Separation of Church and State

The concept and practice of a “Christian” church state union has been widely spread in many different places around the world since the time of Roman Emperor Constantine who had an “experience” at the battle of Milvian Bridge (312 A.D. fighting his brother-in-law Maxentius) where he supposedly saw a vision of a cross in the sky with the words “in hoc signo vinces” or in English “In this sign you will conquer”. Unsure of this apparition’s meaning, Constantine pondered what he saw and then supposedly had a dream that night where Christ appeared to him with the same sign he had seen in the sky and commanded him to make the likeness of that sign he had seen and to use it as a safeguard in all of his battles.

Emperor Constantine may have seen “Christianity” as a means to an end. The uniting of an empire under the belief of one “God” would also make them loyal to one emperor – himself. Rome was embroiled in civil war for several years as Constantine sought to take control of the empire from the others he shared rule with known as the tetrarchy (four rulers).

Constantine and Licinius issued the edict of Milan in February 313 A.D.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

2 Corinthians 11:14
consonant to right reason, that no man should be denied leave of attaching himself to the rites of the Christians, or to whatever other religion his mind directed him, that thus the supreme Divinity, to whose worship we freely devote ourselves, might continue to vouchsafe His favour and beneficence to us. And accordingly we give you to know that, without regard to any provisos in our former orders to you concerning the Christians, all who choose that religion are to be permitted, freely and absolutely, to remain in it, and not to be disturbed any ways, or molested...

The text above in its entirety can be found on the internet easily enough. In reading the entire thing, I really do not get the sense that there was any intent to foment a state-church monster in which people would be tortured and even murdered for simply what they believed. Notice the phrase “or to whatever other religion his mind directed him”. In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping and to destroy their scriptures.

**Bible Corruption at the Beginning of the “Catholic” Church**

Twenty-five years later, Constantine issued another edict ordering 50 Bibles to be published at government expense. Eusebius was in charge of these 50 bibles. This is thought to be where the Catholic manuscripts Sinaiticus and Vaticanus come from. In fact, Vaticanus is thought by T.C. Skeat of the British Museum to be a “reject” copy from these 50 bibles. And yet, it is the primary manuscript relied upon by “modern” translators. Remember that Eusebius was from a line of students leading back to Origen (185 – 254 A.D.) who had corrupted (changed) the Bible manuscripts in over 30,000 places. This corruption continued when Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus to compile and translate what is known as the Latin Vulgate (completed in A.D. 400) by “spending his purse” to obtain the works of Origen.

**Baptist Distinctive – Church and State Should be Separate**

There is much confusion in our day about the separation of church and state. Many think this statement is in our US constitution, but it is not. The idea of this separation is decidedly a Bible doctrine and is something that is rooted in a firm understanding and belief in Soul Liberty. Our US Constitution gives us in the first amendment:

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
Baptist type people down through the ages have respected government but have not sought any union with government. They have sought to simply live in peace, worshiping God as their conscience dictates.

**God Established Both Civil Government and the Church. Each is Distinct in Its Purpose and Mission. Neither Should Be in Control of the Other nor Act as an “Arm” of the Other.**

Matthew 22:15-22

“Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, 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? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 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. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.”

Christ recognized that there were things in this world that “belonged” to the government. He had no problem with giving the government what was theirs. So many people will say something like “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s” but they never finish the phrase “and unto God the things what are God’s! The problem with the “Caesar’s” down through history is that they do not often recognize the things that are God’s. They think EVERYTHING is theirs.

**Line in the Sand** – There is a clear teaching in scripture that we are NOT to obey the government when the government tell us to do that which is contrary to God’s clear teaching in the Bible.

Acts 5:27-29

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**

**Modern Concept of the Separation of Church and State** – The misconception by most people of our day is that people of “religion” should have no right to influence the government in any way. In fact the secularists of our day would change our constitution’s intent of “Freedom of Religion” to “Freedom FROM Religion”. This simply is not true. We as Bible believing Christians have every right to try to influence our government toward righteousness and Bible based values and governance just as any citizen has the right to do according to the dictates of their
conscience regardless of what faith they have or don’t have, or of what denomination of church they go to or don’t go to.

