question the professed Christianity of some. It might be better to say our nation was founded by professing Christians.

What we as confessional Lutherans should be aware of is the term "Christian Nation" is often improperly used by many to support the commingling of Church and State. When Reformed Christians speak of how we need to be a Christian Nation once again, they often mean that we must use the Ten Commandments to create a moral and Christian society. But if we take the two words Christian and Nation, what do we have? Christian in its proper sense is a spiritual term, an invisible kingdom known only to God. The term Nation is temporal, a visible kingdom on earth. Is it possible then to ever have a truly Christian Nation?

Luther answers this question: It is out of the question that there can be a common Christian government over the entire world, or, for that matter, over one country or a great number of people; for the wicked are always far more numerous than the pious. Therefore a man who would undertake to govern an entire country or the world with the Gospel would be like a shepherd who would place into one stable wolves, lions, eagles, and sheep, letting them freely mingle with one another, and saying: Take care of yourselves. Be good and peaceable among yourselves. The stable is open. You have sufficient fodder. Dogs and clubs you need not fear. In such a situation the sheep would no doubt keep the peace and would quietly allow themselves to be fed and controlled. But they would not live long, nor would any beast keep itself from being attacked by another.

For this reason these two kingdoms must be carefully distinguished, and both must be permitted to remain - the one to produce piety, the other to create external peace and to prevent evil deeds. Neither is sufficient in the world without the other for no one can become pious before God by means of the secular government without Christ's spiritual rule. But as matters stand, Christ's rule does not extend over all. On the contrary, Christians are always in the minority and are in the midst of non-Christians. (What Luther Says, Plass, #1795)

Thus if we separate and divide the two words "Christian Nation", we really have two separate and distinct kingdoms, even nations. One is a Kingdom of Grace and the other is a Kingdom of Earth. As we have seen, their purposes are entirely different. Just consider the pairing of these words: spiritual temporal, heavenly earthly, heavenly Gospel earthly law, invisible visible, Sword of the Spirit Sword of Steel, King and king, Lord and lord, everlasting and temporary. Which kingdom is more precious to the believer who has been redeemed by Christ? Which kingdom ends and which is eternal? Which kingdom appeals to pride and which kingdom is repulsed by pride? There is then a marked difference between being a proud American and a humble servant of Christ. "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before the fall", but "the meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever" Ps. 22:26.

### **Christian Laws Do Not a Moral Nation Make** (The Law Makes No One Righteous)

There are many Christians in our country today who reason that we must elect Christians into office so they can pass "Christian" laws in agreement with the Ten Commandments, the laws of Moses. Their hope is that with such laws there will be less immorality in our nation and more good moral behavior. This was the thinking of John Calvin as well.

"John Calvin did not believe in the separation of church and state. He believed the state should be informed by the church as to what is good for the people. There have been and still are movements within Calvinism which intend to replace the legal codes of every nation with the laws of Moses." (Kenneth Miller, Lutherans are not Protestants, pg 27)

But what is the fruit of this commingling of Church and State?

Let us take a brief look at history. "While passing through Geneva, Calvin was persuaded by Farel, the Protestant preacher, to remain there and help make Geneva a Protestant city. Calvin did so and became more or less a dictator for the Protestant cause. Using his Confession of Faith as a creed-test, he determined those who accepted the Protestant faith, as well as those who did not. Those who refused to be Protestants were banished, while others -a large number -who were zealous for the Protestant cause, were allowed in. The citizens were closely watched for infractions of the laws. Punishment, including banishment and even death, was applied to those who broke the laws of the Church and remained incorrigible. In the case of excommunicated persons, the civil magistrates were to take over the matter from the Church in order to try and work a change of sentiment in the person. In cases where they did not succeed they were to administer the proper punishment. Soon, Calvin's oppressive tactics reminded the citizens of previous oppressors, with the result that his reputation came into disrepute." (Lutheranism: From Wittenberg to the USA. Luther, the Reformation, and Lutheranism in America). Since Calvin was both a foreigner and dictator, he was forced to leave Geneva. Years later however, when things were going badly in Geneva, "Calvin was invited back. He returned in September 1541. Calvin demanded, and received, complete authority to lead Geneva as a theocracy. Geneva became a Puritan State, the "city of God." The civil code framed by Calvin made Geneva a Republic, which served from that time on as a center of the Reformed Church. Within four years after Calvin's return, 58 people were executed and many others were banished." (Lutheranism: From Wittenberg to the U.S.A. Luther, the Reformation, and Lutheranism in America, A Conservative Perspective, Christian News, August 18, 2008)

