Subject: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 17:05:51 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

In the light of the discussion concerning whether or not Christians should vote, I offer you all this article I found years ago. It was written in 1887 but it is just as relevant as if it were written yesterday. It is absolutely the best article I've ever read on the subject.

Feel free to answer his arguments when you are finished with the article... <grin>

********** ****

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

A TREATISE ON THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANS TO EARTHLY GOVERNMENTS, OR THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AMONG THE NATIONS

By E. A. SLATER

LEXINGTON, KY.:
TRANSYLVANIA PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO.
1878
INTRODUCTION In offering the following reflections to the public, I beg leave to say that I have long been convinced, that the subject of them, merits more attention than it has received. And while the education and prejudices of the reader may be averse to the facts and truths herein evolved I beg him not to disdainfully cast aside this little book, until he has carefully examined its contents in the light of divine truth. For while, possibly, some of its parts may not be wholly devoid of sophistry, I am confident that, as a whole, in its principles, it is both logical and scriptural.

The Christian's duty can be known only by reference to the Christian's Guide-book, and if the sentiments of the following pages be in harmony with that, in its principles, it is evident that a great wrong is practiced, and a revolution is demanded. With this conviction, the Christian should begin reformation at once, not only for his own sake. but for the triumph of Christian principles; feeling

that the dictates of the Spirit of unerring wisdom is the only safe guide, regardless of what human foresight may predict as the consequence.

I am indebted to others, not only for suggestions, but sometimes for the exact language used; and not knowing at all times to whom to credit the language, I have generally used quotations without regard to author, but sometimes with the language so modified, that the original author will hardly recognize it.

The subject, of course, cannot be exhausted in so small a space, and possibly, it may receive a more extended notice at some time in the future. Enough, however, is said to show that there is a gross error practiced, and a radical reform needed.

To all lovers of truth, for truth's sake, is this little book inscribed, in the interests of truth, by the author, E. A. SLATER.

CONCORDIA, Mo., October 27th, 1877.

The Relation of Christians to Earthly Governments, or the Kingdom of Christ Among the Nations.

In enlightened nations we find mankind divided into two general classes, viz: The Christian (so-called) and the non-professor or worldlian. Of the one of these classes, from a Christian standpoint, God is the acknowledged father, head, or ruler; while the Devil occupies a similar relation to the other class. As these classes commingle in the sea of humanity, certain relations are necessarily involved between them, as natural, incidental circumstantial, and organic relations; the latter of which are more prominently involved in our present inquiry.

The question, then, resolves itself thus: What are the organic relations between the Christian and the non-professor? Or, as organic bodies, between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of the world ? However important this inquiry, it is evident that but few stop to inquire definitely here. We are too apt to take things as we find them, and act upon them as a matter of course, or because those before us so acted, without stopping to inquire for ourselves as to the fitness or propriety of such acts. How humiliating the thought, that intelligent men and women simply ape their predecessors instead of inquiring for themselves as to the fitness of the action involved.

I believe it is never claimed that they are so related that the nonprofessor is one with, and entitled to all the immunities and privileges of, the Christian as such, yet it is almost universally claimed that their privileges are equal as elements in the government. Now, is this claim well founded? Is it true that the Christian is an element in, and a subject of, the respective government in which he may chance to live? Can he speak of it as his government, and of his defense of it, as the defense of his country? Does he owe allegiance to it--such allegiance as vindicates and enforces its laws?

Is he so far an element, in these respective governments, that it becomes not only his privilege, but his duty, to assist in making and executing the law? Is it true, as it is often claimed, that the Christian, as such, is more justly entitled to fill and administer the offices of government? These questions seem to cover the real question and put it in its true light. Government, in this connection, comprehends all forms of civil government whose laws and their ministration are of human devise, whatever be their model. Now, if being a subject of one of these forms of government is an obligation to vindicate and enforce its laws--enforce them simply because they are laws, however varied and conflicting; then the duties of Christians, as subjects of these respective governments, would be as varied and conflicting as the governments. Who is prepared for this? The principles of right do not conflict. Christian duty is the same wherever found, and, in itself, is independent of human legislation. No requirements of human legislation are binding upon the Christian if they conflict with the Christian's law. But where is the government in which this conflict does not exist? And, for this reason, where is the government of which the Christian may be a subject, sharing in the responsibilities and bearings of the execution of its laws? Am I reminded that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that the Christian is required to be subject to them? I answer that subjection does not imply active support and vindication. Subjection is manifested as well by suffering the penalty for noncompliance with conflicting requirements. But this idea of subjection will be considered further on.

We already see some of the difficulties in the way of regarding the Christian as a subject of these governments in the sense of the above question, but who will deny that he is a subject, that he may make and execute the laws of civil government? I say who will deny this, and thus meet the prejudice of both religious and irreligious, and run the risk of being termed a fanatic or a fit subject for the lunatic asylum? The right to vote, hold office, &c., is, as it were, bred and born in us in the United States, and we have never had a thought to its fitness for the Christian. It is a thankless task to assail customs honored by time, respectability, social position, and power. Men rarely speak against them, and so speaking never escape the laugh of scorn. Truth can claim but few votaries at this point. How shameful, that with such eternal consequences involved, truth must thus suffer at the hands of its votaries, for the sake of popular favor! Lord, enable thy servants to see the truth, to love the truth, and to vindicate the truth!

I now offer some reasons why the Christian may not make or execute the laws of civil government:

1st. It is virtually a reunion of Church and State. I do not mean merely that legal reunion found in European countries, but I mean that adulterous connection which assumes its most polluting form, when the Church and its votaries are voluntarily prostituted to the political parties of a popular government. I know we love to boast of Church and State independence in the United States. But observation shows them closely allied, indeed, amalgamated, rather than independent. Law is essential to the State, and the Church coalesces with the world to effect the law and its execution. Moreover, an amalgamation with the different political parties is formed, and Christians thus distributed, have conflicting interests, conflicting policies, conflicting efforts, conflicting feelings,

conflicting prayers, and, as it were, conflicting Gods. For, can the same God answer these conflicting prayers and bless these conflicting elements? A political campaign is inaugurated, and Christians enter into the spirit of the campaign, and generally into whatever may further party success. Party spirit runs high, and not only are Christians thus at variance, but they labor, and pray, and coalesce with the world to carry these conflicting interests against one another. Each believes his party will best subserve the interests of Church and State, and though he may not stoop to all the trickery of his party, he, by his influence and efforts to carry the interests of his party, lends countenance to all its corruption, and winks at its unhallowed devices to gain power. And all this in the name of Christianity! What a pliable material must Christianity be, to be thus molded into the life and spirit of these conflicting parties, and issues! Who cannot see that in blending together, the Church and State, each hangs as it were, upon the shoulders of the other? The question usually asked by both religious and irreligious is: "What will become of us if good men stop voting?" &c. Thus showing that they regard the safety and perpetuity of the State as in the hands of Christians, or the Church, and hence the safety and prosperity of the Church is dependent upon the State. But this adoption of worldly means, of secular interests and influences, for the support of that kingdom which is "not of this world," is but bringing the world into the church. Yet we have all this blending together, this fellowship of the Church with the world, with common interests, in the face of the apostolic admonition, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" But this is not all. By virtue of this amalgamation, the Church becomes responsible for all the enormities of the general government--its corruption, its excesses, its oppressions. Responsible, I say, so far as it is an element in affecting the policies of the government. And if it be the element, if upon it depends the safety and perpetuity of the State, it becomes the responsible party. And how far is this short of union of Church and State? To raise the question, What will become of us, if good men stop voting? &c., is an admission that the church is the element, that upon it depends the safety and perpetuity of the State. During the last campaign churches that should unfurl only the banner of peace--the banner of Christ and the cross, were seen to post rival national flags, their votaries bedecked with the ensigns and badges of rival parties in campaign, and devotees to the policies of conflicting issues. Though rivals, each party seemed to feel that the safety of government depended upon it, and that its mission was to guide the ship of State into more pacific waters.

