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The STATE and the KINGDOM

CONDENSED *and* RECAST *from the* LECTURE

“The Kingdom of Christ & God”

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The STATE and the KINGDOM

“For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.”—1 Cor. 15:25.

How must Christ reign? What is meant by such expressions as—“King of kings”—“Lord of lords”—“Governor of the nations”—“Blessed and only Potentate”—“Prince and Savior”—“all authority on earth” of rulers being “ministers of God’s service,” if the state is not a department of “The Kingdom of Christ and God?”

Does it not seem more appropriate to say “King of nations” than to say King of churches? When the Bible was written, was it the custom to have a king over the church; or does it imply that, as Head over all things, he as king is over a united church and state? In the church, is he not the “Apostle and High Priest of our confession”; and in the state, is he not our Savior King? Is not each a department in his Mediatorial activity? Why should kings and rulers take counsel against Jehovah’s Anointed to break his bonds and cast away his cords, and need to be admonished to “Kiss the Son” if Christ has no dominion over them in their functional duties?

Must conferences and synods have respect to his law while parliaments and congresses are exempt from its Mediatorial administration? Must people serve Christ in the church while they may serve whom they will in the state? Is

him. When true to our moral nature, we acknowledge the true God only—we pay our homage to him as he directs—we revere his holy name—we keep his appointed holy day; and have the natural right so to do; and have the right to be protected by civil government in the enjoyment of the right to do so. We also have the right to be protected by civil government in the enjoyment of our rights under the last six commandments. In examining these commandments, we perceive that the fifth only is purely positive in form, and causes the state through the government to make children take proper care of their parents. An other, the fourth, is partly positive; but the state confines it self, or is limited to, the enforcement of the negative part to prevent Sabbath desecration—in line with the negative character of the other eight commandments; and leaves the enforcement of the positive part to the church to require of its members.

The whole decalogue is moral as it comprehends what is naturally right in our personal relations to either God or Man. A lack of clearness of thought, or of preciseness in nomenclature has caused some confusion with reference to the relation of the state to this law, and to the extent of its duty to enforce. On account of the two objects concerned—God and man—the law is divided into two tables—the first four in one and the last six in the other. Some hold that the first table treats of religion, and the second table of morals. Some writers then plead that it is not only necessary to teach morals in the public schools but that a certain amount of religion must be taught by the state, meaning that the idea of God and of obligation to him and of responsibility for

meeting obligation should be inculcated; and so the Bible should be taught. But how this is to be done on a firm foundation, and to what extent it is to be carried is left practically an uncertain quantity. The terms, Christian religion, Mohammedan religion, Mormon religion, and the names of other heathen religions are in common use with definite meaning; and citizens claim that it would be an invasion of their rights to compel them to receive instruction in any of them in whole or in part. This seems to be a tenable position, and leads to endless discussion and explanation and strife. The friends of the Bible are confused and hesitate, and its enemies gain ground.

There is also confusion of thought with regard to the relation between morals and religion. Many contend that morals are founded upon religion while they are forced to admit that without a moral nature there could be no religion. Their philosophy is at fault as to facts, and their statements of science consequently must be incorrect. If the moral nature of man were taken as fundamental, with religion growing out of his moral duties to God; and ethics, as commonly understood, founded upon his moral duties to man, there then would be a clear field of operation.

The fundamental truths of religion are found in the necessities of the moral nature. Religion and ethics are both founded on the necessary practical operation of the principles of the moral law, and are determined constructively with reference to natural obligation in the activities of life—religion to God, through its suitable forms and exercises, and civility to man, in its various expressions. The proper exercise of moral power in these specific directions cultivates and

develops the whole moral nature until it is fitted for perfect fellowship with perfect beings in the felicities of heaven itself. Without religion, the moral nature is debased. With an immoral religion, it becomes more debased. The true religion, divinely appointed, alone develops an elevated Christian morality. Morals is a condition religion is an economy to perfect imperfect morality and thus reunite the broken bond to God by likeness to his nature in bearing his image.