Calvin's teaching regarding the mixture of church and state ultimately spread to the early colonists who settled New England. While many moved to America for the sake of religious freedom, those who held to Calvin's mixture of church and state by no means practiced religious freedom. "The French Huguenots, the Puritans, and Dutch settlers brought it to our shores. And we need but read the stories of Puritan New England, of Dutch New Amsterdam, to see a repetition of what happened in Geneva under Calvin's rule.' Regarding this last statement: for example, recall that Mary Dyer, a Quaker, was hanged on the Boston Common in 1660 while in pursuit of religious liberty. The Puritans, who were Calvinist extremists, abhorred any deviation. Many of the tyrannical laws which held sway in the early American Colonies were founded on Calvin's principles." (Lutheranism: From Wittenberg to the USA. Luther, the Reformation, and Lutheranism in America). "The Puritans were stern men and they took stern measures. They arrested the disturbers of their peace, whipped some through the towns, cut off the ears of others, and drove them out into the wilderness." (Leading Facts of American History, D.H. Montgomery, 1910, pg. 78)

As for the Quakers, "In several cases they forced their way into Puritan meetings on Sunday and cried out that the ministers were hypocrites and deceivers of the people.....After repeated warnings, the Massachusetts authorities hanged four of these missionaries, one a woman, on Boston Common, and buried their bodies at the foot of the gallows.....Finally, the King ordered the Governor of the colony to cease punishing the Quakers, and the excitement gradually died out." (Leading Facts of American History, D.H. Montgomery, 1910, pg. 78, 79)

Notice it was the King of England who brought about peace, but it was those who mixed church and state who persecuted or harassed one another. From these examples it is evident tyranny is the end result of Calvin's mixing of Church and State. While we must admit that even tyrants can keep order (as Calvin did) and there are benefits, when tyranny is coupled with the name "Christian", the cause of the Gospel suffers. "Any usurpation of power either by the Church or by the State in the domain of the other results in misrule and tyranny in both, and is destruction of religious and civil liberty, as the history of the past amply proves." (Summary of Christian Doctrine, Koehler, pg. 284).

As Christians who believe that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, we must likewise realize it is not the business of the Church to use the State to make a more "moral" nation by the Ten Commandments. The State is not our preaching pulpit whereby we can threaten people to obey as Calvin did. The work of the Church is to preach the Gospel alone so inwardly (by God's power) the heart is turned from sin to love God. Those who love God willingly obey all laws beneficial to faith. This is why we of the Gospel teach morality cannot be legislated -because we know neither God's laws nor man's laws can move a heart to do good and moral things. Jesus alone can do this. Nevertheless it is good and beneficial when men make laws in the light of human reason and experience, for all men have reason by nature and the law of God is written in every man's heart. All men know by nature it is wrong to lie, steal, commit adultery, hurt one's neighbor, etc., yet no man by their own sinful nature has the power to keep themselves from such sins. Thus the good purpose of the government is simply to outwardly restrain and keep in check the natural wickedness of every man. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." Romans 13:3 Thus when we say we cannot legislate morality, we mean only to say that the laws of the land cannot produce or make a good and moral citizen in the positive direction. While they might be well behaved in an outward fashion (as in Geneva under Calvin's rule), such keep themselves from wickedness only out of fear. Laws do not a moral nation make because the law makes no one righteous.