2nd. A second reason is, that connection with politics is certain corruption. There are ambitions, honorable in the eyes of the world, which interfere with our usefulness as Christians. Some of these are so supported by popular favor, and entrenched in the customs of people of so much respectability, and of such social power, that the remonstrant is usually in the minority; and sin, thus committed, loses much of its criminal character in public estimation. Political ambition is thus supported and thus entrenched, but the Christian's service is due to God, and if political service or any other ambition, interferes with the discharge of his Christian duty, he must not touch it. To some who cannot see the difference between active support and assistance, and the phrase "be subject," the exhortation to "be subject to the powers that be, for they are ordained of God," will be

received as sufficient license for active participation. As before promised, however, this Scripture shall be duly considered by and by.

If the ambition which aspires to distinction as a politician--to have a national character as such--be right in itself, certainly the exclusiveness with which it occupies the thought, and the completeness with which it absorbs the time, is fatal to piety and to Christianity. It, as it were, becomes a god, and demands the whole and undivided homage. But as a Christian cannot serve God and mammon, neither can he serve God and politics in this absorbing sense. And if the Christian may not be political in this sense, the sense which is the life and soul of politics, by what divine enactment is he licensed in a more limited sense? But if the Christian may not enter into the life and soul of politics, he who is thus political, is out of the line of Christian duty, and he who votes for him becomes partaker of his sins. A distinguished writer has said that 'Faultless integrity and unimpeachable moral honesty constitute no part of the essential character of a politician. Whatever will carry the day, he must adopt and urge, regardless of whether it be right or wrong. In his ordinary intercourse, and in common dealings with men, he may be as honest as other men, but as a politician, and in the part he has here to act to attain his objects, is not his the life of a trickster?"

But, to proceed: "The politician is necessarily a partisan. Whether from convictions of right or policy, he is still a partisan. He must swear by his party, talk for his party, vote with his party, be true to his party. and all this without question; and, if need be, without conscience; though, in so doing, he may sacrifice his own sense of right, and ignore the higher claims of truth and justice. As a matter of fact, what is the history of politicians as Christians? Are they as a rule good Christians? Are they not, rather, the shabbiest ones that frequent the house of God, where they do at all? Now, why is this? Are these naturally worse than other men that they make such a poor exhibit of Christianity? Not at all. Not to them but to their calling are we to ascribe their failure. As a fact, then, politicians will not be good Christians, and no one has a right to conclude that he would be an exception. Or, if he has a right so to conclude, he cannot afford, in safety to himself, to incur the risk of an experiment." Look around, and where is the man who has passed through a political campaign without the taint of corruption by his associations? Where is the politician office-holder who might not except for their aspirations and their associations, have reflected more fully that gloriously beautiful life of Jesus? "The public service of God is generally laid aside by politicians. Their families become affected with a lukewarm spirit. They become fashionable in their talk, their dress, and their associations; they glimmer through life, and, when gone, leave but few traces of their Christianity; for the mind thus absorbed is unfit for the chaste and sober home of so gentle and pure a thing as the religion of Jesus. Spirituality cannot flourish in such associations. Then, how can the Christian man afford to expose his wife and children to such dangerous and bewildering temptations?" If the politician glory in the cruelty, rapacity, and falsehood of his party leaders, he is compelled to deny the Lord who bought him. "Christianity proclaims peace, independence, truth, justice, and liberty; but the spread of these will be accomplished only by reforming and elevating the individuals of whom society is composed; not by any alliance with the governments of the world; not by any vulgar partnership with politicians to

kill and plunder their enemies." Judge Black, of Pennsylvania, has said that "Human government, at best, is but a compromise of selfish interests and conflicting passions. This, perhaps, gives a reason for the corrupting tendencies of political associations. They destroy the unity of the church, for Christians of the one party are blind to their own sins, but magnify the sins, real or imputed, of the opposite party. The theme of the one party is the wickedness of the opposite party and their hearts are filled with self-conceit, bigotry, spiritual pride, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. Is this overdrawn? Who has not seen this spirit prevail, and that, too, with professed Christians? Who, that was an element in these parties during the recent campaign, has not felt it in his own heart? But I quote again from Judge Black: Christ and the apostles kept politics and religion perfectly separate. They joined no clamors for or against any administration; they expressed no preference for one form of government over another; they provoked no political reforms. If they had done so, they would have flatly contradicted the declaration that Christ's kingdom 'is not of this world,' and Christianity itself would have died out in half a century." They did not, like the popular preacher of to-day, inflame the sanguinary passions of the monarch by exaggerating the treasonable character of the rebellious, and counsel the military execution of all who sympathized in the sufferings! They did not praise Nero for his strategy because he chanced to be ruler, nor pronounce a funeral oration on his virtues when dead.

The legal profession, as such, comes in for its share of corruption. The attorney is sworn to be true to his client, promises success, and receives his fee accordingly. He reasons that the opposing counsel will do his best on the other side, and, therefore, he must do so, or his client's interests will suffer. This may do where all are seeking only the truth and the right; but the question is, May either counsel drop all moral considerations and seek victory, right or wrong? Does the wrong pursued by one counsel make it right for the opposite counsel to set aside righteous principles? May the lawyer be indifferent, morally or socially, about the execution of the law? Shall he, when his client has confessed his guilt to him stand up before God and the bar of justice, and use his ingenuity to make it appear that his client is an innocent and abused man? Shall he rule out every scrap of testimony possible that bears against his client, and press in the perjured statements of confederates with his client in crime? Shall he make the jury believe what he knows is false, and pronounce a verdict of acquittal upon a man who he knows is unworthy a place in civil society? Shall he abuse the veracity of witnesses because on the other side? Shall he intimidate and frustrate them in a bullying manner, and then take advantage of the confusion he has caused, to destroy the force of valid testimony? Must he do his utmost to turn loose upon society every villain that pays him a fee? Has not law a penalty for villains? and has he no concern for the execution of the law? May he help his client, by hook or crook, to avoid an honest debt, or keep the creditor out of it by law's delay? But suppose there are litigations in which one side is right--wholly right, what then? The other side must be wrong, if not wholly wrong, yet the wrong is advocated as right, and right is made to suffer by the ingenuity and trickery of the opposite counsel to make it appear that his is the right side. Is it the lawyer's duty, by virtue of his profession to become the patron of lying, fraud, theft, burglary, robbery, murder, and treason? What strange duties are these for the Christian--for him who is to "do to others only what he would have others do to him?" remembering that "love worketh no ill to his neighbor!" But will you

promise a man success in the legal profession unless he resorts to these policies? Then, may we not conclude from the lesson observation teaches, that an abandonment to a political career is abandonment to corrupting tendencies, and yields corruption as its fruit?

3rd. A third reason is, that The duties and objects of civil government are forbidden to the Christian. This involves a direct reference to Scripture, and we are glad to have so high a source of appeal. First, Paul's language to the Romans determines these duties and objects: "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 resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. * * * For he beareth not sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Here we learn that the power or government is God's minister, a revenger to execute wrath. Yet, while it is to execute wrath, the Christian is forbidden "to return evil for evil for any man." He is required to lift up holy hands without wrath." "Let not the sun go down on your wrath. In Colossians, third chapter, Paul enumerates the things in which they formerly walked, but now requires them to "lay aside anger, wrath, malice," &c. And while the government "is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," Paul classes wrath as a work of the flesh, with a warning that "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The Christian is "not appointed to wrath." (I Thess. v:9); or, as the context shows, he is not appointed to execute wrath. He is forbidden to avenge himself, (Rom. xii:9), which is to take satisfaction for an injury done. Notice, the Christian cannot do this--cannot execute wrath; yet this is the specific work of the powers or governments that be; therefore, these governments are not executed by the Christian. The government, then, is God's sword or instrument of execution; but since this is forbidden to the Christian, it can only be the duty of the opposite class. And thus the Psalmist teaches: "Deliver my soul from the wicked which is thy sword, from men which are thy hand, O, Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life." (Ps. xvii: 13, 14.) The wicked, then, is the "hand" or "sword" of God, and in the form of government, his "minister, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." But he has not appointed or ordained the Christian to wrath. He has forbidden his loving and sympathising children to execute wrath, to take vengeance, and for this purpose uses wicked agents, overruling them to effect his glory by the punishment of evil doers.

