

70. Of Civil Government.

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. *Rom. 13, 1.*

God has given the parents two assistants: the Church and the State. The Church assists the parents in their efforts to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and the State assists them by providing for the secular education of their children and by doing its part in helping them to enforce good order in their homes and families.

The rulers in the State are placed over us by God's ordinance, and we owe them obedience. In our richly blessed country we elect our own officers of the law and regard them as our servants, and hence we are easily inclined to think little of them. It is doubly necessary therefore for us to remember that the civil government is God's ordinance. This is a truth which in our day not only the Anarchists and Nihilists deny, but also the Socialists, who endeavor to undermine and overthrow every existing form of government. God's Word, however, is perfectly clear in this matter also. It makes no difference how a government is constituted, whether it be an absolute monarchy, with its powers and functions chiefly in the hands of one man, or a constitutional monarchy, in which the power is limited by constitutional provisions, or a republic, with the legislative, executive, and judicial powers vested in the people. The question is, Is there an actual government? Has it authority in the land? Is it able to preserve order and to provide for the safety and well-being of the people? If so, then it is of God, then it is entitled to the respect and obedience of every citizen within its boundaries.

An established government, such as ours, is of God. It is ordained of God. It stands in the place of God as far as its power reaches, even as father and mother are the representatives of God in the home. As the Fourth Commandment demands obedience to parents on the part of the children, so it also requires every citizen to obey his government. We must submit to the rulers that have been chosen by the majority of the people. God says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."

Prayer.

O Lord, Thou hast endowed body and soul abundantly with every manner of blessing. How can I find words adequate for the praise I owe Thee? How can I properly show my gratitude? Behold, O Lord, I offer unto Thee the sacrifice of my poor service and glorify Thy grace and mercy with all my strength and powers. In the congregation will I bless Thee. My soul shall honor Thee, my spirit must praise Thee, my mouth shall thank Thee. Bless our country, give us good government. Amen.

God, give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands:
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,
Men who possess opinions and a will.
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who have honor and who will not lie;
Unflinching men, who live above the fog;
Men who can stand before a demagog
And scorn his scheming treason without winking
In public duty and in private thinking.

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