

For God & Country

The Reformed Perspective on Patriotism

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In the aftermath of 9/11, all stores sold out of their flags. Great patriotic fervor gripped the United States of America.

Yet it is we, as believers in Christ Jesus, with God's Word open before us, who have the basis and the foundation for true patriotism.

The topic of this pamphlet, in the Latin, is: *Pro Deo et Patria*. This is the crest and the motto of the chaplaincy of the armed forces. An appropriate motto it is for the chaplain, who definitely is laboring for God, in bringing His Word to bear on the lives of the young men (and now also women) who are serving the country in the armed forces.

But *Pro Deo et Patria* is not only a motto or a logo for chaplains in the armed forces. It is also a motto that fits all believers, regardless of what country God has placed them in and regardless of what leaders are over them: For God, for country!

God and country are not antagonistic or dualistic in the sense that we are half citizens of heaven and half citizens of a particular nation. Rather, because we are for God, we are for our nation. Because we serve God, we will be good citizens of the nation in which God places us. Christians make the best citizens!

Pro Deo et Patria is an appropriate motto because of our dual citizenship. We are dual citizens. By grace we are fully citizens of the kingdom of heaven; and while we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven, God has also in His providence placed us here temporarily as citizens of particular nations on earth. As citizens of a nation here on earth for a while, we face the question: What is our perspective regarding our government and our nation? Should we as believers be patriotic? Are we patriotic?

What is patriotism? Webster's dictionary defines it: "Love of country, devotion to the welfare of one's country." A patriot, then, is one who loves his country and zealously supports its authority and interests. Patriotism is akin to nationalism, which Webster defines as "of or pertaining to or for the nation; devoted to one's country's interests; being patriotic."

The matter of one's relationship to one's country or state was a burning issue at the time of the Reformation. Today it is still a timely subject, even though support for, love of, and obedience to one's country can be a thorny subject for some.

The question whether or not we should be patriotic should not be answered by issues surrounding us. Whether we love and zealously support our country should not differ radically whether one is answering that question around the time of April 15, when we are paying our taxes, or on July 4 when we celebrate the birthday of the country.

The answer to the question Whether or not one should love and support one's country should not depend upon whether we have gone through a crisis like 9/11 and are involved in a popular war, or if we are standing in the middle of the Vietnam era. It will not be decided by whether or not we live in a stable and powerful country such as the United States or in a weak and often corrupt government like the Philippines. This is also biblically true: when the apostle Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, wrote Romans 13, the Roman government was persecuting the Christian church.

Our answer and our perspective must be from the Bible and from the confessions. As Calvinists, those who stand in the Reformed tradition, how do we view patriotism? What is the correct Christian and Reformed perspective on patriotism?

In order to arrive at a correct view, we must look at the historical perspective on this question; we must look at the origin or the place of the state; and we must look at how we work out our relationship to the state.

The Historical Perspective

There have been those in history who, when confronted with the dual citizenship of a Christian, have wanted to make those citizenships mutually exclusive. The Anabaptists tended to regard the state at its very best as a necessary evil. They saw one's country or the state standing antithetically against God's church and God's kingdom. They saw the government as inherently evil, belonging to the realm of the Antichrist. The Anabaptists held that the Christian has been set free by Christ Jesus, and is therefore free from any rule or regulation by the state. Christians acknowledge no king, no magistrate, and no rule. They must look only to Christ Jesus. Anabaptists believe that they cannot benefit from their freedom as long as they have any power set over them. Thus, they have been historically rebellious against any form of civil authority. They have sought to establish their own kingdom, the kingdom of Christ on earth, in which they would have all things in common.

Over against the Anabaptist view, the Reformed churches have taught the truth of Scripture as expressed in the Belgic Confession of Faith, Article 36:

“We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, has appointed kings, princes, and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies, to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose He has invested the magistracy with the sword for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of them that do well. Moreover, it is the bounden duty of every one, of what state, quality, or condition soever he may be, to subject himself to the magistrates; to pay tribute, to show due honor and respect to them in all things which are not repugnant to the Word of God; to supplicate for them in their prayers, that God may rule and guide them in all their ways, and that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and honesty.

Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates and would subvert justice, introduce community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men.”

Almost all of the Reformed believers in the Philippines have come out of a cult called the Worldwide Church of God. That cult, along with the Jehovah’s Witnesses, has an even more extreme position than the Anabaptists. They see all worldly and human government as being under the dominion and the power of Satan. Pledging allegiance to the flag of their country would for them be pledging allegiance to the devil and would constitute idolatry.

Recently, in a religious periodical, a Mennonite wrote: “Nationalism is a form of idolatry. And we must be concerned about this dread sickness of the soul.” He went on to say: “The question of our loyalty to God’s kingdom or to the worldly kingdoms — that is the question.” Remember that according to Webster’s dictionary, being patriotic belongs to the definition of nationalism — a love and a zeal for one’s country and obedience to its authority. To this Mennonite, a stepchild of the Anabaptists, nationalism is a form of idolatry. So when it comes to the question of dual citizenship — being a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and a citizen of an earthly kingdom — these folk would say, “Absolutely not! Impossible! Incompatible! It must be one or the other.” Or, to put it another way, “You cannot serve God and Caesar.”

Looking at some of the history of the Anabaptist movement and various cults leads to the observation that even Reformed believers act at times like “practical Anabaptists.” How often is there not the feeling (or the muttering), “Oh, let’s forget about politics. It’s rotten anyway. Let’s ignore that whole business and let’s live as though it doesn’t exist.” Or even, “I would really like to be an Anabaptist.” That is not spiritual!

In God’s providence, with the approval of my consistories, I served as a chaplain in the armed forces for eleven years. It is no secret that there were some who did not like my being a chaplain. Two of the arguments used against my being a chaplain were that “it does not seem to be fitting, and it sets a poor example” and that “a chaplain puts himself under the authority, the control, the rule of the military.” But how is it not fitting, and how does it set a bad example for a pastor to be under the authority of the military and the state?

“Putting oneself under secular authority is not fitting, and it is a poor example.” “Politics and the military are dirty, places that a child of God should not be.” That is a taste of practical Anabaptistic reasoning! How often that thinking is expressed also when it comes to Christians running for office “It is a dirty business; how can a Christian do it?”

However, all we have to do is look at how God used His servants in biblical times, whether it be a Joseph in Egypt or whether it be a Daniel in Babylon. We rejoice still today over God’s using Christians in government to influence government in a good way

for the welfare of the church. In our history there have been members whose places of employment became union shops. It was through Christians lobbying and working in government that those individuals were granted the freedom and the right to continue working in those places without being forced to become members of a labor union. Or think of Christians in government who exercise their influence so that pornographic shops are closed or that there are rules that businesses stayed closed on Sunday. Those things affect us. It is fitting for Christians to be involved in government because that involvement is for the welfare of the church.

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the Fourth Book, especially chapter 20, John Calvin argues against the notion that government is a polluted thing with which the Christian has nothing to do. Calvin writes: "The political state has indeed functions directly connected with religion. Government protects and supports the worship of God, promotes justice and peace, and is a necessary aid in our earthly pilgrimage toward heaven; as necessary as bread and water, light and air; and more excellent in that it makes possible the use of these and secures higher blessings to men." Notice how important government is. Rather than disparaging it as something corrupt and something to be avoided, John Calvin says it "is a necessary aid in our earthly pilgrimage ... as necessary as bread and water, as light and air, and more excellent..." Over against the Anabaptists, Calvin insisted that government is not of Satan, but is God-given, a benevolent provision for man's good, for which man should give God thanks.

We need to hear that. Perhaps our cynicism has not been as great since 9/11. But cynicism is always there. Now several years later, when we discover that the reasons we went to war were flawed, the cynicism is rampant. We are able to find all kinds of abuses in government and then laugh and put government down. As believers, we need rather to give thanks to God for government. John Calvin writes in his *Institutes*, "the function of the magistrate is a sacred ministry, and to regard it as incompatible with religion is an insult to God."

