

DANGER IN POLITICAL CONSERVATISM

January 12, 2020

“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man (Psalm 118:8). Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar (Romans 3:4). Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psalm 1:1, 2).

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

Evangelical Christians are in large measure politically conservative. In the present political climate, they are energized by the sense that political winds favor them. It appears that the president is appointing judges who respect the values of our founders—values rooted in a biblical worldview. The president boasts of having done much to benefit Evangelical Christianity. Most evangelicals are thankful for the Trump administration, and eager to see it continue with greater success in a second term. But a warning is in order.

History provides examples of Christ’s church thriving amid persecution but declining amid “prosperity.” That decline is not necessarily numerical, but spiritual. When governments and institutions of power favor Christ’s Church, its members forget biblical warnings that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). They forget that are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13). They are more easily seduced to look to the “system” rather than to Christ and His Word. They risk the delusion that political conservatism is a form of godliness.

Our values may overlap on many issues, yet the conservative political “camp” must not be viewed as Christian, or as friendly to Christ and His Church. Byproducts of political conservatism may make it easier for Christian’s to practice their faith openly, yet within that political system many reject God’s Word, and the Christ of Scripture.

God’s people must be warned of this, and of our proneness to lean unto our own understanding—an understanding often informed and nurtured by people who walk “in the counsel of the ungodly.” We must never forget that Scripture and Christ alone are the wisdom and power of God (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:23, 24; Hebrews 4:12), that anything that is not soundly grounded in the Word of God and for the glory of Christ is not spiritually neutral, but is a distraction from and a rival of Christ and His Word.

Political conservatism will never address the real problems of the age. Those problems are spiritual. Spiritual problems are not addressed through changing the thoughts of “the masses.” They are addressed at an individual level, person by person, by the application of God’s Word to the individual heart. Politically conservative leaders may for a time sway public opinion in ways that we believe are good. But those same leaders, denying the reliability and authority of Scripture, will fail to address the real issues, which are spiritual. They can be corrected, but only by Christ and the Scriptures.

“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.”

Psalm 118:8, 9