Examples are abundant in proof of this, but if history furnished no examples, the fact that government is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon the evil doer; the fact that the Christian is forbidden to do this; and the fact that the wicked is the hand or sword of God, would enable each man to find his place in the divine economy. As an example of God's use of a wicked agency to accomplish what saints could not, I refer to the means he employed for the destruction of Ahab, as recorded in I Kings, xxii:20-23. This means was a "lying spirit," which, of course, could lay no claim to saintly or angelic purity. Thus he used Judas, whom the Savior speaks of as "a devil," and "the son of perdition." Thus he used Pharaoh; thus he used Nero; thus he used Cyrus, of whom he speaks, through his prophet Isaiah, as "mine anointed." (Isa. xlv: 1). Or, in the language of Daniel, he would have us "Know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." (Dan. iv:17).

And by Jeremiah he speaks of this same Nebuchadnezzar, "the basest of men," as "my servant." And by Isaiah he speaks of this same Nebuchadnezzar, "the basest of men," as "The rod of mine anger." (Isa. x:5). Thus the basest of men are sometimes the servants of God, and, thus, in a sense, the Devil and hell are ordained of God. Then, while he has forbidden the Christian to execute wrath, the wicked is his hand, his sword, his servant, or the rod of his anger, by which he executes wrath upon the evil doer. Christianity being divine, must be consistent. Does it require its votaries to exercise forbearance, even to suffer wrong, "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly," and then permit them to make or execute a law, the design of whose penalties is to prevent crime, rather than the reformation of the criminal, or to meet the demands of justice? Does it teach that "wrath is a work of the flesh, and that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" require the Christian to lay aside wrath; to "lift up holy hands without wrath," and then make him "the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath?" Does it require its subjects to do only what they would have others do to them, as a common brotherhood, remembering that "love works no ill to his neighbor," and then permit them to confiscate his property or take his life? Oh Christianity, many crimes are committed in thy name, and shall thy votaries thus slander thee! Thou dost teach better things.

4th. A fourth reason is, that The Christian belongs to a distinct kingdom. He is taught that Christ is enthroned "King of kings," and that he, as an absolute monarch, has given to us a perfect law--a law sufficient to perfect us and thoroughly furnish us unto every good work. And the Christian having sworn allegiance to him, it becomes his duty to obey without question, rather than to take the law-making and executive power into his own hands. This is but rebellion--but a want of faith in our King. When Jesus says "My kingdom is not of this world," (John xviii:36), the conclusion is inevitable that the kingdoms of this world are no part of his kingdom, but necessarily belong to some other power. Now can I, as a citizen of the United States, go into the dominions of Great Britain or any other foreign power, and because I regard the law as wicked and tyrannical, proceed, with the ballot and official relationship, to alter or amend it? All know that I cannot. To act there, I must give allegiance to that government. That forfeits citizenship here. Then, I am curious to know how I, as a citizen of Christ's kingdom, can go into another, no part of his, but rather in some respects, radically incompatible with it, and perform duties involving allegiance to that other, such allegiance as enforces and vindicates its laws, and still retain loyalty to Christ. I certainly forfeit the favor and protection of Jesus, my King, as certainly as I forfeit protection and citizenship in the United States by giving allegiance to Great Britain. But this reason will be involved in other reasons which I will offer, and in them, will be fully considered.

5th. A fifth reason is, That his kingdom is to overthrow all other kingdoms. John testifies: "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xi:15). Here the kingdoms of the world are spoken of as diverse from the kingdom of Christ, and as becoming his in the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which all interpreters of prophecy admit to be yet in the future. Now, if they be not his till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the sounding of that trumpet be yet in the future, they have yet to become his, at

some time in the future fulfillment of that prophetic vision. Being not his now, they necessarily belong to some other sovereignty, over which the Christian jurisdiction does not extend but they are to be wrested from this authority and enlarge the borders of Zion in the Kingdom of Christ. On this point, the language of Daniel is explicit: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." (The Assyrian empire was represented by the head of gold, because of its great wealth.) "And after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior to thee," (The Medo-Persian, which, with its silver- plated shields, was fitly represented by "the breast and arms of silver," and inferior to the Assyrian, as silver is inferior to gold), "and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." (The Macedonian empire, with soldiers with brazen armor, and spoken of as the "brazen-coated Greek," was fitly represented by the "belly and thighs of brass.") "And the fourth kingdom," (The Roman empire in its strength, represented by "legs of iron,") "shall be strong as iron, for as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." (Dan. ii:37-40) "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." (Dan. ii: 44,45). This is Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, in which, in a figure, the kingdoms of the world were destroyed by the kingdom of Christ: The fourth kingdom was the Roman empire, which, though "strong as iron," by the admixture of foreigners, or "mingling themselves with the seed of men," became weak. Daniel said. "The kingdom shall be divided, they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." So they were divided, and clave asunder into many kingdoms, now represented by the nations, kingdoms, and governments of the world, which, Daniel says the kingdom of Christ is to break in pieces and consume. But all Christians constitute the kingdom of Christ, and if it is to break in pieces and consume the kingdoms of the world, then, Christians are to break in pieces and consume them; and if Christians are a part of these kingdoms, they must break in pieces and consume themselves. And if the kingdom of Christ is to overthrow these kingdoms, Christianity must be the means; but, as it is now, instead of overthrowing these powers, the Christian only perpetuates them when he votes for men, good or bad, by which they are perpetuated. Is not the tendency of this to thwart the purpose of God, with respect to their overthrow? Christ is to "put down all rule, and all authority, and power," and must reign until he has done this, says Paul, (I Cor. xv:24,25). Was it not these authorities, powers, rulers, and principalities, which he came to put down? For "He is far above all principality, and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." And Paul says, "We wrestle (or fight) not with flesh and blood (mere athletes or bullies), but with governments, with powers," &c. These Scriptures show that the kingdoms of the world are yet to become Christ's; that he is to put down all rule, and authority, and power, that the antagonism existing between the

kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of the world, will result in the overthrow of these kingdoms by the kingdom of Christ, which is to "break in pieces and consume them." Our conflict, then, is with governments and with powers. It is irrepressible, for "To him every knee shall bow."

6th. A sixth reason is, that The Christian is only a sojourner rather than a citizen in these kingdoms. The first proof I shall offer is the typical nature of the Jewish institution. God, mainly, has always had "a peculiar people." He directs the affairs of these, as their King, Governor, or Ruler, and overrules the opposite power to the accomplishment of his will, as universal Sovereign. When necessary, for the good of his subjects and the perpetuity of his moral government, he punishes the rebellious. So far did rebellion prevail at one time, that only one family was loyal to the King, and he "destroyed the others from the face of the earth." But this saved family, in a few generations, became rebellious and went into idolatry, culminating in Babel. God then called and covenanted with Abraham, (Gen. xii:1-4; Gen. xvii:), promising, upon their obedience, to be a God unto him and his seed, and bequeathed to them the land of Canaan. This family, or nations he made a type, by which to represent his future plans, in effecting the redemption and sanctification of the creatures of his image. They were in bondage in Egypt, a type of the bondage of sin. God sent Moses, a type of Christ, to deliver them, and they, led by faith, and being baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, were saved or delivered from that yoke of bondage. This baptism was a type of Christian baptism, and this salvation or deliverance, was a type of salvation when baptized into Christ. God now proposes a covenant to them as a nation, to which they agree and swear allegiance to him, (Deut. v:3, and Ex. xix:5-8), and they become a "peculiar treasure unto him above all people." A holy nation. A nation distinct from other nations, with Jehovah, in person, as their God and King. They are now a nation among nations, the Jewish nation--God's nation. They are no part of other nations, and other nations are no part of them, as such; but as a nation they journey through other nations in order to reach the land of promise. "Forty years' journey is made to reach their abiding city." This promised land was a type of Heaven, or Heavenly Canaan, and this forty years' journey was a type of the conflicts of Christians, in the great warfare of life, before they are permitted to possess their Heavenly Canaan. Their dangers, trials, conflicts, and disobedience, assure us that we will gain Heaven only by obedience and much conflict.

