

National Church Establishments.

(Of Nation and Church)

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:18-20)

Question.—*What is the Scriptural view of the nation?*

Answer.—There are two contending views of the nature of the nationhood:

First, That of the Voluntaries, who believe that nations are voluntary associations, humanly contrived associations, composed of men united together for mutual help, or defence. According to their principles, nations are called into existence for purely secular purposes; and their rulers, having nothing to do with religion, are to direct all a nation's energies to questions which pertain to the lower animals, with eyes ever pointed downward toward the earth, Rev. 13:8.

Second, There is the view of Scripture, that states that nations are not merely human in origin but, being the natural and necessary outgrowth of the human family, Gen. 12:2; it is a divine creation of God when a family is engrossed and enlarged so as to include multitudes of people, Ezek. 21:30; 28:13, 15. Thus, we are informed that all nations are the very creation of the Lord, Ps. 86:9. They exist as the creatures of God, each having a territory allotted, which it is given to subdue and inherit, Acts 17:26, 27. Each nation is the realization of intelligent, moral and responsible man in his condition of fullest development, Gen. 10:1-5.

Therefore, it is in a national capacity that each man is most responsible to exercise himself in such a way as to demonstrate his responsibility to God, his maker, Ps. 67:4; 2:10, 12; Jer. 18:7, 10. It is the duty of all nations to serve the Creator, Ps. 97:1; in submission to His Anointed, or Christ, Ps. 72:1, 11.

Scripture also plainly teaches their rebellion to God in Christ, Ps. 2:2, 3. Hereby, they corrupt the earth by their perversion of its resources to maintain themselves in their alienation and pride, in their mutual malice and envy, and in their pursuit of all worldly lusts and pleasures, Tit. 3:3. It was no vain boast of Satan when he tempted the Lord Jesus, Luke 4:6. The governments of the nations have become citadels of the power of Satan, which the Apostles clearly recognized in their view to their conquest and subjection to Christ, Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 6:12.

Thus it is, that Satan, knowing his time is short, Rev. 12:12; goes about deceiving and confusing those who profess to be Christians, 2 Cor. 4:4; in order to maintain all in chaos and secure the thrones of power, 2 Thess. 2:7. However, he knows the truth, that the saints shall possess the kingdoms of this world, Dan.

7:27. In due time, the kingdoms of this world shall be turned to the Lord, to whom all kingdoms belong, Rev. 11:15.

Question.—*What ought we to think of the church?*

Answer.—*First*, the church is the spouse of the Son of God, a party constituting a spiritual bride for Him, called to enter into fellowship with Him in His fullness, Rev. 21:2. Herein, we find a promise of salvation for herself and her literal children, to build up a spiritual house, Isa. 8:18.

Second, as a result of this relationship, she is received into filial relationship with the Father, who now recognizes them as sons and daughters, John 1:12; Gal. 4:4-7.

Here, we begin to observe the dynamic of the fifth commandment, Ex. 20:12; for, as men yield themselves to the Gospel, their hearts are turned toward their fathers, ultimately, to the right establishing of nations, Mal. 4:4-6; Luke 1:17. This effect is observed in the New Testament command and promise, Acts 16:31. The appointing of the preaching of the Gospel is to reverse the rebellion of men, not simply as individuals, but as nations, Luke 24:47. Under the Old Testament dispensation, we see that Israel's relation to the nations of Canaan anticipated the church's relations to the nations of the world under the New, complete with Christ going before in conquest, Jos. 5:13-15. It is the honor of the saints to wage war with the unbelieving world, until the nations are subdued to the Gospel, Ps. 149:5-9.

It was the heart desire of the Apostles to see the church, not as the Voluntaries desire, but as all true establishmentarians desire, reigning as that established religion wherein they strove even unto the shedding of their own blood, 1 Cor. 4:8, 9; Rev. 12:11.