

Religious Liberty



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.

(Romans 13:1)

1. Liberty Before Sin
2. Liberty After Sin
3. The Principle of Liberty
4. Theocracy
5. Civil Government

We receive into our [health] institutions people of all denominations. But as for ourselves we are strictly denominational; **we are sacredly denominated by God and are under His theocracy.** But we are not unwisely to press upon anyone the peculiar points of our faith. (*7T* 109.1; published **1902**)

Pilate then took his place on the judgment seat, and again presented Jesus to the people, saying, “Behold your King!” Again the mad cry was heard, “Away with Him, crucify Him.” In a voice that was heard far and near, Pilate asked, “Shall I crucify your King?” But from profane, blasphemous lips went forth the words, “We have no king but Caesar.” (*DA 737.5*)

Thus by choosing a heathen ruler, the Jewish nation had withdrawn from the theocracy. They had rejected God as their king. Henceforth they had no deliverer. They had no king but Caesar. To this the priests and teachers had led the people. For this, with the fearful results that followed, they were responsible. A nation’s sin and a nation’s ruin were due to the religious leaders. (*DA 737.6*)

Has the Adventist Church
chosen a different God?

1913 Yearbook— “1. That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

2. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom he created all things, and by whom they do consist . . .”

SIXTY—SIXTH MEETING

GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

December 2, 1930

P R E S E N T:

M Wilcox, M E Kern, Claude Conard, H H Cobban, E R Palmer, Mrs Plummer, J A Stevens, E Hackman, A Spalding, M C Taft, H H Votaw, C S Longacre, S A Wellman, H E Rogers, L E Froom, J A P Green, J J Strahle (of Northern Europe), C E Weaks.

F. M. Wilcox was asked to act as chairman.

STATEMENT OF OUR FAITH FOR YEAR BOOK:

A request was presented from the African Division that a statement of what Seventh-day Adventists believe should be printed in the Year Book, since they feel that such a statement would help government officials and others to a better understanding of our work.

VOTED, That the chair appoint a committee of which he shall be a member, to prepare such a statement for publication in the Year Book.

Named: H.E.Kern, F.M.Wilcox, E.R.Palmer,

C.H.Watson.

1931 Yearbook— “2. That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt. 28:19.”

They will accept that which pleases their ideas and will begin to manufacture another foundation than that which is laid. They will flatter their own vanity and esteem, thinking that they are capable of removing the pillars of our faith <and replacing them with pillars they have devised.> *6LtMs*, Ms 28, 1890, par. 7

This will continue to be as long as time shall last. . . . (Ibid., par. 8)

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will **undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith** that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. (Manuscript 31, **1896**)

We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the last fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to tear down the foundation principles of our faith. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists to take the place of the truth which point by point has been testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the **waymarks** which have made us what we are are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit. From the great system of truth as it has been presented by God's messengers, **not a pin is to be removed.**

(18LtMs, Lt 232, 1903, par. 42) (To Dr. Kellogg)

We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teaching of the Word—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the message of heaven for these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But **the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved**, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimonies of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon **unquestionable authority**.—(Letter 95, March 14, **1905**, to the Kresses)

In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. **Not one pin is to be removed from that which *the Lord has established*.** The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for **the last fifty years?**—*The Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905.

Just as the Adventist denomination rejected the God who established them and who established the pillars of their faith, in like manner our national government will repudiate every principle of the Constitution that has established us as a nation and has defined the pillars of our government.

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization.

Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. (*1SM* 204.2)

When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, **our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution** as a Protestant and republican government, **and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions**, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near. (*5T* 451.1)

As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, **so may this apostasy be a sign** to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble. (*5T* 451.2)

God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, **that His people may be prepared** to stand against the tempest of **opposition and wrath**. . . . It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance. While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord's people may not have mercy or justice. **The Sunday movement** is now making its way in darkness. (*5T* 452.1)

And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

(Ezekiel 9:4)

The people whom God has made the depositaries of His law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed **in the dark places of the earth**. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth. They should make mighty intercession with God for help now. The love of Christ must be diffused in their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. (*5T* 454.1; 1889)

David Livingstone—1842

J. N. Andrews—1874

Abram La Rue—1888

Anybody can see at a glance that the establishment of the national reform theory of government would be but the **establishment of a theocracy**. And this is, in fact, what they propose to establish. They say that “a republic thus governed is of him, through the people, and is as really and truly a theocracy as the government of Israel.”

A monthly reading of the national W. C. T. U., written by Miss Willard, on God in government, says: “A **true theocracy** is yet to come, [and] the enthronement of Christ in law and law-makers, hence I pray devoutly, as a Christian patriot, for the ballot in the hands of women.” (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

And in her annual address to the national W. C. T. U. Convention, of 1887, Miss Willard said: “**The kingdom of Christ ‘must enter the realm of law through the gateway of politics....** There are enough temperance men in both [the Democratic and Republican parties] to take possession of the government and give us national prohibition in the party of the near future, which is to be the party of God.... We pray heaven to give them no rest ... until they shall ... swear an oath of allegiance to Christ in politics, and March in one great army ‘up to the polls to worship God.’ ... I firmly believe that the patient, steadfast work of Christian women will so react on politics within the next generation that **the party of God** will be at the front.” (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

Now a **man made theocracy** is only a scheme of government which puts man in the place of God. That is precisely the theory upon which the papacy was built, and that is just what the papacy is. The national reform theory is identical with that of the papacy; therefore the establishment of the national reform theory in this government will be but the setting up of a living image of the papacy. (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

CHAPTER III. THE POWERS THAT BE

In support of the doctrine that civil government has the right to act in things pertaining to God, the text of Scripture is quoted which says, "The powers that be are ordained of God." This passage is found in Romans 13:1. The first nine verses of the chapter are devoted to this subject, showing that the powers that be are ordained of God, and enjoining upon Christians, upon every soul, in fact, the duty of respectful subjection to civil government. (A.T. Jones, *The Rights of the People*, p. 33.1)

- ❖ The power—the ruler—is the minister of God for good or as a revenger to execute wrath (v. 4).
- ❖ We must be subject because of the wrath and for conscience sake.
- ❖ We reveal this by paying tribute, and we are to render tribute to whom it is due, as well as custom, fear, and honor.
- ❖ We are to owe no man anything but love, i.e. do not commit adultery, or kill, steal, bear false witness, and covet.

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. (*ROP* 36.2)

As the ten commandments contain the whole duty of man, and as in the scriptural enumeration 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; that is to say, again that the powers that be, although ordained of God, are not ordained of God in anything pertaining to a single duty enjoined in any one of the first four of the ten commandments. 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 Cæsar, nor by Cæsar—that which is God's. (*ROP* 36.3)

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them,
Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are
Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.
(Matthew 22:21)

In the Saviour's command to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar'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 state the same things 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." (*ROP* 34.1)

Paul knew full well of 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”? *Answer*—Because he was writing concerning the words of the Saviour which relate to our duties to civil government. (*ROP* 35.)

Our duties under civil government pertain solely to the government and to our fellow-men, because the powers of civil government pertain solely to men in their relations one to another, and to the government. But the Saviour'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 . . . (*ROP* 35.3)

. . . 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 the things pertaining to the relation of man with his fellow-men, and in those things alone. (*ROP* 35.3)

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. (*ROP* 36.2)

Nebuchadnezzar—Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
Darius—Daniel

Thus again God has shown that, although the powers that be are ordained of God, they are not ordained to act in things that pertain to men's relation toward God.

Christ's words [Matthew 22:21] are a positive declaration to that effect, and Romans 13:1–9 is a further exposition of the principle. (*ROP* 42.1)

And he changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, And knowledge to them that know understanding:
(Daniel 2:21)

That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. (Daniel 4:25)

1 Peter 2:13–14