

Four Winds Publications

IT'S ALL A MATTER OF FREEDOM

Principles of Liberty of Conscience and Religious Liberty

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

"The God-given right of religious liberty and liberty of conscience is best exercised when church and state are separate. Government is God's agency to protect individual rights and to conduct civil affairs; in exercising these responsibilities, officials are entitled to respect and cooperation.

However, religious liberty and liberty of conscience entails "freedom" of choice: to be with our family or not to be, to worship or not to worship, to profess, practice and promulgate religious beliefs or to change them. In exercising these rights, one must respect the equivalent rights of all others.

Attempts to unite church and state are opposed to the interests of each, subversive of human rights and potentially persecuting in character; to oppose union, lawfully and honorably is not only the citizen's duty but the essence of the golden rule - to treat others as one wishes to be treated."

EXPLANATION OF DECLARATION

1. PRINCIPLE BASED ON DUTY OWED TO GOD AND TO MAN

The principle upon which this declaration stands is that civil government is civil, and has nothing to do in the matter of legislation, with religious observances in any way. The basis of this is found in the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:21.

When the Pharisees asked whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not, he replied: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

In this the Savior certainly separated that which pertains to Caesar from that which pertains to God. We are not to render to Caesar that which pertains to God; we are not to render to God by Caesar that which is God's.

ARGUMENT: May not the thing due to Caesar be due to God also?

RESPONSE: No. If that be so, then the Savior did entangle himself in his talk, the very thing which they wanted him to do. The record says that they sought "how they might entangle him in his talk," Having drawn the distinction which he has between that which belongs to Caesar and that which belongs to God, if it be true that the same things belong to both, then he did entangle himself in his talk; and where is the force in his words which

command us to render to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar, and to God the things that are God's?

ARGUMENT: Is it not a requirement of God's that we render to Caesar that which is due to Caesar?

RESPONSE: Yes.

ARGUMENT: If Caesar is society, and the Sabbath is required for the good of society, does not God require us to establish the Sabbath for the good of society? and if society makes a law accordingly, is it not binding?

RESPONSE: It is for the good of society that men shall be Christians; but it is not in the province of the State to make Christians. For the State to undertake to do so would not be for the benefit of society; it never has been, and it never can be.

ARGUMENT: Do you not confuse this matter? A thing may be required for the good of society, and for that very reason be in accordance with the will and the command of God. God issues his commands for the good of society, does he not? God does not give us commands that have no relation to the good of society.

RESPONSE: His commands are for the good of man.

ARGUMENT: Man is society. It is made up of individual men.

RESPONSE: But in that which God has issued to man for the good of men he has given those things which pertain solely to man's relationship to his God and he has also given things which pertain to man's relationship to his fellowmen. With those things in which our duty pertains to our fellowmen, civil government can have something to do.

ARGUMENT: Man would obey God in obeying civil society.

RESPONSE: In the things which pertain to our duty to God, with the individual's right of serving God as one's conscience dictates, society has nothing to do; but in the formation of civil society, there are certain rights surrendered to the society by the individual, without which society could not be organized.

ARGUMENT: But society is behind the government which society creates.

RESPONSE: Certainly. All civil government springs from the people, I care not in what form it is. But the people, I care not how many there are, have no right to invade your relationship to God, nor mine. That rests between the individual and God, through faith in Jesus Christ; and as the Savior has made this distinction between that which pertains to Caesar and that which is God's, when Caesar exacts of men that which pertains to God, then Caesar is out of his place, and in so far as Caesar is obeyed there, God is denied. When Caesar - civil government - exacts of men that which is God's, he demands what does not belong to him; in so doing Caesar usurps the place and the prerogative of

God, and every man who regards God or his own rights before God, will disregard all such interference on the part of Caesar.

This argument is confirmed by the apostle's commentary upon Christ's words. In Romans 13: 1-9, it is written: "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 resist the power, resist the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bear not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

It is easy to see that this scripture is but an exposition of Christ's words, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." In the Savior's command to render unto Caesar the

things that are Caesar's, there is plainly a recognition of the rightfulness of civil government, and that civil government has claims upon us which we are in duty bound to recognize, and that there are things which duty requires us to render to the civil government. This scripture in Romans 13 simply states the same thing in other words: "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."

Again the Savior's words were in answer to a question concerning tribute. They said to him, 'Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?' Romans 13:6 refers to the same thing, saying, "For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." In answer to the question of the Pharisees about the tribute, Christ said, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.' Romans 13:1, taking up the same thought, says, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." These references make positive that which we have stated, - that this portion of Scripture (Romans 13: 1-9) is a divine commentary upon the words of Christ in Matthew 22:17-21.

The passage refers first to civil government, the higher powers, - the powers that be. Next it speaks of rulers, as bearing the sword and attending upon matters of tribute. Then it commands to render tribute to whom tribute is due, and says, "Owe no man any thing; but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Then he refers to the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments, and says, "If there be

any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

There are other commandments of this same law to which Paul refers. There are the four commandments of the first table of the law, - the commandments which says, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me', Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Then there is the other commandment in which are briefly comprehended all these, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and, with all thy strength'.

