

And In Other News...

The Coronation of King Charles III: *What about the “Protestant” and “Gospel” Bits?*

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Why the Coronation was Not Christian and Could Not Be

The coronation of King Charles III in May 2023 was a display of pageantry and pomp of the first order. No one in the world does pageantry like the British, and this event did not disappoint. And considering that this was the coronation of a king, there was nothing wrong with it being so magnificent. It was the *religious* aspects which should be repugnant to all true Bible Christians. It is not surprising that Anglicans supported these; but that so many Evangelicals did as well reveals a terrible blind spot concerning this matter, the result of seriously faulty teaching and an erroneous understanding of the relationship between “Church” and State.

Ever since 1688, at their coronation all British monarchs are asked, “Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel and the Protestant reformed religion established by law?” The monarch then takes an oath to do so, and bears the title of “Defender of the Faith.”

In an article in a Christian magazine, an author who is a Free Methodist minister wrote as follows regarding the coronation of King Charles III: “The form of the forthcoming Coronation Service is extremely important concerning the Christian foundations of this nation. The particularly crucial parts of the service are when the Monarch promises to uphold the laws of God according to the Christian Scriptures. This aspect must at all costs be retained and there must be no introduction of multi-faith elements.”¹ But actually, the part which he thought was crucial is precisely the aspect which should be repugnant to all Christians! One is left with the impression that he, and so many others like him, would love to have been able to sit back with a contented sigh and say, “Thank the Lord that multi-faith elements were left out, and that it was a *Christian* coronation!” In truth, even if there had been *no* multi-faith elements whatsoever, the coronation would *still* not have been a Christian one! For Anglicanism is not truly Christian, the Anglican coronation service was not Christian, and the king himself is not a true Christian. And although all true Christians in Britain must pray for their monarch (1 Tim. 2:1,2), they should not rejoice over this unbiblical coronation oath and “service”!

The Difference Between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church

What does the Bible have to say about all this? In particular, since Christians are New Testament believers and are not living under the theocracy of Old Testament Israel, what does the New Testament have to say about it? This is all-important; but when it comes to the United Kingdom and its monarchy so many Protestants speak or write as if it is the Christian equivalent of the kingdom of Israel under the Old Covenant. This is a very serious error, and stems from a failure to understand the difference between the way in which the Lord dealt with Israel under the Old Covenant, and the way in which He deals with the true Church under the New. New Testament believers are *not in any sense* under that Old Covenant. It has gone, it has been superseded by the New Covenant, as the epistle to the Hebrews makes crystal clear.

Old Testament national Israel was a theocracy, by divine appointment (e.g. see Deut. 7:1-6); i.e. the nation had God as its supreme Ruler, with His laws being the laws of the land. But Israel was the *only*

true theocracy in history. Under the New Covenant the situation is completely different. So many Protestants have been incorrectly taught that the concept of a “State Church” is somehow a good thing. It is not. It is a very, very bad thing. It is directly contrary to the New Testament doctrine of the separation of Church and State (Matt. 22:16-21). Such an idea is based on an erroneous understanding of the Old Testament, and the unique position of Old Testament Israel as the only divinely appointed theocracy in history. Britain is not, never has been, and never will be a divinely-appointed theocracy, and nor will any other nation.

“My kingdom is not of this world,” the Lord Jesus said (Jn. 18:36). Israel had a State Religion, because the people were God’s people, nationally. The “holy nation”, now, is not an earthly nation as Israel had once been, but rather the true Church of God, the *spiritual* “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16), existing as a “holy nation” *in the midst of* all the nations of the world (see 1 Pet. 2:9-11). A “State Church” has never been the Lord’s plan for the Church of God. It has never been the duty of Christians to work for the establishment of a “Christian theocracy”. Nowhere are they commanded in the New Testament to create a so-called “Christian country” by law. The early Church, the Church of the first century AD, had absolutely no power over the State, nor any union with it – and did not seek any! It knew very well that this was not its mission in the world. Paul never attempted to create such a union, and nor did any other apostle. They acknowledged that the political powers-that-be were ordained of God for the maintenance of law and order and the proper government of a land (Rom. 13:1-7). But they never attempted to “Christianise” a country, or to get its leader to swear an oath to maintain the Christian faith and the true profession of the Gospel. This was never part of their divine calling, and it is never part of any minister’s calling at any time. The New Testament will be searched in vain for such a thing.

Church and State are two separate entities. The civil authority has a particular task, and the Christian Church has a specific task; but they are not one and the same! The government’s purpose is to attend to earthly affairs of law and order in a country; the Church’s purpose is entirely spiritual. It is not the Church’s task to force the State to embrace Christianity. “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21).

“The Roman State had its officially designated Object of worship, and to it every Roman was expected to give homage. It is significant that the early Christians did not launch a crusade to have this Object ousted and a new and better Object, the God of the Scriptures, put in its place. The primitive Church did not propose to remove the Object that had hitherto stood in the square and put its own Object in its place. It was content to worship the Christian God in an off-the-street place and to ignore the Object that stood in a place where none belongs.”²

Sadly, many Protestants believe that it is somehow the mission of Christians to clean up society, enforce Christianity on all, and make sure that the State adheres to “Christian” laws and practices. No wonder, then, that they also support the idea of the monarch swearing to “maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel and the Protestant reformed religion established by law”!