This truth can only be understood through the light of the Gospel. We know we are justified by grace alone through faith alone so that Christ alone is our Savior. To the contrary all unbelievers believe they are justified in God's sight by the works of the law. Such can only conclude better laws in the State will create better citizens. Those in such darkness cannot see the light. Thanks be to God the Light of Christ has shined upon our hearts, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1

Concerning the law we know that Christ has fulfilled and kept God's law perfectly in the stead of all men, in our stead. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Mt. 5:17 "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4:4-5

The Son of God did what we sons of men could not so, He kept the law perfectly out of a perfect and pure love for God. The Spirit of Christ then teaches us in the Gospel His perfect obedience of the law is credited to our account. We do not only receive His forgiveness of sins through faith, but also His righteous obedience of the law through faith. This is why the Bible says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." We who dwell in the light of the Gospel stand under the light of the eternal Sun, the Sun (Son) of Righteousness who carries healing in His wings. We don't live under the dark cloud of the law for we know the law cannot save us. Instead we daily live under His grace, the Light of the Son. Therefore when we speak of the way of salvation for sinners, it is not necessary for man to do even one single good work, for God has already through Christ justified and declared all men righteous through Christ. Faith receives what God has already freely given.

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Christ is yet dead in vain to those who think they are alive by the law (salvation by good works).

As long as people trust in their own goodness and refuse to admit they are dead in trespasses and sins, such will never be moral in the sight of God, nor will they have any need for Christ, the Savior of sinners.

The Gospel alone declares God has already counted all men righteous through Christ and "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." Where this faith in Christ lives in the heart, the believer needs no threats of force to obey the powers that be. It is his love for his Savior which moves him to happily obey all laws by faith. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." And, "faith worketh by love."

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to everyone that believeth." Rom. 10:4 Luther writes, (Christians) "need no secular sword or law. And if all the world were composed of genuine Christians, that is true believers, no prince, king, lord, sword, or law would be necessary or helpful. For why should they need them since they have in their hearts the Holy Spirit, who teaches them and sees to it that they wrong no one, that they love everyone, and that they gladly and cheerfully suffer wrong and even death from everyone." (What Luther Says, Plass, #1759)

When we understand that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth", we utterly drop the idea that moral laws in government will make anyone good. Yet where the Gospel faith lives, no club, no curb is needed, for faith works by love and we love Him because He first loved us and love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

## **What Should We Do Considering the Present State of Our Nation?**

The short and sweet answer here is PRAY!

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." I Tim. 2:1-4 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" 2 Chron. 7:14.

Living in God's Kingdom of Grace, knowing Christ rules and governs all the kings of this earth for the glory and welfare of His Church, it is self-evident that we pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority." We pray that they rule and govern in such a way that there will be peace and order in our land. We pray criminals will justly be punished according to the severity of their crime. We pray that law abiding citizens will be rewarded (honored).

We pray that those government officials who are corrupt will be removed from office and replaced with honest and godly people. We pray that God will put Christians in office who understand the Biblical teaching of separation of Church and State, lest the cause of the Gospel suffer. We pray that our government officials will hold true to the law of the land, our constitution, so that our freedoms will be preserved; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We ought to pray fervently instead of reaching for the sword of rebellion, as Peter did. We also dare not underestimate the power of prayer, in that Christ is the perfect Mediator between God and man, and for His sake our prayers are readily heard and readily answered according to God's good and gracious will. If we do not understand why God has allowed certain rulers to occupy their place in office, we must remember His ways are higher than our own, and Jesus is yet our ascended King of kings and Lord of lords. Sitting at the right hand of power, He rules all things in heaven and earth. As for the power of prayer when there are evil people in office, consider Elijah who was persecuted by King Ahab and Jezebel. "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" Jms 5.

Another striking example regarding the evil forces of this world and the prayer of a believer is found in II Kings 6. The prophet Elisha and his servant woke up one morning to see their city surrounded by the chariots of Syria's army. "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness.

And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha." 2 Kgs 6:15-18  
Indeed, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

While we are to "pray without ceasing", believers also are free to run for office. We can also be active in the political realm as long as we have a proper understanding of the purpose of Church and State.