Paul knew full well these commandments. Why, then, did he say, "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"? - Because he was writing concerning the principles set forth by the Savior, which relate to our duties to civil government. Our duties under civil government pertain solely to the government and to our fellowmen, because the powers of civil government pertain solely to men in their relations one to another, and to the government. But the Savior's words in the same connection entirely separated that which pertains to God from that which pertains to civil government. The things which pertain to God are not to be rendered to civil government - to the powers that be; therefore Paul, although knowing full well that there were other commandments, said, "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;"

that is, if there be any other commandment which comes into the relation between man and civil government, it is comprehended in this saying, that he shall love his neighbor as himself; thus showing conclusively that the powers that be, though ordained of God, are so ordained simply in things pertaining to the relation of man with his fellowmen, and in those things alone.

Further: as in this divine record of the duties that men owe to the powers that be, there is no reference whatever to the first table of the law, it therefore follows that the powers that be, although ordained of God, have nothing whatever to do with the relations which men bear toward God.

As the ten commandments contain the whole duty of man, and as in the enumeration here given of the duties that men owe to the powers that be, there is no mention of any of the things contained in the first table of the law, it follows that none of the duties enjoined in the first table of the law of God, do men owe to the powers that be. These are duties that men owe to God, and with these the powers that be can of right have nothing to do, because Christ has commanded to render unto God - not to Caesar, nor by Caesar - that which is God's. Therefore, as in his comment upon the principle which Christ established, Paul has left out of the account the first four commandments, so we deny, forever, the right of any civil government to legislate in anything that pertains to men's duty to God under the first four commandments.

2. SUNDAY LEGISLATION: APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLE

EXAMPLE: A Sunday bill that proposes to legislate in regard to the Lord's day. If it is the Lord's day, we are to render it to the Lord, not to Caesar. When Caesar exacts it of us, he is exacting what does not belong to him, and is demanding of us that with which he should have nothing to do.

ARGUMENT: Would it answer the objection in that regard, if, instead of saying "the Lord's day," it would say, "Sunday"?

RESPONSE: No, because the underlying principle, the sole basis, of Sunday, is ecclesiastical, and legislation in regard to it is ecclesiastical legislation. Now, do not misunderstand this point. Even for a Sabbathkeeper, if a bill were in favor of enforcing the observance of the Seventh Day as the Lord's day, he/she should oppose it just as much as a Sunday legislation, for the reason that civil government has nothing to do with what we owe to God, or whether we owe anything or not, or whether we pay it or not. The words of Christ emphasize this point. At that time the question was upon the subject of tribute, whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not. In answering the question, Christ established this principle: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." That tribute money was Caesar's; it bore his image and superscription; it was to be rendered to him. Now, it is a question of rendering Sabbath observance, and it is a perfectly legitimate and indeed a necessary question to ask right here: Is it lawful to render Lord's day observance to Caesar? The

reply may be in His own words: Show me the Lord's day; whose image and superscription does it bear? - The Lord's, to be sure. A Sunday legislation declares itself to be the Lord's day. Then the words of Christ apply to this. Bearing the image and superscription of the Lord, Render therefore to the Lord the things that are the Lord's, and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. It does not bear the image and superscription of Caesar; it does not belong to him; it is not to be rendered to him.

Again: take the institution under the word Sabbath: Is it lawful to render Sabbath observance to Caesar or not? Show us the Sabbath; whose image and superscription does it bear? The commandment of God says, it "is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." It bears his image and superscription, and his only; it belongs wholly to him; Caesar can have nothing to do with it. It does not belong to Caesar; its observance cannot be rendered to Caesar, but only to God; for the commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." If it is not kept holy, it is not kept at all. Therefore, belonging to God, bearing his superscription and not that of Caesar, according to Christ's commandment. It is to be rendered only to God because we are to render to God that which is God's, and the Sabbath is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, Sabbath observance, therefore, or Lord's day observance, whichever you may choose to call it, never can be rendered to Caesar, And Caesar never can demand it without demanding that which belongs to God, or without putting himself in the place of God, and usurping the prerogative of God.

Therefore, if a bill were framed in behalf of the real Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day and proposes to promote its observance, or to compel men to do no work upon that day, it should be oppose just as strongly as a Sunday observance bill, and it could be argued precisely upon the same principle, - the principle established by Jesus Christ, - that with that which is God's the civil government never can of right have anything to do. That duty rests solely between man and God and if any man does not render it to God, he is responsible only to God, and not to any man, nor to any assembly or organization of men, for his failure or refusal to render it to God and any power that undertakes to punish that man for his failure or refusal to render to God what is God's, puts itself in the place of God.

Any government which attempts it, sets itself against the word of Christ, and is therefore anti-Christian. There never was a Sunday law that was not anti-Christian, and there never can be one that will not be anti-Christian.

ARGUMENT: One should oppose all the Sunday laws of the country, then?

RESPONSE: Yes.

ARGUMENT: People should oppose all Sunday laws?