Now, as is the type, so is the antitype. If the type, the Jewish kingdom, was a distinct kingdom, and, as such, separate from other kingdoms; the antitype, the kingdom of Christ is also a distinct kingdom, and as such, separate from other kingdoms. If in the type they were no part of other nations, in the antitype Christians are no part of other nations. In the type, however, instead of being a part or other nations, the Jews were required to avoid their idolatry and forbidden to marry of other nations. (Ex. xxxiv:12-16, Deut. vii:2-4; Josh. xxiii:12, &c.) And who will deny that we, too, are required to avoid their idolatry and forbidden to marry "only in the Lord." A gross error, however, is practiced here, for Christians disregard this requirement and marry out of Christ, and preachers, for the sake of position or a fee, solemnize the ceremony! The Jews, by their intercourse with other nations, and their desire to be like them became so corrupt and faithless, that only Caleb and Joshua were permitted to enter Canaan, and how can we practice as they did

and avoid a like consequence? If only two in six hundred thousand enter the Heavenly Canaan well might the Savior say, "Straight is the gate and(l narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat." As in the type we had the King, the subjects, and the law, while the territory was only promised; so in the antitype we have the King, the subjects, and the law, while the territory is only promised, and can be attained only by a patient and faithful continuance in serving our Captain until he shall bring us in triumph to possess the Heavenly Canaan. As they, as a nation had to journey through the nations in order to reach their promised land, so we are but "sojourners" in the nations--"Strangers and pilgrims," "Having no continuing city, but seeking one to come." And as "citizens of heaven," (Phil. iii:20), we are admonished to "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear." Jesus is our Monarch, and, as such, is sole lawgiver. He has not delegated us to make laws in his kingdom, the one to which we belong, and certainly we can claim no right to make laws for a kingdom to which we do not belong, and of which we are no part but simply sojourning therein. If we be only sojourners we are not citizens, and, therefore cannot interfere with, alter, or amend the law, however tyrannical and oppressive; however contrary to our sense of right it may be. We are simply no part of these kingdoms. We owe allegiance to another. But as sojourners, we must obey the law of the nations in which we sojourn, when that law does not conflict with the law of our own government or King; just as the American citizen, sojourning in a foreign land, must submit to the law of that land, until such law conflicts with duty to his own government. Submission is enjoined by Scriptures, and required by the government in which we sojourn, but both reason and Scripture teach that this submission is not unconditional or unqualified. The American citizen can submit to the demands of a foreign government only when those demands are not in conflict with allegiance to his own government. So to the Christian, God's law is paramount. To it all conflicting demands must yield. The Apostolic language is: "We ought to obey God rather than man." "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." The wife is required to obey her husband, and the servant to obey his master, but, of course, this obedience is only to lawful demands, or, in other words, that which is in harmony with the last will and testament. If, therefore, the commands and requirements of government conflict with this standard; if, in other words, the government commands what God has forbidden, its commands must be disregarded. We have no right to obey; obedience becomes a sin. In case of such conflict, however, the Christian must not resist, but submit by suffering the penalty for noncompliance. Since God requires submission to the lawful demands of government, to refuse such submission, is not only resistance against government but against God also. Hence, we must "submit, not only for wrath," or because the government will execute wrath upon the disobedient, "but also for conscience sake," that our conscience may he void of offense toward God. "For, for this cause, pay you tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." We must pay whatever tax they may require as the price of a safe sojourn, just as the American citizen must pay, without question, and however exorbitant the tax upon his possessions in a foreign land. As a sojourner he has no voice in the matter. Though in the foreign land, he is not of it; so the Christian, "though in the world, is not of the world." And as the American citizen cannot stop to inquire to what uses his tribute-money will be appropriated, neither can the Christian stop for such

inquiry. It is no more his right to inquire, than it is to inquire what uses his alien neighbor will make of the just dues he pays him.

I have now, here, and elsewhere, redeemed my promise to consider the requirement to "be subject to the powers that be," and to all, it must be manifest that this subjection does not necessarily imply citizenship, or active support and assistance. On the contrary, it is implied that Christians do not constitute these powers, as, if so, they are exhorted to be subject to their own rule. It would be about as consistent to exhort a father to be subject to his own discipline. Government should not, and cannot, of right, require the Christian to do what is in conflict with the Christian's law; but if it should require say, for example, bearing arms, and in lieu of bearing arms, should require a tax of one hundred, two hundred, or five hundred dollars, the Christian must pay it if necessary. And if he have not so much, and government is not satisfied with what he has, still he must not fight. And if no opportunity is offered to make satisfaction by paying tribute, still the Christian must not fight. Nor can he supply a substitute, for may he not as well kill a man, as to pay another one thousand dollars to kill him? God disfranchised the Christian by forbidding him to shed the blood of his fellows. For, in voting men choose agents to kill, make war, &c., knowing that they are required to commit those acts under oath when occasion demands it. Yet many vote who think it sinful to bear arms, apparently not able to see that both must stand or fall together. He who votes, virtually says, I will fight; for what is the law enacted by our vote, without the executive force behind it? But the primitive Christian refused to fight at the bidding of the reigning monarch, under any circumstances--in many cases suffering death as a penalty for non-compliance, as history informs us.

I here pause to notice an objection. It is urged that the Christian may as well be a party in the execution of law, as to pay tax to further the demands of law. I reply that paying tax is not a sanction of the corruptions and excesses of government. If so, Jesus approbated the wickedness of the Roman government by paying taxes, and God encourages the sinner by sending him rain. The American citizen, paving taxes in a tyrannical government is not supposed to approve its tyranny. Why, then, so suppose of the Christian under similar circumstances?

At this point I must also notice another objection. We are told, says the objector, that Paul claimed Roman citizenship, and was not simply a sojourner, but enjoyed citizen rights. To which I reply, that we should not base too much upon his case, until we see what is comprehended in his citizenship--the nature and extent of his privileges. The word citizen is used with much latitude of meaning, reaching over the whole line, from unrestricted citizen's rights down to the simple rights of the alien. Blackstone says, "Local or temporary allegiance is due from an alien to the government in which he resides." Here, then, is much latitude for restricted citizenship. This, too, is characteristic of our own government. Here women and children are citizens, but denied the rights of franchise, hence are only restricted citizens. Also, he who only sojourns among us, is for the time being, a restricted citizen, enjoying many citizen rights. So of the Christian, as a sojourner in earthly governments, though his "citizenship is in heaven (Phil. iii:20). Paul being of this class, enjoyed only a restricted citizenship, as we shall see. Who believes that Paul's citizenship

vindicated and enforced the laws of that power, whose pleasure it was to murder his fellow-Christians by thousands? This would have been to fight against his own dearest interests, and with his own hands to overthrow that for which he was constantly suffering. Who believes that Paul's citizenship vindicated and enforced the laws of that kingdom, which the kingdom of Christ, to which he belonged, was to "break in pieces and consume?" This would have been to overthrow himself. In the nature of things his was a restricted citizenship. But the nature of his privileges may be known by reference to the Roman law. The Dictionary in Holman's Family Bible, compiled from Smith, Kitto, and Fairbairn, says: "The Roman law had two classes of citizens. The first class were entitled to vote, hold office, and carry on public business. The second class enjoyed the protection of the law as freemen." This was Paul's privilege. Pliny and Appian tell us that Tarsus was a free city. Appian even says its citizens were not required to pay tribute. And Paul being born therein, was "free born," and entitled to the second class of citizenship- -the protection of the law as a free man. Paul, then, could claim Roman citizenship from that peculiarity of the government which made Tarsus a free city; and, doubtless, for reasons that no other apostle or any Christian of this day, could urge. Being only a citizen of the second class, he could not vote, hold office, or carry on public business, yet he could claim the protection of the law. This much he did; more than this is only conjecture.

7th. A seventh reason is, That the kingdoms of this world are of the Devil's dominions. To many this is a very unwelcome truth, if true. But if admitted to be true, then how easy to account for the tendency to corruption in political circles, and the existence of corruption in the governmental arena to-day. And, if admitted, how great the sin of the religious world, by its amalgamation with the political powers of earth--those appointed by God as "avengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." On the other hand, if it be not admitted that the kingdoms of the world belong to the Devil, then Christians must be the responsible element, and still, I say, how great the sin, and how heavily does responsibility for the present corruption and enormities of government rest upon them. We now offer the evidence of its truthfulness.

