

Semper Reformanda: The Church That Is Always Reforming

The Distinction Between Church and State

1 Peter 2:11–17

The Lord's Day Morning

October 6, 2019

A Brief Overview on the Relationship of Church and State

Jesus and the apostles (1st century): The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this world are separate, so that the state is obligated to protect, but not promote, the church through just laws. The power of the sword is given to the state to restrain evil by punishing the wicked, protecting the innocent, and providing for the weak (Jn. 18:36; Mt.22:21;26:52; Ro. 13:1–7).

The Roman Church (16th century): The two kingdoms are united in “Christendom” (Constantinianism) so that the church protects *and* promotes the gospel by the power of the state’s sword.

The Reformers (16th century): The two kingdoms are separate as the state protects people from physical harm with the power of the sword and the church protects people from spiritual harm with teaching and preaching. In practice, the two kingdoms cooperated in Europe to protect *and* promote the true gospel and demote all false gospels.

James Madison (18th century): The two kingdoms are separate and the state is obligated to protect, *but not promote*, the true gospel and all false gospels by the power of the sword. Equal treatment under just laws protect healthy competition in the marketplace of ideas and the church is free to persuade unbelievers through love and logic.

The Essence of Good Citizenship

1. Earn _____ for the gospel by _____ good laws.

2. Endure _____ while _____ evil laws.

3. Display _____ while making your _____.