RESPONSE: Yes, people should have been against every Sunday law that was ever made in this world, from the first enacted by Constantine to any today or in the future; and people

should be equally against a Sabbath law if it were proposed, for that would be anti-Christian, too.

ARGUMENT: State and national, alike?

RESPONSE: State and national. George Washington once said, "Every man" who conducts himself as a good citizen is accountable alone to God for his religious faith, and is to be protected in worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience." And so should we be protected, so long as we are law-abiding citizens.

FIRST EXAMPLE:

There are people who believe in community of property in this world. Suppose they base their principles of having all things in common upon the apostolic example. Very good. They have the right to do that. Everyone who sells his property and puts it into a common fund, has a right to do that if he chooses; but suppose these men in carrying out that principle, and in claiming that it is a religious ordinance, were to take, without consent your property or mine into their community. Then what? -The State forbids it. It does not forbid the exercise of their religion; but it protects your property and mine, and in exercising its prerogative of protection, it forbids theft. And in forbidding theft, the State never asks any questions as to whether thieving is a religious practice.

SECOND EXAMPLE:

It is every man's right in this country, or anywhere else, to worship an idol if he chooses. That idol embodies his conviction

of what God is. He can worship only according to his convictions. It matters not what form his idol may have, he has the right to worship it anywhere in all the world, therefore in the United States. But suppose that in the worship of that god he attempts to take the life of one of his fellowmen, and offer it as a human sacrifice. The civil government exists for the protection of life, liberty, property, etc., and it must punish that man for his attempt upon the life of his fellowman.

The civil law protects man's life from such exercise of anyone's religion, but in punishing the offender, the State does not consider the question of his religion at all. It would punish him just the same if he made no pretensions to worship or to religion. It punishes him for his incivility, for his attempt at murder, not for his irreligion. The question of religion is not considered by the State; the sole question is, Did he threaten the life of his fellow-man? Civil government must protect its citizens. This is strictly within Caesar's jurisdiction; it comes within the line of duties which the Scripture shows to pertain to our neighbor, and with it Caesar has to do.

Therefore it is true that the State can never of right legislate in regard to any man's religious faith, or in relation to anything in the first four commandments of the Decalogue. But if in the exercise of his religious convictions under the first four commandments, a man invades the rights of his neighbor, as to life, family, property, or character, then the civil government says that it is unlawful. Why? Because it is irreligious or immoral? - Not at all but because it is uncivil, and for that reason only. It never can be proper for the State to ask any

question as to whether any man is religious or not, or whether his actions are religious or not. The sole question must ever be, Is the action civil or uncivil?

NOTE: These explanations of the Declaration of Principle of Religious Liberty were drawn and adapted from The Sentinel Library, National Sunday Law, Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1889. The arguments were presented by Senator Blair and the responses were offered by A.T. Jones, Seventh-Day Adventist minister, before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor, Washington, D.C. December 13, 1888.

A.T. Jones was interrupted by the chairman alone 169 times in ninety minutes as may be seen by the official report of the hearing. (50th Congress - 2nd Session - Messages and Document #43 p. 73-102)

WARNING!

The principles of Liberty of Conscience as protected by the United States Constitution are presently under attack and if the New Church State Government (New World Order) ever comes to power, a repetition of the persecution of the Dark Ages is sure to be repeated. The importance of protecting these principles were understood by the Fathers of the Reformation and of the United States Constitution. And unless the world wakes up to uphold these principles, we will soon see the power of the Beast re-enacted to destroy these principles and those who cherish them.

1. The most sacred principle of the United States Constitution is the equality of every citizen before the law. But the fundamental principle of the New Church and State Government (New World Order) will be the denial of that equality.
2. Liberty of conscience is proclaimed by the United States, a most sacred principle which every citizen must uphold, even at the price of his blood. But liberty of conscience will be declared by the Church and State Government (New World Order), a most godless, unholy, and diabolical thing which every citizen must abhor and destroy at any cost.
3. The American Constitution assures the absolute independence of the civil from the ecclesiastical or church power; but the Church and State Government (New World Order) will declare that such independence is an impiety and revolt against God.
4. The American Constitution leaves every man free to serve God according to the dictates of his conscience; but the Church and State Government (New World Order) will declare that no man has ever had such a right, and that the Church and State Government (New World Order) alone can know and say what man must believe and do.
5. The Constitution of the United States denies the right for anybody to punish any other for differing from him in religion; but the Church and State Government (New World Order) will say that it has the right to punish with the confiscation of their goods, or the penalty of death, those who differ in faith from the Church and State Government (New World Order).

6. The United States have established schools all over their immense territories, where they invite the people to send their children, that they may cultivate their intelligence and become good and useful citizens. But the Church and State Government (New World Order), will publicly curse all those schools, and forbid their children to attend them, under pain of excommunication in this world and damnation in the next.
7. The Constitution of the United States is based on the principle that the people are the primary source of all civil power. But the Church and State Government (New World Order), will proclaim that this principle is impious and heretical. It will say that all government must rest upon the foundation of the Catholic faith; with the pope alone as the legitimate and infallible source and interpreter of the law.