

## THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

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## CHURCH AND STATE.—No. III.

It being, as we humbly conceive, made sufficiently plain in the two preceding numbers under the above title, that the State is bound to acknowledge and support the gospel, we now come to "the tug of war," in ascertaining *how* it ought to be done. And as this question, by assuming a *practical form*, encounters human selfishness and obstinacy in every variety, we must bespeak the reader's attention for a little detail, for the necessary purpose of "stating the case" clearly. And as the main question is blended with some things that are collateral, and would suffer materially by keeping them out of sight, we shall make no further apology for introducing what otherwise might seem irrelevant matter: and when this article is *finished*, we shall submit it as a *whole*, to the reader's judgment. It might not be amiss, furthermore, to remind the reader that men are, and ever have been, in the habit of disputing principles connected with religion *because they are true*. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and it is not a warm zeal in one particular direction that removes its opposition to religious truth; but, in addition to zeal, a comprehensive and fundamental view of the subject, which shall embrace the *first principles* of human society, in connection with the declared will of God.

1. The State can do nothing without *funds*; and these no state can command except from the productive labor of the people. Whether it be by direct taxes, or duties on Commerce, or by money at interest, or by leasing public lands, or by leasing patches of the sea, as the State of New Jersey leases out *oyster-beds* to its subjects,—it is still *taxation*. Hence the state, in order to support religion, must tax the people as certainly as it must for the administration of Justice. And if for this purpose God has not given the state *full authority*, he has not required it to lift its hand in the cause of the gospel—no, not even to acknowledge it before men.

2. But can the state produce authority for so doing? We think so, for the following reasons:

*First*.—The obligation to support the worship of God, implies God's authority for having recourse to such lawful means as he places within its power.

*Secondly*.—If it is lawful to tax the people for their good in things of inferior value, it must be lawful to tax them for their good in things of the highest possible interest: and if the first is a duty on all governments, what is the last?

*Thirdly*.—The gospel sets forth generally that civil rulers are appointed by God to encourage and support virtue, and to discountenance and restrain vice, and that for this very thing the people pay tribute. But as the Gospel is the only standard by which we can determine the true character of either virtue or vice; and as the practice of religion both publicly and privately is the only virtue in which a Christian is at all interested, this Bible rule, by a very easy inference assumes the position, that Christian rulers have the power to tax the people in order to their religious instruction, and also to superintend the requisite expenditure in distributive detail, according to the general circumstances of society at large. Besides, if we confine the jurisdiction of the State to mere political diplomacy and the execution of certain decrees respecting the things of *this world*, we deprive our rulers of their *Christian* character of Stewards under God; we lay virtue and vice, as determined by the Bible, quite out of the account, and we place them on the simple ground of *public Atheism*; for then no public measure could have respect to God and his religion, but merely to *human policy*, founded on *human authority*.

*Fourthly*.—We can refer to *precedent*. Noah, as head and ruler of the whole human family, put his household to *expense* for the worship of God. Abraham, as a *Prince*, did the same. "I know him, that he will *COMMAND* his children and his household *AFTER* him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." The whole *Jewish* economy was also a declaration of God's will to the same effect.

*Fifthly*.—The "sure word of prophecy" declares the same. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers," under the Gospel; which they cannot be without ex-

pending the public revenues in its cause, and maintaining it by public authority.

*Sixthly*.—We have the collateral testimony of all religions not claiming to be Christian, which, from the days of Noah downwards have been maintained by the State. This fact bears on the subject with the same force with which the universal practice of offering sacrifice for sin bears on the Christian Sacrifice as collateral testimony to its value; or as idolatrous and other priesthoods consent to the truth of the Christian Ministry. It is claimed by all parties who believe in the Christian Sacrifice, that the universal heathen custom of making atonement and cleansing for sin, was intended by divine providence to prepare men's minds for the cordial reception of the two great doctrines of the true atonement, and the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. But since the union of Church and State has also overspread the whole heathen world, linked and bound up in the same bundle with the other doctrines, there is precisely the same reason for believing that God ordered it for the express purpose of paving the way for Christianity, and "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," by their being previously accustomed to respect public authority in connection with religion. And he that rejects this last is furnished, from the case itself, with the same reasons for rejecting the others, and calling them heathen errors. And here also it should be borne in mind, that neither of these can be a *fundamental falsehood* assumed as true; for then the falsehood could not have been of uniform and universal prevalence; but a *fundamental truth* retained as a leading characteristic of a true system, for the purpose of preserving alive the great outlines of the Moral Government of God as adapted to the human condition in this world.

*Seventhly*.—We appeal to analogy;—but yet an analogy which owes its origin to the same fountain head, the *primitive condition of man*, in the first formation of Society. Every head of a family is both political and ecclesiastical head of his own household, and, under God, is bound to tax the labor of his children, and expend it on their religious instruction. This establishes the principle for larger communities; because every family government contains within itself every fundamental principle essential to the constitution of an extensive empire, with the same certainty that the sprout of an acorn contains every generic essentiality of the largest oak. In neither case does *quantity* at all interfere with *kind*, or essential principle. The subject of the state is under the same obligation to obedience in these things that the member of a private family is under; for the very notion of government supposes both the right to judge for the subject in every thing that falls within its jurisdiction, and by consequence the valid claim to obedience; because "the powers that be are ordained of God." The parent judges, under God, for his child, and arbitrarily, that is, without consulting his child's judgment, provides for his religious education according to the will of God. But here we must anticipate an objection concerning the right and the exercise of *private judgment*. And to be brief, we will instance a Jury under oath. Each Juror exercises it in full; but it is upon facts over which he has no control whatever, and which are furnished to him by the information and testimony of others. The whole of the case is laid before him, and the law is expounded to him, which is evidence also, and a part of the case. And even if he should previously understand the law, it would make no difference, as such knowledge would as strictly be evidence as the witnesses in Court. It is thus, on *comprehensive evidence*, that we decide "of ourselves," as St. Paul would say, in all the concerns of life. We see the truth of things when rightly presented, and our private judgment, or sense of right and wrong, directs us to follow *authority*.

*Eighthly*.—The principle is *conceded*, though undesignedly, by those who have called for a division of the Clergy Reserves "among the different denominations." For this, be it observed, is but calling on the state to lay an arbitrary tax on the labor of *some* who must rent these lands, for the support of religion; which involves all the supposable tyranny of Church and State in England and Scotland—all the injustice of compelling some to give a considerable portion of their labour towards supporting a Communion to which they do not belong, and from whose ministry they derive no benefit. For it can hardly be supposed that in all cases persons of a particular denomination would be selected to till the lands assigned to that denomination, and then that they would do so in preference