The Protestant Reformers Perpetuated a Constantinian and Popish Error

The entire horrible notion of the union of State and “Church” is a Constantinian and Roman Catholic one. This evil union is shown in Rev. 17:2, between the Roman Papacy and the earth’s governments. Tragically, at the Reformation the Protestant religious bodies did not shake off this unbiblical Popish concept of State-Church union. The Lutherans in Germany, the Presbyterians in Scotland, the Dutch Reformed in Holland, and the Anglicans in England all retained it. They felt it was necessary for Protestants to rule their country along similar lines to how Old Testament Israel had been ruled. Luther, for example, even wrote a book entitled *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*. Where in all the New Testament does it say that it is the work of political rulers to “reform” the Church, or to have any say at all in the Church’s affairs? *Nowhere*. John Calvin was just as guilty of teaching such an error, as were almost all the Protestant Reformers of that era. Essentially, in England the authority of the Roman pope was simply replaced by that of the king. But the latter is no more biblical than the former.

All these men – and their modern praise-singers ape them in this great error – believed that Protestantism should be *enforced by law*. But where in all the New Testament does it say that the “Protestant reformed religion” should be established by law? *Nowhere*. Where does it say a monarch should be “Defender of the Faith”? *Nowhere*. There is no such thing as a “Christian nation”. This unbiblical idea is a denial of the New Testament doctrine of the Church as being separate from the State, as a holy and separate “nation within a nation”. Christ’s kingdom is *not of this world* (Jn. 18:36). Nothing could be clearer than this! Why then do Christians praise such an unbiblical union of “Church” and State? This is a heresy that has led to innumerable difficulties for Christians, and even to persecution. Baptists and Independents, for example, were persecuted by State-Church Protestants. They were imprisoned and even killed in places. Was John Bunyan imprisoned for all those years by a Papist government? No – by an Anglican one!

“The state is therefore purely temporal and strictly secular – secular in the etymological sense of the word, of this age (*saecula*), for the here and now.... This implies that there cannot be such a thing as a ‘Christian state.’ For a given state to qualify for the adjective ‘Christian,’ all its subjects would have to be believing men and women, a prospect whose realization is not promised in the New Testament. In the New Testament vision, society is not unanimous, not homogenous, neither in its entirety nor in its components.”³

The Anglican Institution is Not a True Christian Church

British law says that the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the “Church of England” (Anglicanism). Now, either the Anglican institution is a true church, or it is not. If it is, then no monarch may be its governor, and therefore no Christian should support this false teaching; for a true church is autonomous, and governed by pastors (Heb. 13:7,17); if it is not (and this is the truth), then no Christian should treat it as if it is, or rejoice that the monarch is its supreme governor. Christians, then, who support this notion are between a rock and a hard place. They are acting contrary to the Scriptures, any which way one looks at it!

Besides, even assuming, just for the sake of argument, that a monarch could be its governor (which of course he cannot), if the monarch is a *queen* then how can she be supreme governor of a church when no woman may “usurp authority” in a church (1 Tim. 2:11-14)? The churches of God are to be governed by male pastors alone, called by God and appointed by the churches – not by any political leader whatsoever.

At the most, if Anglicans want the monarch to be the supreme head of *their* particular religious institution, that is their business; but let no true Christian call it biblical! Whatever Anglican ecclesiastics and the monarch decide to do with regards to their own religious institution, this should be of no concern whatsoever to any *true* churches and believers. They should not rejoice in this, and they should not support it.

How well John Gill put it when he wrote: “The church of *England* [i.e. the Anglican institution] has for its *head* a temporal one, whereas the church of Christ has no other head but Christ himself. That our lawful and rightful sovereign... is head of the Church of *England*, we deny not; he is so by *Act of Parliament*, and as such to be acknowledged; but then that church can never be the true church of Christ, that has any other head but Christ; we therefore are obliged to distinguish between the church of *England* and the church of Christ. A woman may be, and has been head of the church of *England*, but a woman may not be head of a church of Christ; since she is not allowed to speak or teach there, or do anything that shews authority over the man.”⁴

King Charles is Not a True Christian

And one other vital point: the majority of monarchs have never been converted to Christ. Now, how can any monarch promise to “maintain the true profession of the Gospel” in the land, when he himself has not been truly converted? It is impossible! Charles is not a Christian (not as yet, at any rate, for the Lord may yet draw him to Himself). This is glaringly obvious to any true believer with a Bible in

his hand. It would only be denied by those with no understanding of the Gospel, and by those foolish Protestants who say, “We mustn’t judge. We can’t see his heart; we don’t know the true state of his soul.” Oh yes we can judge, and we must! We must judge according to the biblical evidence. The Bible forbids hypocritical judgment (Matt. 7:1-5), but it *commands* righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24). A regenerated and converted man is known by his doctrine and by his fruit (good works). Believers are most definitely called to judge righteously, according to these biblical tests. Almost the entire epistle of 1 John makes this abundantly plain, and many other Scriptures as well.