All will concede that there are but two great heads, powers, or kingdoms, in the world--that of God; and that of Satan. All mankind belong to one or the other of these kingdoms. All give allegiance to one or the other. Originally, man was subject to God, or of God's kingdom, but by rebellion the rebellious became identified with other rebellious spirits, and subjects of another kingdom, the kingdom of the Devil. The loyal are God's people, the rebellious defy him, and are the children of the Devil. Of such Jesus says, "Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lust of your father will ye do." "The tares are the children of the wicked one." "He that committeth sin is of the Devil." God's providence, however, is over all. He gives rain and fruitful seasons to all. Jesus thus classifies in the following language: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." These facts give a reason why the Jews were no part of other nations: For, if all other nations, except the Jewish nation, God's covenanted people, were Satanic powers, the Jew could not become a part of other nations, but by rebellion against God and allegiance to Satan. And if this were true in the type, much more is it true in the antitype, where we seek a higher life under "a more excellent way."

As there are but two powers, whatever is not of one is necessarily of the other. That which is no part of Christ's kingdom, is of the Devil's. So when Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world," the necessary conclusion is that the kingdoms of this world are no part of his kingdom; therefore, they belong to the Devil's dominions. The headship of Christ and the Devil is the sum of all power; the kingdoms of this world are not Christ's; therefore they are the Devil's. Is not this a logical sequence? If it be urged that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof," we admit it, in the sense of creation--and this much is implied in the context wherever the passage occurs- -but by rebellion and by grant they are not the Lord's. Certainly the rebellious of earth are not the Lord's. -"Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do " said Jesus. "All that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." To man was given dominion over the earth, but man rebelled and gave allegiance to Satan, and Satan became master of his dominions. In harmony with this, Job says, "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he (the wicked one) covereth the faces of the judges thereof" (Job ix:23). In the first chapter of Job, we learn that not only were the Sabian and the Chaldean hosts his servants, but even the elements, fire and wind, did his bidding. John, speaking of Christians, says, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the wicked one" (I John v:19, by Anderson, &c). In the temptation of Jesus, the Devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and said, "I will give you all the authority and glory of these, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke iv:6, ibid). Here the ownership is ascribed to the Devil in explicit language. Does any object that we only have the Devil's word for it, and that he is a liar? I reply, that we want to do the Devil justice, and more especially to do our Savior justice. But, in this case, we cannot do justice to his claims to Divinity, in knowing all things, but by admitting the sincerity of the Devil's pretensions. The record says Jesus was tempted in this transaction (Luke iv:2), and it is clear as that the Devil made truthful pretensions, as is the divinity of Jesus. For Jesus knew if the Devil was asserting truth or falsehood, and his being tempted by the offer of the kingdoms, is conclusive proof the Devil asserted truth, as it could have been no temptation had Jesus known that the Devil did not possess the kingdoms.

Gentle reader, if some one should offer to you the authority and glory of all the kingdoms of the world, or even that of the Presidency of the United States, who, you know, can lay no claims to such authority and honors, would you be tempted by the offer? Certainly you would not. Then what conceptions must one have of the divinity of Jesus, with the assurance that he was tempted by the offer of the kingdoms and yet deny that the Devil made truthful pretensions in the ownership of the kingdoms? Of him Paul says, "It behooved him to be made in all things like unto his brethren," that he took upon himself our nature, "and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." He did not yield to the temptation offered by Satan, in the authority and glory of the kingdoms of the world; but his followers yield to the temptation offered, in the name, position, influence, wealth, and honor of an Empire, a Kingdom, or even positions of authority in a Republican government. They need more of the spirit of their Master, which says, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." They even court these positions, and to gain them, compromise Christianity by stooping to

the trickery of party, and scruple not to accept the assistance and influence of intoxicating liquors, bribery, &c., as auxiliaries to the end desired. Only think of a Christian, a child of God, than whom there is none greater, begging and bribing the Devil for a position in his kingdom!

Who will deny that our "seventh reason" is established by the foregoing proofs? And being established, it is settled that the kingdoms of the world are of the Devil's dominions. Jesus asserts the same when he calls the Devil "the prince of this world" (John xiv:30). Paul calls him "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv:4)

We have then these two great Kings, Kingdoms, or Powers. The one of light, the other of darkness; the one righteous, the other unrighteous; the one of Christ, the other of Satan. They can have no affinity. For "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. vi:14,15)

8th. An eighth reason is, That the Christian being forbidden to go to law before the world is conclusive evidence that the law and its officers are not in the hands of Christians or the church; but in the hands of and administered by the world (See 1 Cor. vi:1-8). This passage simply negatives the idea, that Christians fill and administer the offices of government. For if they did, their going to law would be before the saints rather than the "unbeliever." Bishop Butler says: "Civil government is that part of God's government over the world, which he exercises by the instrumentality of men." This, with the term men modified to embrace only the species, in moral character, rather than the genus, is certainly true. We have already seen that the wicked is the species who is the hand, instrumentality, or sword of God, and who, as his minister, is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. But this being forbidden to the Christian, he could not hold the offices of government, and brethren who resorted to law for the adjustment of their difficulties, had to go to law before the "unjust." The language of Peter, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors sent by him," &c. (1 Peter ii:13,14), implies that all the Christian has to do with these ordinances, is to submit to them, not to make them. So the language of Paul, "Be subject to the powers that be," implies only subjection, rather than active support and assistance, and that the Christian does not make, or execute, or constitute these powers. But we should remember that the instrumentality is men, and not expect the stream to rise above its fountain. Imperfect men will devise imperfect laws and give them an imperfect ministration. God, of himself, "may graduate punishment according to the real guilt of the criminal, but no human government can do this." The inspired word is, "go to law before the unjust." So, in harmony with this, the penal sanctions of civil government are not merely to satisfy the demands of justice, or to make amends for the mischief done. In their nature, they are not retributive. Nor are they reformative. "Government has not to do with the reformation and moral character of the criminal. It inflicts punishment for its own safety in the prevention of crime." Therefore the basis of its penal sanctions is preventive. The motive power for restraint is fear, or the wrath of the insulted power, and not justice or reformation. While, for the Christian, the motive enjoined is, "Not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

If the foregoing "reasons" be sound, logical, and Scriptural, there can be no longer a question as to the right of the Christian to make and execute the laws of civil government. He is prohibited, because it is virtually a union of Church and State; because connection therewith is certain corruption; because the duties and objects of civil government are forbidden to the Christian; because he belongs to a distinct kingdom, because his kingdom is to "break in pieces and consume"- -overthrow and destroy, all other kingdoms; because he is only a sojourner and not a citizen in these kingdoms; because the kingdoms of this world belong to the Devil; and because, in New Testament language, the law and its offices are administered by the "unbeliever"--the "unjust." These being established, or any one of them, it is evident that any further reasoning on the subject is gratuitous; for until they are nullified, it is settled that the Christian's jurisdiction is not over the law. And from these I educe the following summary:

1. There are but two powers or kingdoms for man--that of God and that of Satan.

2. All accountable humanity belong to one or the other of these kingdoms.

3. But for rebellion all men would have belonged to the kingdom of God.

4. The Jewish people as a nation, in their bondage, and exit from Egypt, and in their journey to Canaan were typical of the bondage, deliverance, and trials of the people of Christ.

5. As they were a holy nation, and, as such, no part of other nations, but separate from them, so the Christian is a "holy nation," and, as such, no part of other nations.

6. We cannot give allegiance to two kingdoms at once, at least those so much in conflict as that of Christ and that of Satan.

7. The kingdoms of this world are no part of the kingdom of Christ.

8. They are of the Devil's dominion; hence the Christian cannot make or execute their law.

9. As the type, the Jewish nation, sojourned through other nations to reach Canaan, so Christians must sojourn through the nations to reach the Heavenly Canaan.

10. As sojourners, nothing can be required of us only as sojourners. Nothing to conflict with allegiance to our own King.

11. As sojourners, we enjoy only the privileges of sojourners, which are more or less according to the liberality of the kingdom in which we sojourn. The leaven is at work, however, and Christian liberty is becoming more universal.