"A Christian can with a good conscience administer a civil office.....The Gospel does not abolish the government; therefore a Christian can also administer such an office with a good conscience" (Comparative Symbolics Based on Guenther, Wallace H. McLaughlin, Martin Luther Institute of Sacred Studies, 1968).

Joseph of Egypt, King Saul, King David, King Solomon, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, are all examples of Old Testament believers in office. In the New Testament Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, and Jairus was a ruler of a synagogue.

In Luther's day there were many believers in authority by way of Luther's teaching of the Gospel. Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." Indeed we should pray that God will put such believers in power and it could even be said that when a Christian is given such a position by God in the civil estate, such should rule according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This does not mean the State would become their preaching pulpit, but rather they would rule through their God-given wisdom of faith. Church and State would then be rightly separated and not confused nor comingled, so that the laws of the land would agree with the light of reason and human experience, but also be tempered with mercy and compassion. Love knows no law, yet love is the fulfilling of the law. Proverbs 29:14 says, "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever."

When there are evil forces at work within one's own government, it is our duty to condemn the sins of those in office while giving such their proper honor as God commands. This is not easy to do because of our sinful flesh, yet it is very necessary and pleasing to God when done in the proper spirit. Luther said, "We are to rebuke our Pilates in their brazenness and defiance. But then they say: You are slandering and dishonoring the majesty of princes. To this we reply: We should and shall endure at their hands what they do to us; but we certainly do not intend to be quiet or say: Gracious Lord, you are doing what is right. For there is a great difference between the two: suffering injustice and violence and being quiet about it. One should suffer injustice and violence, but one is not to remain quiet. For a Christian should testify to the truth and die for the sake of the truth" (What Luther Says, #1807). There were many believers in the Bible who suffered either injustice or persecution, yet they condemned the sin while respecting the office (David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, John the Baptist, Peter and the apostles). The prophet Jeremiah is a wonderful example. In his day there were false prophets telling the people not to worry about the Babylonians, teaching God would not allow them to overthrow the Jews. Yet God repeatedly through Jeremiah told them His anger was hot against the Israelites for their idolatrous sins and He would use the Babylonians to punish His people. Zedekiah, Jeremiah's king, did not like this message and he threw Jeremiah in a dungeon. "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon.....and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no

water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire" (38:6). After Jeremiah had suffered for many days, Zedekiah quietly took him out and asked if the Lord had any message for him.

Notice how Jeremiah speaks to the cruel king. He appeals to his conscience, but also respectfully. What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. Jer. 37:18ff

Note even after being imprisoned in the dungeon for speaking only the truth of God's Word, when Jeremiah stands before the king, he calls him "my lord the king". Thus the sins of the king were condemned, yet Jeremiah still spoke respectfully to this wicked ruler.

Let our thoughts again return to Peter who first reached for the sword to defend Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. After he was restored to faith by the risen Christ, Peter's regard for government had greatly changed. Through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost Peter now directs believers to "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." I Peter 2:13ff On the flip side, Peter also speaks of the great wickedness of those who despise government. "Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.....these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes."

Thus regarding those in office who abuse their God-given power, while it is our duty to condemn their sins, we must yet submit and obey unless they command us to do what is clearly forbidden by God (Acts 5:29). We must also remember God alone is the judge of our enemies, and unless they repent they will finally be destroyed in hell's fire. Such would be our fate also, had not the Lord condemned our own rebellious nature by the law, that we might be freed from our sins by the Gospel. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." On the cross our Savior, with His own blood, paid for every time we despised the authority of our father or mother, the authority of our pastor or teachers, the authority of our kings and rulers. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" and "By Him all that believe are justified from all things" and "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." Thanks be to God Jesus is "the Lord our righteousness." So we love our enemies, we do good to them who hate us, we bless them which curse us, and we pray for them which spitefully use and persecute us. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."