The state must protect man in his right to perform his duties to God according to his conscientious convictions in the practice of his religion as long as its forms are not immoral; and must protect him against the invasion of his rights as between man and man. If the government is faithful in doing this, it fulfils its sole original purpose; for "God ordained civil government to enforce his moral law among men that they shall enjoy their rights." Breach of the moral law necessitated the institution of civil government by and with divine authority; and the state is constituted to organize it. Efficiency and continuity in this object is the only warrant for other uses of the governmental power--they are merely incidental. It is the common nature as intelligent beings that causes men to gather themselves together into communities: it is friction in social intercourse that necessitates the political or governmental control of his commercial activities. If all would do what is right, there would be no need of justices of the peace, nor of constables, nor of policemen, nor of charters to regulate corporations. No man would have the right or authority to supervise the moral conduct of another for there would be no need of it--so there would be no civil government. This fact is evident from the

tendency of faithful administration to lessen the need of civil government, as seen when jails are empty and courts convene and adjourn without cases to adjudicate. But as long as there is sin in the world, there will be need of civil government to enforce the moral law. Rights are of a moral nature and all are under obligation to respect them whether they think so or not. All men exist in the same moral sphere. Those who purposely break the moral law may oppose its enforcement; but men disregard their opinions and overpower their resistance. They make the necessary laws to incriminate the offenders, and enforce with pains and penalties. In a Christian nation, the basis of all law is moral law, and no law is considered valid that contravenes it. Disregard of righteous law is anarchy; disregard of unrighteous law is faithfulness to Christ our righteous King. The moral law and the Christian and humane way of enforcing it are found originally in the Bible. All must come under the authority of the laws, and should be taught the principles underlying them. The specific laws must be studied in special institutions because of the largeness of the study; but the principles underlying them, contained in the ten precepts, can be learned and should be taught in our public schools to prepare law-abiding citizens. Our best citizens, with little professional knowledge of our laws, are such through intentional obedience of the moral law. The historical method of study is professional; hence, in the study of civil government, the use of the Bible is a scientific method. It is then only reasonable for the government to introduce its youth to the fountain of governmental knowledge in the use of the Bible for this purpose. Its use in the schools should be understood clearly to be

for instruction in the morals which control our legislation, and not for the purpose of teaching religion, the means to be used to be restored to God's favor.

The church and the state are two departments of the Kingdom of Christ, who is Head over all, because they are distinct institutions, intended for clearly defined separate purposes with reference to his object in assuming mediatorial government. Both are economic—made necessary by the change of the moral nature by the fall. The other department, the family, is the only natural one as originally instituted before the fall; but, being of a moral nature, must continue through the whole period of man's existence on earth. The practice of what was moral before the fall must be continued after the fall under specific moral regulations be they religious or civil-governmental: through the church or the state. With reference to our subject, however, it is not necessary to discuss the subjects of the family and the church, as they are generally fairly understood by Christian people, and their relation to Christ's sovereignty acknowledged.

As civil government is a divine institution,* originated

*NOTE—Because of immoral laws and governmental wrongs, some Christian reformers have concluded that civil government is an engine of the devil. The ambition of wicked men may cause them to seize upon governmental power and prostitute it to use to the Kingdom of Satan. We need not be surprised at the designs of the evil one with regard to the state when we know that he has been able to transform the church into a synagogue of Satan. If he cannot annihilate civil government, we may expect him to try to turn it to his own account. Civil government as a burden through sin may have the appearance of an evil; but its legitimate use is indispensable in present conditions. It is worth the expense. The curse of labor is a blessing in disguise.

to meet conditions and further the purposes of the mediatorial dominion of Jesus Christ in controlling and finally subduing the powers of evil, it is necessary that it be conducted according to the divine intention in order to obtain the associated benefit to man, and the object of the divine will to suppress wickedness in the world, and provide freedom of operation for the church in its gospel mission of salvation. The relation of the state to the church is to produce such civil conditions in the world as will facilitate the work of the church while not infringing upon the natural rights of those who are not church members, but are still lovers of good order in society. In a Christian country, rulers, personally, should be members of the church and should use their personal influence and means to advance its interests; but, officially, they have no more authority in the church than the humblest citizen; nor can they use the public funds which belong in part to those who are not members of the church to support its work financially. The money of the Roman Catholic should not be used against his will to support the Protestant religion; and the money of the Protestant should not be used against his will to support the Roman Catholic or any other system of religion. But this principle does not interfere with the right of the government to tax all its citizens for the development of morals, nor of its duty to do so, as the true foundation of good citizenship.

How carefully civil rulers should examine their relations to Christ, and consequent responsibilities; and endeavor faithfully to meet their obligations in ruling for him!

How carefully the nation should consider the governmental authority of Christ, and constitute its government so

as to acknowledge allegiance to him, and make its laws harmonize with the principles of his moral administration?

How carefully the people should consider what would be to the honor of Christ and favorable to the loyal execution of his law by placing in power those only who are in sympathy with his purposes in order to make effective his beneficent ordinance for securing to every citizen his natural rights and for the faithful suppression of all wrongs. Thus honor will accrue to the Father through honor given to the Son, and the Holy Spirit will work effectually for the establishing of the "Kingdom of Christ and God."



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