I think enough has now been said to establish the foregoing reasons as both logical and

Scriptural; whence it follows that all the Christian has to do with the law is to obey it. They are not, like the nations, to have "princes" among them, to "exercise dominion over them," or "great ones" to "exercise authority upon them."

9th. Having considered the rights of Christians in civil government, we will next examine the question practically, or the Christian's ability to correct the evils of government, even if his jurisdiction extended over it. With the facts before me, I cannot admit his ability to effect this end. The history and experience of the past, and the facts of the present, assure us that we need not expect reform from that source. Whatever be the imperfections of civil government, it is evident that the Christian element cannot correct them. Christians have acted a conspicuous part in the United States government since its foundation, but what is there in the recent campaign, or in the corruption, fraud, and bribery of the government to the credit of Christian principles? We will suppose that they have given it the best support they could, but instead of purifying it, has it not rather become putrid on their hands? Instead of purifying it, do not all more or less compromise the dignity and purity of Christianity, by their efforts in behalf of Caesar, and corrupt themselves? Where is the man upon the pages of history whose life might not have reflected more fully the gloriously beautiful life of Jesus Christ, but for his part in the government? The church, in its representatives has lost much of its high, God-like bearing, and is conformed to the world. Many Christians (?) who have not a dime for the cause of Christ, have dollars for the furtherance of party schemes, and for a bonfire or cannonading in triumph! Christians are as much at a loss and differ as much as to the needs of government, as do non-professors. They are divided and subdivided upon issues antagonistic, and are as much at variance as are men of the world. They labor and pray, resort to the trickery of party, and coalesce with the world, to carry these conflicting interests against one another. And we might as well try to bring order out of chaos as to try to harmonize these conflicting elements. Yet this chaotic wrangle is the saving element in the government--the means by which they are to correct and reform it! If Christians could know the needs of government, be a unit with respect to those needs and then have the co-operation of all acknowledging the superiority of Christian principles, there might be reason for hope; but in the absence of this knowledge, this unity, and this co-operation, all effort, is hopeless. On the contrary, the most oppressive governments that ever existed were under the control of professed Christians. Indeed, I think it may be said, that, as a rule, rulers have not been "a terror to good works," only when they adopted the policies dictated by religious advisers. The policies of these advisers has generally been to direct the attention of their ruler and nation away from their own sins, and magnify the sins, real or imputed, of a probable enemy. And the chances are, that while they slander the absent and undefended, they excite the bad passions of their own adherents. Instead of following in the footsteps of Jesus, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously," and instructing their adherents how to be saved eternally, they are prolific in devising means for the destruction of others, and arousing those brutal passions which result in riot, bloodshed, spoliation, civil war, and general corruption of morals. The experience of fifteen centuries is that more than half the bloody wars which, at different periods, have desolated Christendom and cursed the world, were directly instigated by such advisers; and wherever they have thrust

themselves into a contest commenced by others, they always envenomed the strife and made it more cruel, savage, and uncompromising. What of the wars, in which millions of lives were lost, which followed the Arian controversy? the thirty years' war in Germany, between Catholicism and Protestantism? with similar wars between England and Ireland? or the wars waged by the clergy of England and Scotland, to settle the questions of election, reprobation, &c.? Or, coming to Massachusetts and Connecticut of our own country, in colonial times when, under the Puritan rule, they waged treacherous wars upon the Indians for purposes wholly mercenary; enslaved white men as well as red, and sold them abroad, or "swapped them for blackamoors," and were so intolerant of religion, that they whipped imprisoned, exiled, and killed the Quakers and Baptists for their conscientious opinions. As a further example of their austerity, see the "blue laws of Connecticut." These facts furnish an instance of "Protestantism fleeing from oppression, appealing to liberty, and then closing the door against her." Who ushered in the reign of Know-Nothings, Blood Tubs, and Plug Uglies, when pulpits resounded every Sunday with injurious falsehoods, and ministers met their political allies in sworn secrecy to plot against the rights of their fellow-citizens? And what was the consequence? Riot, murder, church burning, and lawless violence all over the land. Who provoked our late civil war, which clad our nation in mourning and the rags of poverty, and shocked the civilized world? Who excited servile insurrection, and while they slandered their absent brethren, and not only severed the ties of brotherly love, and disclaimed brotherly connection, but engendered such an enmity and hatred, as quickened the baser, brutal passions of their adherents into a vow of extermination against those who chanced to understand the Scripture differently --sometimes seeming to feel it an act of the highest glory to kill a Rebel or a Yankee? (I refer only to facts, not to party.) Who applied the torch, and who fanned the flame which consumed the vitals of our government, and left but the charred remains to the world and to posterity, with much the same result with the Church? Those who lived through those pages of our history, do not need to be told that all of this was the work of prominent actors in the respective churches. They were sometimes known to use their persuasive powers, accompanied by exciting speeches and other things calculated to enlist the young, that they might bind the soldier's yoke upon them, but "they would not touch it with their little finger." And when reminded that they must love and feed their enemies, their reply was, "I will feed them with bullets." Indeed, it seems that, when once they stepped over the line, to vent their wrath upon their fellows, all means were hallowed for that end. These historical references and many more that might be given, give us but little reason for hope from that source.

Another reason for the impracticability of reform here, is the impossibility of the Christian voting intelligibly. If our best statesmen not only disagree, but take opposite positions on the vital issues, how can the common citizen know the needs of government, without which he cannot vote intelligibly, and without which intelligence his act is not honorable or to his credit? I think I may safely say, that not one in one hundred, if any at all, can cast a vote with that degree of intelligence which will mark it as a noble act! What is there about a vote to make it noble, except the motives which prompt it, and the results which follow? If the motive rests upon that degree of intelligence which certainly assures us that the vote will promote, or tend to promote our highest interests, it is a noble act, and especially if the desired results are attained. But who votes thus

intelligently? We must be ignorant as to the issues, and largely so as to the policies, as well as of the character and merits of the candidate.

Now, I submit to every candid mind, to every lover of truth, if we have a question among us with respect to Christian duty, upon which the evidence is more conclusive, or which is more satisfactorily settled by the inspired word, than is this, as set forth in the reasons offered in these pages? And I further submit, if it is not as well sustained by the facts before us, that whatever be the imperfections of government, the Christian element will not and cannot correct them?

This may be so averse to our former understanding, that we admit its truth reluctantly; but, if true, it must be received, and that cheerfully. For to him who receives not the love of the truth, God will send a strong delusion that he may believe a lie and be damned (2 Thes. ii:12).

It must now be regarded as settled, that the Christian is no part of earthly governments. They belong to Satan, and the Christian cannot be a law-maker or an executive therein, as such service is in behalf of Satan, the wicked subjects of whom is the "hand" or "sword" of God--his minister to execute wrath upon the evil doer.

Is Christianity, then, to have no influence upon the political destiny of the nations? Certainly it is. But is the influence of Christianity not felt only when exerted through the officers of the law? We have already seen that it is badly represented there, and we have reason to believe that it would soon be unfelt if confined to them. It generally shines more brightly in the lives of more humble citizens. And certainly the leaven of Christianity would not cease to influence government if Christians withdraw. It would rather work more favorably when divested of so incompatible an element, by which Christianity is compromised. For the government is to execute wrath, the very thing that is prohibited to the Christian. I know that some limit this prohibition to personal retaliation, but I know not where personal ends with the Christian, either in retaliation or responsibility. It is all a personal matter. We have an account of men being officers before they were Christians, but no such account afterward. On the contrary, history informs us that when officers become Christians they refused to execute their office. The Christian's influence would still be felt in all those higher qualities which will characterize the true Christian. He will hold up Jesus as the light of the world, and be careful to do his will. But if he preach a strict observance of the first day, may he for that reason preach a crusade against the Jews and Seventh-day Baptists, to have intolerant laws enacted against them for keeping Saturday? And while he must warn all against the sin of intemperance, what right has he to provoke violent hostilities against tavern-keepers, liquor dealers, and liquor makers? He may show the inconsistency of polygamy with Christianity, and its dangers to domestic happiness, but is it, therefore, lawful for him to carry fire and sword into the territory of the Mormons? Certainly no lover of truth and righteousness will be so reckless of Christian principles as to advocate a thing so incompatible with Christianity.