Politics is a rotten, dirty business? Patriotism is an idolatry? Absolutely not! Rather, we must insist that it is only the child of God who can really be patriotic; the Christian makes the best citizen because he obeys for God's sake. He is subject to the powers that be because he loves God. Not only is it true that a Christian should be patriotic, but ultimately it is only the Christian who is truly patriotic. That is the kind of patriotism that should be taught to our children.

Aristotle said, "Man is a political animal." In John Calvin's view, man is more political when he is motivated by religion. Calvin would have been appalled by the type of sectarian spirituality that deserts the sphere of politics as if it were beneath the spiritual man's plane of living. He would have been appalled at the idea that there are believers who say that Christians should not be involved in politics. More than any other theologian, John Calvin would call for an active and a positive political behavior. Very

early in his ministry he wrote numerous letters to crowned heads of states and to others in positions of power. The earliest and most notable of these was his letter to Francis I of France, which served as the introduction to his Institutes of the Christian Religion. On behalf of Reformed believers, he writes there: “We are not sectarians. We are not rebels. But we are loyal and obedient subjects who love our country and are loyal to our leaders.”

Over against the Anabaptist movement, the cults around us, and even cynicism among Reformed people, the Reformed position is that politics are ordained by God as a provision of God’s providence for natural man to restrain his dissoluteness. And always, God so works in His grace for the benefit and blessing of His church.

The Place of the State

As Reformed believers, we confess that civil government has been ordained by God. Whatever particular government exists in a country has been ordained by God, whether that government be a democracy, whether it be communism, or whether it be a dictatorship or a monarchy. We who live in the United States have heard too long that government is “of the people.” We must not fall for this idea. Government is not “of the people.” Government is of God! We read in Romans 13:1: “There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.” Government is ordained of God. This truth is very important for our view of our government and our country.

A second element in the Reformed view is that the state, with all of its officers, is the servant of God. Three times Romans 13 says of those in government that they are ministers or servants of God. What an honorable title! Those who are cynics with regard to leaders in government must listen to what God calls government officials: “My servants (ministers).” If only our officials saw themselves as God’s servants! Whether they are politicians or judges, or whether they sit on juries, they ought not to be swayed by public opinion, but search the will of God, as His ministers.

The state serves God. Calvin writes in his Institutes: “God has two great servants in the world: the church who serves Him freely by His grace, and the state which serves God in His providence. The one is spiritual whereby the conscience is instructed in piety and in reverencing God; the other is political whereby man is educated for the duties of humanity and civil life that must be maintained among men.” God’s government is twofold — the one ruling the inner man, the other ruling the outward behavior of man. The principle here is that Christ rules; He is Lord over all of life. He exercises both a spiritual and temporal jurisdiction, a twofold government: the church and civil authorities. Both of them are the arms of Christ Jesus. The truth of God and of Christ will be upheld and regulated by these two kinds of governments. They are two servants that print the Lordship of Jesus Christ over a person’s life. They are not incompatible, not at variance, and not antithetical. They complement each other.

Contrary to the position of the Anabaptists, we insist that there can be spiritual freedom that we have gained in Christ Jesus, and that spiritual freedom can co-exist perfectly with civil bondage. Civil government, then, in Calvin's thought, is an outward aid or instrument by which God calls us to and maintains us in communion with Christ, as does the church through the Word and sacraments. These two are not one and the same, and we do not identify them. But the civil government exists for the good of those who in this perishable world belong to Christ Jesus.

Christ, who is head of the church, is also Lord of the world. This means that civil order is necessary for the well-being of the church. Church and state must be distinguished, but not separated. The church gives instruction to the state as to what it must be and how it must behave. The state must see to it that the church is preserved in order that the pure gospel may be preached. The state is obligated to uphold both tables of the law.

