

National Church Establishments.

(Scriptural Relation Between Church and Nation)

And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted. (Isa. 60:10-12)

Question.—*What relations exist between a church and a nation?*

Answer.—There are two propositions necessary for the clearing of this:

First, There is nothing but a church which can be a nation, Mic. 4:5; and that in order to be nations, which shall be blessed and abiding nations, it is necessary for the nations to become churches, Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8. The church alone is the heir of the world, Gal. 3:29; and no other party shall be permitted to occupy her territory, or exclude her from her inheritance, Matt. 5:5; Dan. 7:18. So it is that whatever occupant of the earth cannot show the church's title must be dispossessed, Ps. 147:6. Therefore, once the people of Israel were constituted a church they came into the possession of Canaan, in which they prospered as they obeyed, Deut. 29:7-9; and, conversely, the nations of Canaan were dispossessed and exterminated, Num. 33:53.

Man's church relations, his relation towards God and His Son, must first be constituted, Ps. 2:10-12; afterward, there is the blessed enjoyment of his reign upon and inheriting of the earth, Judg. 1:1, 2. Thus, it is that churches are constituted to become nations, Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9. Failing to honor the constituting of the former, there can be no constituting of the other, Num. 33:55, 56.

No nation can be saved from these consequences though it has communities of Christians dwelling within its borders, Ezek. 14:14. The prayers and services of these Christians may prolong a nation's prosperity, Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:2; but as occupiers of the soil, these heathen nations are but tenants awaiting a time of dispossession, Ps. 43:1. The righteousness of the believers will not deliver an ungodly nation in the day of judgment, Prov. 11:21. It is the nation, constituted in a national capacity, which occupies, possesses and inherits the national territory, Deut. 32:8. Therefore, God seeks the necessary service *of the nation*, Ps. 72:11; as well as tithes *as a nation*, Mal. 3:8-10; and consecration of the earth's gain to Him from nations *as such*, Lev. 27:30-32. Thus, nothing but a church can be a nation, Jer. 2:11; and to be blessed and abiding, the nations must become churches, Isa. 54:5.

Second, While nothing but a church can be a nation, it must be a church professing the true religion in order to be blessed and abide, 2 Chron. 20:20; Isa.

54:14. The nations are not dispossessed by virtue of being nations, but because they are false churches conspiring as nations to commit idolatry, Deut. 7:1-6. It is their rebellion against the true God that leads to their downfall, Ps. 9:17. Israel, too, was warned that failure to obey the laws of God would result in an apostasy into false religion which would be rejected of the Lord, Hos. 4:1-6. Thus, when he turned aside from worshipping the true God, according to the precepts of the true religion, Israel was dispossessed, Jer. 3:6-11.

Third, It is expressly prophesied, of the New Testament era, that the church would be established amongst the nations, *i.e.*, the church would be settled in the chiefest position of the nations, Isa. 2:2. Christ was given to enlighten the churches of the nations, Isa. 49:6. Christians are set to be salt and light amongst the nations, Matt. 5:13-16. The Gospel is leaven which is to transform the nations from the inside (*i.e.*, all genuine reform is spiritual, *cf.* John 3:3) out, Luke 13:20, 21. Christ, through His church, is set to rule in the midst of nations (*i.e.*, Gentiles), which have hitherto been His enemies, Ps. 110:2, 6. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, declares that the purpose of the sending forth of the Gospel was to make them, the nations, fellow-heirs together with Israel by transforming the rulers of those nations so that they worship the true God, Eph. 3:6-11. This is the dispossession, by the true church, of the false church in the midst of the nations, Ps. 96:5. It is Zion that shall bring forth mystical Christ in the midst of nations which are born unto Himself, Isa. 66:7-12; Rev. 12:1, 2, 5. This is the *man* that is born of the church, *each nation* in its abiding and blessed state in submission to Christ, Ps. 87.