Charles is an unrepentant adulterer and divorcee, a New Age mystic, a pro-Papist, pro-ecumenical and extremely spiritually confused man. With evidence like this staring us in the face, to say that “we can’t judge the state of his soul” is the height of folly, and completely unbiblical. The blatant support for ecumenism and interfaith, and the blatant denial of the Bible, was evident at the coronation itself, with Roman Catholic ecclesiastics participating, as well as some female head of some liberal denomination. If one blocked one’s ears, one would be forgiven for thinking one was watching a Popish coronation, the idolatry and blasphemy were so obvious. There it was in all its stupendous grotesqueness: bishops and archbishops sashaying around in long effeminate gowns; the archbishop of Canterbury fresh from presiding over the decision of Anglicans to “bless” sodomite “unions”; the golden crosses; the prayers full of lies from the ecclesiastical wolves in sheep’s clothing; the parody of the Lord’s Supper; the promises made by unregenerate hearts, which have already been broken and in fact could never be kept; the worship offered by wicked man and women in high places. It was all pomp and show and Anglo-Popery.

As a man who is still dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), not a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), Charles simply could not promise to “maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel and the Protestant reformed religion”. How any Christian could think otherwise is astonishing.

Would true Christians ever allow such a man to be their pastor? Of course not. Why, then, do they believe a *king* can make such promises? And why do they believe he even should? As monarch, he is to be recognised by Christians in his realm as a political figure, but not a spiritual one. British law may say it is his duty to “defend the [Christian] faith”, but nowhere has the sovereign Lord given him this duty, as a king!

For true Christians in Britain, the coronation of their monarch is an important *political* event; but they should not in any sense support the unbiblical notion which supposedly binds him (or her) to defend what he cannot defend, that to which he himself is a stranger, and which the Bible never permits an earthly ruler to control: the true Christian faith.

Britain is Not a Christian Country

The Free Methodist minister already quoted above also stated that “Charles’ coronation has the potential to be a powerful testimony to Him of whom the Scriptures speak, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, the author of our salvation”.⁵ This statement is breathtaking in its utter folly. Charles’ coronation *mocked* Christ! The only thing it had the potential to do was to cause the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12:14), to laugh and snigger, as Charles’ personal life is a disgrace, and Britain itself has become a moral cesspool, and a country where Christians are rapidly becoming a persecuted people. In Britain today, street preachers are being arrested for preaching against sin; the Anglican monstrosity is denying the great doctrines of the faith and “blessing” sodomite couples; people are shacking up in fornication (Charles’ own son, William, heir to the throne, did so before his marriage); abortion is rife and viewed as a “right”; children are having the transgender horror shoved down their throats; Muslim killers are molycoddled while decent people are accused of “hate speech” for speaking the truth; movies and rock music are the national obsessions; the monarchy bestows knighthoods on bisexuals and other perverts; and true Christians are now merely a tiny minority. It is nothing but sheer biblical ignorance to refer to Britain (or for that matter any country) as a Christian country! And the sooner British Christians, and indeed Christians the world over, approach this issue biblically, the better.

Conclusion

For far too long this “State Church” heresy has been held by far too many professing Christians. This false teaching causes Christians to spend time attempting to “keep the country Christian”, which is *never* the duty of any Christian. Instead, they should be focusing on preaching the Gospel to the world, and building up believers in their faith within the context of the local church. This is the very reason why, in this day and age when so many laws are being passed which are utterly evil, many professing Christians spend so much time bemoaning the state of the country, instead of seeking to evangelise the lost. Let the world go on its way! The world will do what the world will do. The world will always be at enmity with the people of God. There are two separate kingdoms, and they should never be united or confused. Far too many professing Christians expend far too much time and energy on bemoaning the state of their *country*, whereas in fact it they should be deeply concerned about the state of the professing *Church*.

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For further study:

Church and State (MP3 sermon), by Shaun Willcock.

<https://www.biblebasedministries.co.uk/tapes/the-christian-church/>

ENDNOTES:

1. “At the Coronation - Let the Lord’s Name Prevail,” by Peter Simpson. *Christian Watch*, Issue 44, Mar/Apr 2023, pg. 14ff. Christian Watch, Leamington Spa, UK.
2. *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, pg. 25, by Leonard Verduin. The Christian Hymnary Publishers, Sarasota, Florida, reprinted 1991.
3. *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, pgs. 35-36, by Leonard Verduin. The Christian Hymnary Publishers, Sarasota, Florida, reprinted 1992.
4. *The Dissenter’s Reasons for Separating from the Church of England*, by John Gill, pg. 377, published in 1751 and republished by The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., Paris, Arkansas, USA.
5. “At the Coronation - Let the Lord’s Name Prevail,” by Peter Simpson. *Christian Watch*, Issue 44, Mar/Apr 2023, pg. 14ff. Christian Watch, Leamington Spa, UK.