The state serves God, according to Calvin. There is order in society by the administration of an earthly, external justice — the punishment of criminals and the protection of those who do well. In 1 Peter 2:13-16 we read: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God." In his *Institutes* Calvin says: "Take away the precious gift of the magistrate and we would have to live as rats in the straw." During Calvin's time many of the cities were overrun with big rats. As a young boy on the farm, I remember seeing mean, vicious rats in a bin that contained oats and straw. Without the state and without the precious gift of magistrates, people would have to live as rats in the straw.

Calvin adds, "The worst government is preferable to anarchy." Think about that for a moment. All of us remember how awful communism was, how we deplored it, and how we fought against it. But look at much of what was once the Soviet Union. When the central government failed, the result was anarchy — one ethnic group killing another ethnic group, with no one in control.

What is the origin of the state?

The Westminster Confession states, "God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under him, over the people, for his own glory, and the public good: and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers" (Chapter 23, Section 1).

The Belgic Confession was written in the light of the controversy regarding the relationship of church and state, and in light of disobedience in the world among those who claimed to be Protestants. One who reads the Confession could easily come to a

wrong conclusion regarding especially Article 36. Notice how the article begins: “We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, hath appointed kings, princes, and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies, to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency.” If one were to read only this opening paragraph, he might be inclined to join the Anabaptist and say, “Yes, government is a necessary evil because of the depravity of mankind.” One might interpret this article to mean that the state originated with the entrance of sin into the world. But that is not the case, nor does Article 36 teach this.

When we go back to the Scriptures on which the Belgic Confession is based, we find that the state originated in paradise. Adam was the head of his wife, and he was made the king of creation, the head and father of the entire human race. Adam was commanded to dress and keep the garden. He was appointed by God to rule his wife and posterity, and to rule over the entire creation. Adam was appointed to be king over creation, representing God, and to press the entire creation into God’s service. God ordained that His sovereign rule and His control over all things and all men in every sphere of life would be represented here on earth by vice-regents whom He appointed.

The state developed along the lines of the organism of the human race. The father of the family was its head. He was ruler of the clan, king of the people. That kind of rule also prevails among God’s creatures in heaven, for we read of principalities and powers there. God is pleased to rule, in heaven and on earth, by using others.

The point that Article 36 of the Belgic Confession brings out is that with the appearance of sin in the world came the necessity of the sword. How emphatically the Bible emphasizes that in Genesis 9:5, 6. “And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” Not everyone may take the sword and bring his own vengeance, but only the father of the clan, the leader, the magistrate! The sword is given to the magistrate to execute God’s justice, God’s vengeance, and God’s righteousness.

The government, then, as the vice-regent of God, must give an answer to God. The calling, and the purpose of the magistrate, according to Romans 13, is to punish those who do evil and praise those who do well.

Our Relationship to the State

As Reformed believers, with the Bible as our infallible rule for faith and walk, let us take heed. We read in Romans 13:1, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.” This means every person without exception. This also means that it is not an option whether you want to be loyal, whether you want to be subject, whether

you want to be patriotic. All people must be subject to the higher powers. Notice the words “higher powers,” which is a description of those who stand above or over us, that is, government authorities and civil rulers. The word powers is not the best translation, because it carries the connotation of some kind of raw or sheer power. Rather, God’s Word is talking about the authority that governmental officials have been given. They have been given the right to govern. They rule, not because they are stronger, but because God in His providence has appointed them.

This is important because there are always seditious groups who believe that the kingdom of God cannot be sufficiently elevated unless all earthly powers are done away with. The answer of Scripture is, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.”

Think for a moment of the apostle Paul as he writes to Jewish believers in Rome. Those sons of Abraham were under another power, a power that was hostile to believers in Christ. Paul says, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers” (Rom. 13:1). He makes no exceptions to this rule. Every person and all citizens must be subject to the higher powers — those who stand above us or over us by virtue of the authority conferred upon them by God in Christ.