As a climax of the evidence now offered, I will restate numerically as follows:

1st. For Christians to make and execute the laws of civil government, is essentially a union of Church and State; but such a union has always been degrading and corrupting to the Church; therefore Christians should not make or execute the laws of civil government.

2nd. That which corrupts the children of God, and lowers the dignity of Christianity, must be spurned by the Christian; but connection with the law of civil government, in the practice, making and execution of law, both corrupts the Christian and lowers the dignity of Christianity; therefore the Christian must avoid all such connection.

3rd. While the government is the minister of God--a revenger to execute wrath upon the evil doer, the Christian is strictly forbidden to do this; but that which is forbidden to him either in principle or by express statute, he cannot do without sin; therefore he must not make or administer the laws of civil government.

4th. The laws of any distinct kingdom can be made and executed only by the subjects of that kingdom; but the kingdoms of the world are distinct from and no part of the kingdom of Christ (John xviii: 36); therefore the Christian cannot make or execute the laws of civil government.

5th. Any kingdom which is to "break in pieces and consume" another, cannot be so far a part of that other as to make, enforce, and vindicate its laws; but the kingdom of Christ is to break in pieces and consume the kingdoms of this world; therefore the Christian cannot make or execute the laws of the kingdoms of this world.

6th. The Christian, as a subject of a distinct kingdom, is sojourning in the kingdoms of the world; but the subject of a distinct kingdom, thus sojourning in another kingdom, cannot alter or amend the laws of that other; therefore the Christian cannot alter or amend the laws of the kingdoms of the world.

7th. No service, essentially of the Devil's dominions, can be performed by the Christian; but we have seen (see reason 7th) that the kingdoms of this world are of his dominions; therefore the Christian cannot render any service in these, which is essentially of them.

8th. Any kingdom whose laws and offices are not in the hands of Christians cannot be administered by them; but Paul teaches (I Cor. vi:1-8) that the laws and offices of civil government are not in the hands of Christians; therefore they cannot be administered by Christians.

The force of this evidence is, that the Christian is not a subject of earthly governments, that they belong to the Devil, and service rendered therein is his service. This, of course, the Christian cannot render in loyalty to his Savior and King. But it is still his privilege and duty to influence, so far as he can, in the way of right, those who may make and execute the law, thank God for protection and Christian liberty, and pray for rulers that they may so administer the law, that he as a Christian "may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Whatever

difficulties occur between him and his brethren must be settled in the church, and if either party will not be reconciled, he becomes as a "heathen man and a publican," and may be disposed of as such, or, if you please, as a subject of the world or Satan's kingdom. If any such as last named, interferes with his privileges as a sojourner, he may appeal to the respective power over such a subject, just as the American citizen, sojourning in a foreign land, appeals to that power, when its subjects trespass upon his person or property. In either case, the appeal may not be considered, and while an earthly power may not be able to compel another to consider such appeal, and yet for the Christian, God will bring all things into judgment.

I have never yet met with one who would logically and Scripturally endeavor to dispose of the foregoing reasons. Some simply slur the subject over with as much indifference as if it were of no consequence. They find this a very convenient way to dispose of a subject which gives them trouble at every turn; and on which they prefer to dogmatize, rather than take the position which the force of evidence compels them. Others admit the plausibility of the reasons, and their inability to detect any sophistry in them, or unsoundness Scripturally, but are content to rest upon consequences. This is just the position of Pedobaptists as to the essentiality of baptism. They rest on consequences--saying that to admit its essentiality is to unchristianize a large per cent of the best people in the world. And those who take this position should never controvert that question with them. But will not the true man of faith admit that, if the foregoing be the plan of Heaven, there should be no question on consequences? If unerring wisdom dictates the course, will human wisdom devise a better? It certainly becomes an erring being to regulate his actions by an acquiescent reference to an unerring will. Are we willing to say that the Almighty has directed us amiss, and thus impeach his wisdom or his goodness? Does our faith in Jesus lead us to set up our own views of safety and interest, rather than follow the precepts he has given us? Those who are ready to sustain the consequences of an undeviating obedience are the supporters of whom Christianity stands in need. She wants men who are willing to suffer for her principles. But why raise questions on consequences? In whose hands have these things been? In whose hands are they now? What per cent of them are true Christians? Certainly a very large per cent are only nominally such--not deserving the name. While a very large per cent of those who lay no claim to the name, acknowledge the Bible as divine, and as containing the only title to a home beyond, and even infidels admit it contains the best system of morals ever devised for man. These three classes are largely in the majority over the Christian, and credit is due to them for the blessings of government. If the Christian should withdraw, the leaven of Christianity would still be felt, and the above classes would still give tone to the government, leaving but little reason to expect a change radically different from the present, or what it might be with their continuance. Have we not seen that Christians cannot correct the evil? That in spite of their efforts, the government has become corrupt, and they have become corrupt with it? Then what change for the worse could take place? But, suppose persecution should follow, and Christian liberty be lessened, would it be worse than during the early periods of Christianity? Yet, then, the martyr was the seed of the church, and the gospel was more prolific than at any subsequent period. And in the history of our own country, when the Quakers were whipped, imprisoned, exiled, and even hanged, history informs us that their pure and unspotted lives enlisted the sympathy of many, and popular sentiment at length

checked ecclesiastical intolerance, and compelled a relaxation of the severity of law; and that their constancy and courage established in Massachusetts the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Would not the principles of Christianity be alike triumphant now under similar circumstances? Would not these principles command respect now, as did the divine principles of non-resistance as exhibited by the Quakers in the settlement of Pennsylvania? The Indian said of the Quaker, "That man has the good spirit; he will not harm us." "Thus they were armed without arms; strong without strength; safe without the ordinary means of safety, and that for more than seventy years." Have we yet to learn the necessity of performing the duties of Christianity without reference to consequences? We may not always see why the Lord has led us along this road, but we should not like the Israelites, rebel, lest, like them, we fail to reach the promised land. Jesus says, "Follow me," and cannot we trust him for consequences? If Jesus has marked out non-interference with civil government as the line of the Christian's duty, will the man of faith stop to raise questions on consequences? As the seed of faithful Abraham, he will do as he who "went out, not knowing whither he went." The Christian must follow the orders of his Captain--dare to do right without regard to consequences. But if any raise such questions, the above facts and considerations, as well as others not here given, show that the consequences may be even better, rather than so direful as some would have us believe.

Having now examined the relation of Christians to civil government, the impracticability, yes, impossibility, of its imperfections being removed by them, and the consequences of their withdrawal, we leave these reflections with the reader. It must be evident to all, that the voter cannot stop short of whatever military or other operations and provisions that may be necessary for the preservation of the government. This is but the climax of Popish amalgamation. But in the most successful period of the kingdom of Christ, no such amalgamation was known; and while many steps have been taken to get back to the authority and kingship of Jesus, it seems essential that another be taken to bring the church to shine down upon the nations, in its full orbed splendor, as the light of the world.

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 17:12:38 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Ahh, Hombre... you disappoint me. I didn't see any where in the article about not working in the world (Paul was a tentmaker). One cannot be expected to articulate a complete answer to all of the ethical situations one might face as a Christian in a short article dealing with only one thing--our relationship to the kingdoms of this world.

You know full well the fallacy of basing our Christian ethic--our fundamental beliefs,--on the shifting sands of what worldly governments may or may not do.

You say:
Quote:1. If one chooses to be a pacifist in every situation of life, and were that to be true of our forefathers as well, Mr Slater would NOT have had the religious and political freedom to write what he has. Mr Slaters' arguments are wonderful within the context of a 'civilized' world, wherein people would actually read, understand, accept and practice that which is right....however, as he so skillfully states, we do not. We live in a barbaric world, in which the strong survive and the weak are trampled. Were it not for those who willfully resisted the governments that they were subject to, from Martin Luther to George Washington, we would not have the freedoms we enjoy today.

What kind of argument is that? Do you think that he would be forced to abandon his beliefs because he couldn't write about it??? What does that have to do with whether or not we choose to hold fast to what we believe?? Sounds a bit like you've opted for situational ethics over sound principles. The question isn't whether or not our present situation, our present freedoms, would be non-existent if we followed our convictions, the question is, would we follow our convictions even if it meant a radically different comfort level for our lives?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 17:22:35 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Quote:Hombre wrote:
1. Passive resistance though prayer.

