

Sacralism

Lesson 1: Introduction and Definitions

Introduction

Definitions

- Sacralism

“Sacralism, in its theological and political sense, refers to the belief that religious and political authorities should be closely aligned, with the state having a role in enforcing religious laws and the church wielding political influence. This concept often leads to a theocratic form of government, where civil authority is viewed as divinely appointed and religious leaders hold sway over political governance. Historically, sacralism was a key feature of both Roman Catholic and certain Protestant societies during the medieval and early modern periods. Sacralism would more accurately be categorized as an error rather than a formal heresy.” (monergism.com/sacralism)

- Caesaropapism (statism)

“a secular, caesaropapist ruler ... exercises supreme authority in ecclesiastic matters by virtue of his autonomous legitimacy” (Swedberg & Agevall, *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*, 22) | “caesaropapism denotes the secular ruler’s control over the priesthood” (Swedberg & Agevall, *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*, 112).

- Ecclesiasticism

- Constantinianism

- Sacramentalism

The doctrine/concept which teaches that the sacraments are necessary for salvation, establish the membership of the church “and state” and confer grace.

- Sacerdotalism

“Sacerdotalism (from the Latin *sacerdos* – priest) is the belief in a priestly system where the priest has been given the special authority to act as a spiritual mediator between God and mankind” (theopedia.com/sacerdotalism)

Points of Thought

“Now, since we have established above that man is under a twofold government, and since we have elsewhere discussed at sufficient length the kind that resides in the soul or inner man and pertains to eternal life, this is the place to say something also about the other kind, which pertains only to the establishment of civil justice and outward morality. For although this topic seems by nature alien to the spiritual doctrine of faith which I have undertaken to discuss, what follows will show that I am right in joining them, in fact, that necessity compels me to do so. This is especially true since, from one side, insane and barbarous men furiously strive to overturn this divinely established order; while, on the other side, the flatterers of princes, immoderately praising their power, do not hesitate to set them against the rule of God himself. Unless both these evils are checked, purity of faith will perish. Besides, it is of no slight importance to us to know how lovingly God has provided in this respect for mankind, that greater zeal for piety may flourish in us to attest our gratefulness” (Calvin, Institutes, 4.20.1).

Bibliography

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- Doug Wilson, *Mere Christendom*