That was God’s word to His church living as a small minority among those who hated them and persecuted them. That is God’s Word to seditious Anabaptists. That was what Calvin was dealing with in his Institutes. And that is what we need to hear in the church today. The Word of God does not say, “If you like your government or your nation, be subject to it.” It does not say, “If you always agree with your government, be subject.” But it says, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.” We must notice that God’s Word does not say, “Be subject to the highest or supreme power.” The magistrates do not possess the chief authority. Rather, they are higher, that is, they are over us because they have been placed there by the Lord Jesus Christ. There are always seditious groups who believe that the kingdom of God cannot be sufficiently elevated unless all earthly powers be abolished, and that they cannot enjoy their freedom in Christ unless they shake off every yoke of human subjection. But the Scriptures teach us, “Let every soul be subject. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake...”

When the civil powers require us to do something contrary to the will of God, then we must be prepared to say with Peter in Acts 5:29: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Submitting sometimes means that we must disobey, being ready to pay the consequences, but never rebelling. There is no power but of God, as Romans 13 teaches. This is why we must be subject to the magistrates, because they are constituted by God’s ordination. God is pleased to rule the world by them, and to resist them is to resist God Himself.

God ordains, God sets up, and God puts in place the authorities. Whether they acknowledge that fact or not, whether they acknowledge Him or not; and whether they seek to do his will or not, God has placed them in authority, God rules through them,

and that government is useful to man. Whoever resists does it to his own ruin.

Through that purpose God provides for tranquility. Civil rulers are His ministers for good. They are God's provisions of providence to the citizens of a nation for the sake of the church, given in grace for the sake of His church that lives here in this world.

Some have attempted to attribute this gift of government to God's "common grace." Rev. L. Verduin wrote, "It will perhaps be granted by all that the State results from God's common grace..." Most in the Reformed community argue that because God loves all human beings, in His common grace He gives government for the tranquility and good of all people. I once studied under a teacher who said that the civil disobedience of Martin Luther King Jr. was a provision of God's common grace, given in order to produce equality for the races. Notice that common grace is here attributed to government and authority, as well as to civil disobedience for the equality of the races.

As Reformed believers, we do not believe that government is a gift of God's common grace, but rather that it is a gift of God's sovereign, particular grace. Government is for the sake of Christ's church that lives in a sinful, disobedient world. God rules, using the government authorities to punish wrongdoers and to produce peace, so that the gospel may go forth, and so that those who serve the Lord may live "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:2).

The Reformed tradition recognizes that the state is an institution of God for our good. The Bible teaches that Christians are responsible for submitting to the authority of the state, paying taxes, giving all due respect and honor to their leaders, and praying for them. It is the duty of every man, wherever he may live, to be obedient to the magistrates, according to Romans 13. Lord's Day 39 of the Heidelberg Catechism asks and answers this question: "What does God require in the fifth commandment? That I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me; submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and correction; and also bear patiently with their weakness and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." Educating Christians in responsible citizenship is a proper responsibility of the church institute in her preaching and of our Christian schools in the instruction of our covenant youth. This means that we preach and teach true patriotism — giving honor to those who have been placed in authority over us by God and thanking Him for our leaders, for our government, and for our country. As citizens of that country, we demonstrate our love for God as well as our Christian faith in the way of our obedience and submission, praying for those in authority.

As Reformed believers with the biblical injunctions, we must pray for those who are in authority: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1,

2). We pray for our leaders not only after catastrophes, but continuously as they are used by God to govern and rule. Are you praying for your leaders, for wisdom for the president, that through that man and through the sword that is given to the government that he represents, God's righteous judgment may be executed against those who take innocent lives? Are you praying that God will lead rulers to rule in harmony with His Word? Are you thanking God for the religious freedom and liberties that we enjoy? Are you praying for our leaders as they ask for soldiers, as they seek to promote peace and protect those precious freedoms? When my son was called to duty in Iraq, as a Christian parent I was proud of his duty and his obedience to his calling to serve God by serving his nation.