**Thomas Jefferson – Wall of Separation**

Thomas Jefferson most likely was not born again. He, like Benjamin Franklin might properly be termed as deists believing in many of the Bible’s principles but failing to come to Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Jefferson edited a version referred to the Jefferson Bible or “The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth” where he removed references to miracles and the supernatural (not believing in them).

Jefferson did however, have contact with Baptist people and did not condone their persecution in colonial America. He would visit the Buck Mountain Baptist Church in Albemarle County, Virginia pastored by Andrew Tribble. In conversation, Jefferson expressed to this pastor that the form of government employed in this Baptist church would be the prefect form of Government for the new nation.

In a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, Jefferson used the phrase “wall of separation between Church & State:

“Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.”

**The Church-State Monster is Born**

Within the same century as the Edict of Milan was issued, the newly established Roman Catholic Institution began to use its alliance with the Roman government not to insure the free exercise of “religion” as the edict seems to grant, but the enforcement of one particular form of religion, that being the Catholic form. In other words, it was becoming a reality that you could be a Christian only if you were in agreement with the Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. You were “free” to practice Christianity only the form found in the Catholic institution.

Consider what the religious father of the Roman Catholic Institution, Augustine, said regarding the use of military force against the Donatists in northern Africa, recorded for is in the council in Carthage in 404 A.D.:

“It is now full time for the emperor to provide for the safety of the Catholic church, and prevent those rash men from terrifying the people, whom they cannot seduce. We think it is as lawful for us to ask assistance against them, as it was for Paul to employ a military force against the conspiration of factious men.”

Paul had nothing to do with “employing” a military force of Roman soldiers against anyone. The soldiers simply were his escort, not his military arm following his directions. The gross
misunderstanding and twisting of the scriptures by Augustine can only remind me of one person, Lucifer.

By 380 A.D. the sitting emperors Theodosius I, Gratian, and Valentinian II issued the Edict of Thessalonica which in part states:

“We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since, in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation and in the second the punishment of our authority which in accordance with the will of Heaven we shall decide to inflict.”

We see here a union of church-state power to force upon people, under pain of punishment, the type of religion they must practice and be subservient to. There is no freedom of religion and there is no soul liberty.

**Catholic Doctrine of the Two Swords**

Catholic doctrine officially given during the reign of Pope Boniface VIII in 1302 illustrates the extent to which this unholy union went. Based on another scriptural perversion regarding the statement made by the disciples in Luke 22:38 – “And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.”

“That in her and within her power are two swords, we are taught in the Gospels, namely, the spiritual sword and the temporal sword. For when the Apostles said, "Lo, here,"- that is, in the Church,- are two swords, the Lord did not reply to the Apostles "it is too much," but "it is enough." It is certain that whoever denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, hearkens ill to the words of the Lord which he spake, "Put up thy sword into its sheath." Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the temporal sword; the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by the Church; the former by the hand of the priest, the latter by the hand of princes and kings, but at the nod and sufferance of the priest. The one sword must of necessity be subject to the other, and the temporal authority to the spiritual.”

**Protestants Keep the Union of Church & State**

Lest one would be left to think that only the Catholic institution had this church-state union, let us be clear that many who rebelled against the Catholic “church” and removed themselves from that institution (that is why they are called “protest-ants”, kept much of the institution’s practices that they left. Infant Baptism and the persecuting church-state union are certainly two of the big ones they kept.
Here is a statue of Ulrich Zwingli, leader of the reformation in Switzerland. Notice the depiction carefully. There is a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other! This signifies the state-church union that he practiced.

