

National Church Establishments.

(The National Church—The Magistrate's Power *Circa Sacra* 2)

For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (1 Tim. 2:2)

Question.—*What are the general rules which must guide the magistrate under the New Testament?*

Answer.—The general duties of magistrates must be constrained by two overriding principles of concern:

First, It is the duty of all men to study the glory of God in all departments of life, especially their callings, Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:23; apart from which they only plow in sin, Prov. 21:4. So, too, kings and magistrates must order and regulate their business, whether matters of commerce, peace or other interests of the commonwealth, to make all subservient to Christ's great interest and the good of His church, Eph. 1:22.

Second, They are to take care that all the Lord's institutions are observed as well as His glory promoted throughout the kingdom, Ezra 7:23; 6:10-12.

Question.—*What particular things must the magistrate do for the promotion of the true religion?*

Answer.—Among the particular duties of magistrates on behalf of true religion are:

First, They should act as godly Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah by sending forth, according to God's order, approved and faithful ministers, by whom the true religion will be published, purity of worship studied, and holiness of life inculcated, as well as discovering and reproofing all ungodliness, 2 Chron. 17:8, 9; 29:11-19. Indeed, they should be forward in the reform and up building of the people of God, 2 Chron. 30:1, 5-9. Furthermore, they should speak comfortably to those ministers who are faithfully discharging their duties, 2 Chron. 30:22.

Second, They should erect and maintain schools and universities for the better educating of the people in the principles of the true religion, Eccl. 1:12; 2 Chron. 17:7. Additionally, it belongs to them to allow ministers an honorable maintenance because it is God's express ordinance, 1 Cor. 9:14; in this way, they bring the wealth of the Gentiles into the church, Isa. 60:16, 17.

Third, They may command and order the people to come and attend upon the ministry of the Word, as the great means appointed by Jesus Christ for their instruction unto salvation, Luke 14:23.

Fourth, When people have declared themselves to be a willing people, and profess to embrace the Lord and His ways, Ps. 110:3; it is competent to the

magistrates to engage them by covenants, stirring them up in a moral way, 2 Kings 23:3. To this end they may also command days of fasting and thanksgiving, especially in conjunction with covenant renewals, 2 Chron. 20:3, 13; Jon. 3:5-8; Ezra 10:11 (the word translated "confession," תוֹדָה, means thanksgiving or praise).

Fifth, It belongs to magistrates to reject corrupt and unworthy ministers, such as starve and fleece the flock, Ezek. 34:2-6; because as nursing fathers, Isa. 49:23; they cannot commit the charge of their children to such in faithfulness, Ezek. 34:23-25. It was to this end that Samuel made an annual circuit throughout Israel, 1 Sam. 7:15-17.

Sixth, They ought to prevent, and pull down idolatry, superstition, being spiritual adultery, and esteemed by God as the defiling of the marriage bed of the nation, Isa. 57:5-9; for this is the duty of the magistrate, as demonstrated in the Old Testament, so that the uprightness of their heart was judged by this, 1 Kings 15:26, 34; 16:26, 31; 2 Kings 10:29; 23:19, 24. It is said, in the New Testament, that ten kings shall come unto Christ and, in so doing, they shall hate the whore and make her desolate, Rev. 17:16.

Seventh, On the same account, they ought to do the like with all blasphemies and damnable doctrines, 2 Chron. 34:33; Lev. 24:16; Deut. 13:5-15; the spreaders whereof are termed dogs and evil workers, *etc.*, and should not be tolerated, Phil. 3:2; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29.

Question.—*Why should magistrates concern themselves with such matters?*

Answer.—Because magistrates, holding the office of nursing fathers, Isa. 49:23; should not merely provide wholesome bread for his children, but keep them back from poison, since:

First, Heresies are works of the flesh, Gal. 5:20; and can no more demand toleration than any of the other works of the flesh described, Gal. 5:19-21.

Second, They are compared to a leprosy, or gangrene, 2 Tim. 2:17; which must be excised from all society, Lev. 13:45, 46.

Third, These cause the way of truth to be blasphemed and make religion appear a vain thing, 2 Pet. 2:2. Which is contrary to the duty of magistrates to make beautiful the house of God, Ezra 7:27.