Are you paying taxes? All too quickly the time of the year comes when that painful crunch comes in the pocketbook. But government is a gift of God; and Christ, who gives us government, says, "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's." "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; honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:6, 7).

Be obedient, as we read in Romans 13, not only for the sword's sake (not only because you are afraid of being punished if you are not obedient), but for the sake of conscience (because you know it is God's will that you obey). Be willing to serve and to fight for your country and for the freedom that we enjoy, if called upon to do it. Are you able to appreciate our young people who serve in the Army Reserve or National Guard units as holding a worthy profession? Lest you react strongly and declare that this is no place for our Christian youth, remember the examples of Naaman, the captain of the Syrian forces (2 Kings 5), the Roman centurion in Capernaum whose servant Jesus healed (Luke 7), and Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band in Caesarea (Acts 10). We do not read in Scripture that after their conversions any of these believers were ever told that they should leave their respective positions. This leads us to believe that they continued to function in their official positions as Christians.

Show honor to whom honor is due. Honor them because the powers that be are ordained of God. God has given each of these powers his respective place at every level of government, whether it be those who make the laws, those who judge the laws, or those who enforce the laws. Too often the authorities are held in low esteem and are the butt of endless jokes. But the magistrates are the ministers of God to the church for good (Rom. 13:4).

Be patriotic, not just outwardly, and not only after a crisis, by displaying a flag, but because you love God. Realize that the country in which He has placed you and the government that is over you are God's gifts. Be loyal to that country and its leaders, be zealous for them, and teach your children to be patriotic, also in our Christian schools,

whether it be by pledging allegiance to the flag or by their study in a civics class.

Be good citizens for God's sake. If given opportunity, vote. God has given us the ability to have a voice in our government. It is the duty of every citizen to encourage the magistrate to rule well and to admonish him if he should fail. In a democracy we can do that by voting or, as individual believers, by writing letters to the authorities. We must avoid the Anabaptistic approach of non-involvement in the political process. We may not hide ourselves behind the wall of total political inactivity or take the position of fatalism, "What will be, will be. These things are in God's hands and He will take care of it. One vote will not make any difference anyhow. Politics is just a dirty business." In a democracy it has pleased God to appoint the ordained authority through the popular vote. Should the Christian citizen allow the ungodly to determine the course and actions of their government? We have no illusions that America is a Christian nation. But it pleases God to appoint leaders over us. We vote, then, not blindly according to party affiliation, nor for a candidate who stands on a platform that is patently anti-Christian. But we vote carefully, with an informed conscience, selecting those who most nearly represent the God-ordained purpose of government. There are a host of issues that will reveal and illustrate the convictions of the candidates. Write letters to applaud just actions or admonish wrong actions. Witness to the government by speaking to and corresponding with elected representatives.

When given opportunity, serve your country by running for local on a Godly platform and by serving in office and in decision-making. There are those of the opinion that due to the corruption found in government, the child of God cannot and may not serve as a civil servant nor be involved in the political process because of compromises. But is that the Reformed position? We have the biblical examples of Joseph and Daniel serving in high places in two of the most godless governments in history. No involvement of the Christian in government conflicts with the truth that government has been ordained of God and the magistrate is the minister of God. A position in government is a perfectly proper profession. We may not abandon those high offices to the unbeliever. In the Westminster Confession we read, "It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice and peace according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth" (Chapter 23, Section 2). If God should call us to execute the office of a magistrate by opening the way for us to do so, then it is our duty to accept this responsibility and serve as a minister of God. You may ask, "How likely or possible is it for a Christian to be elected?" I ask you in return, "How likely or possible was it for a Hebrew slave, sentenced to jail for attempted advances or rape of his master's wife, to be elevated to second-in-command of Egypt? Or what likelihood was there for the God-fearing Daniel to be raised to his high position in Babylon and in the courts of the Medes and Persians? Shall we trust God to elevate us as believers into high places for His glory and kingdom?"

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