## **"Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness"**

When we know by faith that the King of kings and Lord of lords for our sake and for our salvation humbled Himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, it is evident and beyond all doubt -we are to set our affections on the things above, and not on the things of this earth. There will never be heaven on earth, yet Christ came from heaven to earth to bring us from earth to heaven. Jesus said "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness". It is in, by, and through His righteousness that even now we belong to a far more precious kingdom than this land of the free, namely we belong to God's Kingdom of Grace by faith in Christ Jesus. This is indeed a spiritual kingdom on earth, yet it is a heavenly kingdom in that the doors to heaven are now open before us. This heavenly kingdom of Christ is far more precious and real than any fictional heaven on earth that the devil may place before our eyes. Let us therefore not reach for the sword of rebellion by the vain thought that God's Kingdom needs be defended with earthly tools. Let us also listen to and obey the voice of our Good Shepherd, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" The Scriptures have been fulfilled. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Jn. 20

It is glorious and indeed beautiful to understand that our ascended Lord even now in the highest heaven is yet ruling all things on earth in the interest of His bride the Church! If He in His grace allows this nation to yet stand with its freedoms intact for another 100 years for the sake of the saints, such would be a wondrous sign of His everlasting love. By the same token if He allowed this nation to fall by the disease of socialism and persecution of saints, such would also be a wondrous sign of His everlasting love for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." When God through chastening teaches our hearts there is no heaven on earth, He is at the same time directing our hearts to the Kingdom of Glory yet to come. The cross leads to glory. By His grace days of gladness follow days of sadness. "Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice" Jn. 16:22.

Faith alone in Christ will preserve us through this present distress. Let us then "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" Heb. 12.

Beloved of the Lord, recall how your blessed Savior entered into mortal combat with your foe by way of the cross and so thoroughly defeated him, that Satan even now is under Christ's heel in his death throes. He can harm us none, he's judged the deed is done. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." "Who shall lay any thing to

the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" Rom. 8. Therefore, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not on thine own understanding." "For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" Deut. 20:4. Amen.

### **Appendix**

#### **Prayer in Time of National Calamity**

(The Lutheran Hymnal, pg. 104, 105)

O Lord God, heavenly Father, we humbly confess unto Thee that by our evil-doing and continual disobedience we have deserved Thy chastisements; yet we earnestly beseech Thee, for Thy name's sake, to spare us; restrain the harmful power of the enemy and help Thy suffering people that Thy Word may be declared faithfully and without hindrance and that we, amending our sinful lives, may walk obedient to Thy holy commandments; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

#### **Prayer for Independence Day**

by Pastor Paul C. Neipp

Lord of the Nations, Governor of the world, we thank Thee on this Independence Day, for the glorious land which Thou hast given us. While nations the world over have little freedom at all, we have the priceless treasures of freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom of religions. Speed the day when these freedoms will be extended to men everywhere. Strike off the shackles of those who live in slave countries.

Restrain the forces of evil which would destroy our way of life. Rouse us to our sense of duty as citizens of this great nation. Help us to fight evil and corruption in our community. Help us to appreciate our use of the ballot. Send us statesmen who rise above personal gain, men who are truly American and have the vision and courage to serve the best interests of our nation as a whole. Remove corrupt officials from office and replace them with God-fearing statesman. Cleanse our cities, counties, and states from crime and corruption. Protect the rights of the common people. Keep us in the ways of our God-fearing forefathers. Preserve our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Keep us strong, make us humble, help us to put our trust in Thee. We ask this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

#### **Brief Statement of 1932, Of Church and State**

“34. Although both Church and State are ordinances of God, yet they must not be commingled. Church and State have entirely different aims. By the Church, God would save men, for which reason the Church is called the "mother" of believers, Ga. 4:26. By

the State, God would maintain external order among men, "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," I Tim. 2:2. It follows that the means which Church and State employ to gain their ends are entirely different. The Church may not employ any other means than the preaching of the Word of God, John 18:11, 36; 2 Cor. 10:4. The State, on the other hand, makes laws bearing on civil matters and is empowered to employ for their execution also the sword and other corporal punishments, Rom. 13:4. Accordingly we condemn the policy of those who would have the power of the State employed "in the interest of the Church" and who thus turn the Church into a secular dominion; as also of those who, aiming to govern the State by the Word of God, seek to turn the State into a Church."