

The Home, Church, and State

By Everett Hardin

There are three divine institutions. They are the home, the church, and the civil state. The home had its beginning in the Garden of Eden. The church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, Acts 2:47. The civil government is ordained by God to fulfill another need of man, Rom. 13:1.

There may be some over-lapping of responsibilities to these institutions but they are to be kept distinct. When we obey the law of the civil government forbidden stealing, we will at the same time obey God's law. *"Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth,"* Eph. 4:28. Even though there is an over-lapping of duty, the state did not make the law for the church. Gaining by unfair means is so common that the world calls it shrewdness. But in the eyes of the Lord he is a thief who takes from another his rightful due.

We have a separate duty to the civil state and to God. Representatives of the Pharisees and the Herodians came to Jesus and said, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not? Jesus called these men hypocrites because they pretended they wanted information, when they knew that was not the case. He asked them for the tribute money, and asked whose image was on it. *"They said unto him, Caesar's. Then said He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's,"* Matt. 22:15-22. It is right to give to each institution that which is due. This would answer the problem of church and state.

They are Different

Even though all three institutions are God-approved, when they do what they are designed to do, they are different and should be kept separate.

Different In Purpose

The church is a spiritual institution. It was established by Jesus Christ to fill a need that no human institution could possibly perform. In I Tim. 3:15 Paul writes to Timothy, *"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* The church holds aloft truth — the reference is to spiritual truth which saves souls. It is the responsibility of the church to uphold and proclaim the truth against all foes.

The design of civil government is to promote the security and well-being of its citizens; and there would be no security of life and property if there were no civil government. *"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 beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil,"* Rom. 13:3-4. It is wrong for Christians to resist or seek to overthrow the power ordained of God, and they who resist will fail under the condemnation of this power and of God Himself.

The home is multi-purposed. It is for companionship,. God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him," Gen. 2:18. The man being the kind he was and with the kind of expected future, he would need a helper suited for his social and reproductive needs, Gen. 1:28. In I Cor. 7:2 Paul sets forth a safeguard against fornication in

marriage. *“Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”* The home is the place for the physical, the intellectual and especially the spiritual development of children, Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:6-9.

Different In Organization

In the United States we have three branches of government, Legislative, Executive, and Judicial,. Civil government is approved of God. *“For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God,”* Rom. 13:1. All authority and right to govern belongs to God and to those to whom he delegates it. God has delegated to civil rulers the right to execute authority and rule over men. The President, Congress and Supreme Court have a rightful role and God intended for each to fulfill that role.

God did not place the President, Congress or Supreme Court over the church to make its laws. Christ is *“head over all things to the church,”* Eph. 1:22. All things have been put or “subjected” under the rule of Christ. He possesses ultimate preeminence over all things to the church, Matt. 28:18. God placed elders over local churches to oversee its affairs according to the will of Christ. *“They ordained them elders in every church,”* Acts 14:23. God does not provide for any human officers outside a local church to exercise any oversight of the local church.

The husband is the head of the home, Eph. 5:23-24. The headship of the husband is carried out, and illustrated by the headship of Christ over the church. The love required of the husband for his wife should be Christ-like, patterned after God’s love, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing, and self-devoting, even unto death. Every relationship and organization on earth must have proper leadership in order to survive and be successful. The home relationship is no exception,.

Different Duties

In the church we are commanded to worship God, John 4:23-24, work to preach the gospel, Mark 16:15-16; I Tim. 2:2, help one’s fellow man, Gal. 6:10, and be faithful to the Lord, I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10. The state requires us to pay our taxes and obey the laws that govern our society, Rom. 13:1-7. the home has duties that differ from these. Mutual love is to abound, Eph. 5:25; Tit. 2:4, parents are to train their children, Eph. 6:4, children are to obey and honor their parents, Eph.6:1-3. We are to engage in prayer and Bible study regularly.

Different Laws

The Bible contains Christ’s laws governing marriage and the home, Matt. 19:3-9; Rom. 7:1-7; Eph. 5. The New Testament also gives the laws governing the church, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3. The Congress makes our laws for the civil state. The state does not have the right to make laws that would hinder the work, worship, or identity of the Lord’s church. Civil government is out of place to make a law forbidding worship, the preaching of the gospel, discipline of its members. Should there be a conflict between our duty to God and what the state requires, *“we ought to obey God rather than man,”* Acts 5:29. Nor does the church have the right to “swallow up” the organization, duties and work of the state. Neither the state nor the church has the right to destroy the home. Its purpose has been changed, and the laws governing marriage, divorce and remarriage have been set aside. On Jan. 22, 1972 the Supreme Court passed a law legalizing abortion. The results of this dreadful decision are appalling. Doctors who have forsaken their noble calling of healing and saving laws have killed thousands of unwanted babies.

Different Means of Entering

One becomes a member of the home and citizen of the state by a physical birth, without a personal choice. One does not get into the church by a physical birth. He must experience a "new birth." Jesus told Nicodemus, "*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,*" John 3:1-7. The three thousand, on the day of Pentecost, were told to "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,*" Acts 2:38,. It was that group that "*gladly received the word and were baptized*" that the Lord "*added to the church,*" Acts 2:41,47. Christ commanded His apostles to preach the gospel offering salvation to all men. "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned,*" Mark 16:15-16. The state of condemnation will reach into eternity unless its cause is removed. God is not to blame if men do not choose to be saved. His mercy is manifest; his love boundless, His grace is free to all.