Zwingli was a persecutor and a murderer. Consider the city council edict against the Anabaptist:

“You know without doubt, and have heard from many that for a long time, some peculiar men, who imagine that they are learned, have come forward astonishingly, and without any evidence of the Holy Scriptures, given as a pretext by simple and pious men, have preached, and without the permission and consent of the church, have proclaimed that infant baptism did not proceed from God, but from the devil, and, therefore, ought not to be practiced. . . . We, therefore, ordain and require that hereafter all men, women, boys and girls forsake rebaptism, and shall not make use of it hereafter, and shall let infants be baptized; whoever shall act contrary to this public edict shall be fined for every offense, one mark; and IF ANY BE DISOBEDIENT AND STUBBORN THEY SHALL BE TREATED WITH SEVERITY; for, the obedient we will protect; the disobedient we will punish according to his deserts, without fail; by this all are to conduct themselves. All this we confirm by this public document, stamped with the seal of our city, and given on St. Andrew's Day, A. D., 1525.”

Men were burned at the stake (like Balthasar Hubmaier – March 10, 1528) and others drowned (Felix Manz, Jacob Falk, and Henry Reiman – Dec. 1527).

The council proclamations became rasher as time went on. Consider the following given on Sept. 9, 1527:

“In order that the dangerous, wicked, turbulent and seditious sect of the Baptists may be eradicated, we have thus decreed: If any one is suspected of rebaptism, he is to be warned by the magistracy to leave the territory under penalty of the designated punishment [to be drowned]. Every person is obliged to report those favorable to rebaptism. Whoever shall not comply with this ordinance is liable to punishment according to the sentence of the magistracy. Teachers of rebaptism, baptizing preachers, and leaders of hedge meetings ARE TO BE DROWNED. Those previously released from prison who have sworn to desist from such things, shall incur the same penalty. Foreign Baptists are to be driven out; if they return THEY SHALL BE DROWNED. No one is allowed to secede from the [Zwinglian] church and to absent himself from the Holy Supper. Whoever flees from one jurisdiction to another shall be banished or extradited upon demand”

And again more severe language issued on March 26, 1530:

“All who adhere to or favor the false sect of the Baptists, and who attend hedge-meetings, shall suffer the most severe punishments. BAPTIST LEADERS, THEIR FOLLOWERS, AND PROTECTORS SHALL BE DROWNED WITHOUT MERCY. Those, however, who assist them, or fail to report or to arrest them shall be punished otherwise on body and goods as injurious and faithless subjects.”

We could here list many more protestant persecutors like John Calvin (had body parts of people hung in parts of Geneva Switzerland to warn people not to cross the church-state alliance there), the German Lutherans were persecutors (Martin Luther himself at the end of his life came to embrace a policy of “extermination” toward Baptists and wrote violently against the revolting peasants, hated the Jews and wrote a book ‘The Jews and their Lies”). The DIET OF SPIERS in 1529 pronounced the death sentence upon all Anabaptists. Hundreds of special police were hired to hunt down and execute them on the spot. It was Lutheran theologians
which Hitler communicated with concerning the Jewish “problem” coming to the conclusion of extermination.

The Church of England after separating from the Roman Catholics under Henry the VIII were persecutors of Baptists and also stated that the “If there be no hope left, then the obstinate are put to death”. The “no hope” here refers to there being no hope of ever getting some to recant and worship at the feet of the state-church. Those so obstinate as that were to be executed. During the time of Colonial America when John Clark was petitioning King Charles the II for a new charter for Rhode Island in which complete religious liberty would be granted in that territory only (which John Clark did secure after 11 years of petition), there were no less than 8,000 Baptists in prison across England according to estimates. Only God I’m sure, knows the exact number.

We will save further details of trials and persecutions of our Baptist brethren for another time, but sufficient evidence has been given here to allow us to understand the horrors of the church-state union. We didn’t event talk about specifics in regard to the Catholic persecution horrors where literally millions of people were murdered.

A Women Rides the Beast

Revelation chapter 17 portrays for us a very strange picture indeed. This is the picture of a religious system (the whore, the women) which is attempting to control the political system. This is the picture of a state-church union. Ultimately, this end-time union of a one world government and one world “church’ will dissolve by the beast (the political god of forces) turning upon its rider and devouring her.

Rev 17:1-18

Human Government the Bible Way

Romans 13:1-7

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 resisteth the power, resisteth 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 beareth 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; honour to whom honour.