Actually prayer isn't a 'passive' activity... it is the most powerful activity we could ever hope to engage in; donâ€™t you agree?
Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 17:24:59 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Quote:...are we NOT to pray:

' Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, ON EARTH as it is in heaven'?

Nevermind, I see you do think 'prayer' is an important activity! <grin>

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 17:38:23 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Quote:Hombre wrote:
That's a chink in Slaters' armor. If we are ONLY 'sojourners' in a kingdom that isn't our own, what is the point of doing anything at all in an attempt to change it to fit our conception of what we want?

That 'chink' is what the Bible teaches... how can you seriously argue otherwise?

Maybe I've misunderstood your tagline: 'Creating upheaval in the unbelieving church through the doctrines of the Word of God, one moment, one thought, one person at a time'.

I've always interpreted that as being directed mainly toward the systems that religious men have erected... would it not also apply to the systems that comprise the kingdoms of this world? You certainly don't go into the denominational systems and work within to bring about change... (They, like the US government, allow--even welcome--participation). Why do you consider it your â€˜dutyâ€™ to involve yourself in the political system and not the religious?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 17:50:39 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Quote:Hombre wrote:
..those convictions are based upon whether one sees the kingdoms of this world as belonging wholly to satan or whether God is in charge.

Slaters entire thesis is devoted to the that idea

'...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....'

No, you misread his thesis... he acknowledges God's sovereignty over *everything*, the point he makes is that the world's kingdoms are antithetical to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ... we are a part of the second kingdom *NOT* the world's kingdoms-- even though everything falls under His ultimate sovereignty. He is the one (as Slater points out) that will destroy *ALL* of the systems of men--even though He is the one who ultimately reigns over all!

If you want to work to build up a 'relatively' good worldly kingdom, fine, but don't get too caught up in the process lest that Stone, cut out of the mountain, destroy you as well.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by Mark L on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 02:49:04 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

...however, if the Presidency were offered to me tomorrow, I WOULD do it. It's just that I would be impeached the following day.

It's because of comments like that one that I always read your posts.

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by william on Tue, 28 Oct 2008 17:11:46 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Wow, one little analogy and we are supposed to fold???

Quote:Hombre wrote :
Let's assume for a moment that we're not talking about a Presidential election, but rather a local one, in which a territory has been recently been given sovereign status. There are 100 farmers living in this territory. They have to decide what laws are going to be recognized and who is going to enforce them. Half of the farmers are liberal, and half are conservative. They decide to elect a person to fulfill those duties which they see as for the common good, however, one of the candidates is tired of farming because it is hard work, and would like to use a law known of as eminent domain to seize the assets of the farmers and sell it off for a profit to a smoke belching factory that makes plastic things. Since the conservative farmers are good Christians, they decide to get into their prayer closets and pray that this will not come to pass. In the mean time, the liberal farmers in cahoots with the guy who is more interested in money than he is in the future of the territorys' people, vote in the candidate who will cut them in on the power/money scheme. After the election, when the conservative farmers find themselves homeless and realize that it is THEIR land that was at stake, they wonder what lesson God wants them to learn from this.

Let's add a couple of details that might make it more relevant to the discussion. As it stands, the main lesson of your analogy is that the end justifies the means; not exactly a ringing endorsement of the truth.

Nor is it fitting to paint the opposition as those who have only prayer at their disposal... salt and light are pretty useless in a closet, even if it is a prayer closet.

Of course your analogy might have more credibility if you could supply us with details of your own personal involvement with the realm of politics beyond "voting" as that would contrast better with the 'inaction' of prayer. For instance, if you really believed in a policy or politician pushing a policy, and you were giving both time and money to see his/her success, this would give us a better perspective on your analogy. At the very least the contrast between "voting" and "prayer" might seem to be more significant as you would be putting your money where your mouth is!

Firstly, to limit the analogy to a small community and one issue doesn't really translate to the broad issue of the Christian's involvement with the governmental systems. Especially absent is the concept of multiple 'communities' joining together to form a 'one-world community' and the Christian's attitude toward this trend.

Secondly, if you add a couple of missing details to the above analogy, like maybe a prophecy or two that says that the leader of this group of 100 would be destroyed by a rock falling from the sky? You might even change your vote to the liberal guy with that knowledge!

Thirdly, let's say you don't have Jesus Christ on the ticket and you know that your candidate is likely to drop a bomb on the next community killing a bunch of their farmers in his mad rush to squash the madness of their sovereign leader. On the other hand, the liberal guy is only

interested in killing babies. Now that should make it easy to determine WWJD... Only one problem to consider here, and that is whether or not it was your vote that made the difference on who made it in, cause you know that the guy who breaks the tie will be the guy who is judged for his part in either the massacre of the neighbors (who really is our neighbor?) or the other massacre, the babies.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by james on Wed, 29 Oct 2008 01:18:05 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Seems 'my tax dollars' pays for a lot of things that I'm not consulted on. Hope you enjoyed the vacation...I'd rather see you take a 'vacation' with the money, that it be given to somebody to study the mating habits of some critter in the wild.

Guess if I don't like it I should register and vote for someone who will change what happens in Washington, huh?

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by NBF56 on Wed, 29 Oct 2008 14:12:38 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Hombre wrote on Wed, 29 October 2008 08:42james wrote on Tue, 28 October 2008 18:31...OH! Maybe it's because I've NOT traveled around the world....

..well I haven't either James, although I'd like to. I have been to several places in the caribbean, mexico a number of times, and quite a bit of the US.

..of course, I didn't go anywhere when I had a house full of kids, it was just too expensive.

I also started looking at total cost when I traveled anywhere. For example, although I live in Indy, a weekend in Chicago will cost me as much as a weekend in Florida including flights. So what's the

choice? I am always amazed at people who spend anywhere from 3-5 grand to go to Disneyworld for a week or 10 days, when the same amount would have bought a 2 week tour of Italy. Attention to detail in planning vacations and trips and being educated about costs is the key to doing those kinds of things...at least it has been for me.

..anyway, my point in saying this is that one gets a totally different perspective of the US once they are on the outside looking in, that is impossible to see when you're on the inside. That is why I encourage people to travel outside of the US.

I don't think that Gary, and certainly not I, want to be thought of as effete snobs.

I have been able to travel all over the US, and spent a week in Canada (Montreal and Toronto) a couple of years ago. I have been to the Virgin islands, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, and St. Maarten. lest some think that' I'm rolling in dough, most of that has been on my employer's dime. The Caribbean stops were vacation, on a cruise my wife and I took a couple years ago.

Even with my travels in the US, I have gained a different perspective, a much broader perspective than what I call the "provincial" views of the town I grew up in, and where I live now. Most people really don't understand that the world does not revolve around them, and their little town, or their little neighborhood. Seeing from a distance opens up one's eyes to different possibilities, different vistas (not to be confused with Microsoft's latest mistake), and a different mindset on the part of the people one can meet. Personally, I love the Southwestern US. The people there are a little more open-minded, a little less cynical, and the infusion of Hispanics has made for an interesting mix.

I would love to spend more time outside the US. I really want to see England, and Germany. Switzerland is on the list too, since half of my heritage comes from there.

I have no problem with Christians being involved in government, per se. We are to be salt and light, and those things cannot be hidden, and be of any effect.

What I think is often missed is the difference between "doing something for Jesus", and doing what God has called you to do. Too many people don't know the difference, and waste time doing the former. Such works are wood, hay, and stubble. It takes prayer, time spent listening for the voice of the Spirit, and learning to follow the Holy Spirit's leading, to truly do what God has called you, individually, to do, to be in the place He desires you to be, doing the work He has ordained that you do.

My 2 cents, anyway....

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by james on Wed, 29 Oct 2008 14:30:13 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Wait! Wait! brother, you forgot your change.....

Subject: Re: Christian Involvement in Government
Posted by NBF56 on Wed, 29 Oct 2008 17:21:24 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

james wrote on Wed, 29 October 2008 09:30Wait! Wait! brother, you forgot your change.....

ah, keep it...pennies don't go as far as they used'ta....