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"Ministers' Minute" Volume V Number 7

Fourth of July -- A Collection of Scriptures and Patriotic Quotes

Editor's Note: This "MM" is an email sermon, the 7th of 2006 --66th overall-- in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message is not a message, as such, but a collection of relevant scriptures and patriotic quotes. It is my prayer that these will encourage you and honor God. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it! May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

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Ps 33:12-22

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

(KJV)

Prov 14:34

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

(KJV)

Rom 13:1-14

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that

loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

(KJV)

Zech 4:4-10

4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this

house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

(KJV)

James Madison, father of the Constitution:

"We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."

In reality, throughout the late 1700s – the era of the Revolutionary War and the subsequent adoption of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment – Christianity permeated America from top to bottom.

In 1777, with the Revolutionary War threatening the flow of Bibles from England, Congress approved the purchase of 20,000 Bibles from Holland to give to the states.

No fewer than six of the 13 original states had official, state-supported churches – "establishments of religion"! I'll bet you didn't know that. In fact, these states – Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and South Carolina – refused to ratify the new national Constitution unless it included a prohibition of federal meddling with their existing state "establishments of religion."

Still other states required those seeking elected office to be Christians.

The Continental Congress routinely designated days of "fasting and prayer" and other religious observances, appointed government-funded chaplains, and appropriated money to pay for Christian missionaries to convert the Indians.

Patrick Henry -- 1775 - Speech to the Virginia Convention

Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

George Washington --1793 - letter to the Members of the New Church in Baltimore

We have abundant reason to rejoice that in this Land the light of truth and reason has triumphed over the power of bigotry and superstition, and that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart. In this enlightened Age and in this Land of equal liberty it is our boast, that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the Laws, nor deprive him of the right of attaining and holding the highest Offices that are known in the United States.

Benjamin Franklin --1787 - Motion for Prayers in the Constitutional Convention

And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? or do we imagine we no longer need its assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this Truth, that God governs in the Affairs of Men. And if a Sparrow cannot fall to the Ground without his Notice, is it probable that an Empire can rise without his Aid?

George Washington's Thanksgiving Presidential Proclamation -- 1789:

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course

and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us. And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

A look at the First Amendment:

Excerpted from an article by David Kupelian

"Congress ..." – we know what that is.

"... shall make no law ..." Well now, I'll bet you thought you knew what that means. You thought it meant Congress shall make no law. But what you didn't know was that in 1940, in the Supreme Court case of *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, the justices decided – citing a mysterious legal principle called "incorporation" – that the First Amendment applied not just to

Congress, but to state governments too. So now the federal government could force the states to follow its dictates in regards to prohibiting the "establishment" or prohibiting the "free exercise" of religion. This is obviously something the original 13 states would have rejected outright, given that half of them had state "establishments" of religion.

"...respecting an establishment of religion ..." For 150 years an "establishment of religion" in the context of the First Amendment meant that a national church, a particular denomination, wouldn't be supported and imposed on the states by the federal government. But with the decline of Christianity in the U.S. and, indeed, increasing hostility toward it, the meaning of "establishment of religion" has been radically changed – just like the words in the Stephen Stills song. Today, "establishment of religion" means the mere public mention of God, Christ, the Bible, the Ten Commandments, prayer and so on. The "God Bless America" banner erected on a California public school to honor those killed in the 9-11 terror attacks was attacked by the ACLU as an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

But to make this seduction even more powerful, the First Amendment religion clauses have been morphed into the phrase, "a wall of separation between Church and State" – eight words taken out of context from an incidental letter of courtesy Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802.

You rarely hear the actual wording of the First Amendment anymore. But "separation of church and state" is one of those phrases that roll off the tongues of judges and journalists so easily and so often, most of us assume it's in the Constitution.

In fact, one of the justices on the New York Supreme Court, back in a 1958 First Amendment case called *Baer v. Kolmorgen*, made this very point when he commented: "Much

has been written in recent years concerning Thomas Jefferson's reference in 1802 to 'a wall of separation between church and State.' ... Jefferson's figure of speech has received so much attention that one would almost think at times that it is to be found somewhere in our Constitution."

But there's a method to this constant repetition, as marketers well know: Say it enough times, and people come to believe it. The celebrated 18th century American philosopher William James put it more pungently: "There is nothing so absurd but if you repeat it often enough people will believe it."

Indeed, there are very few phrases more familiar to Americans than "the separation of church and state." Marketers pay millions to brand their product or make their political candidate a household name. But just as with commercial or political marketing, widespread familiarity with a slogan doesn't necessarily mean the message is true.

If Jefferson's "wall of separation" has come to mean that any reference to God must be eliminated from government, schools and anything the government funds, then what did the phrase originally mean, as Jefferson used it?

Ironically, Jefferson intended for his letter to the Danbury Baptists to reassure them that the new federal government would not endanger the free expression of their religion. This is widely known. But what is not well known is that Jefferson did not actually coin the phrase "separation of church and state."

Rather, he borrowed the metaphor from the sermon, "The Garden and the Wilderness," which was very familiar to Baptists of the time. As Jim Henderson, senior counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice explains it:

That sermon, rendered by Roger Williams (the founder of the Rhode Island Plantation colony) and a Baptist, depicted the church as a garden, the world as a wilderness, and the wall as a device of the Creator's invention that protected the garden from being overrun by the wilderness. Williams explained that, from time to time, for the purpose of disciplining sin in the church, "it hath pleased" the Almighty to break down the wall.

Thomas Jefferson, ever the politician, knew when he communicated with the Baptists that "The Garden and The Wilderness" was well known and widely read nearly two generations later. He appealed to them in the terms of their own great man's idiom.

There you have it. The "wall of separation" was meant to protect "the garden" of the church from being overrun by "the wilderness" of government. No wonder Chief Justice Rehnquist has said, "The metaphor of a 'wall of separation' is bad history and worse law. It has made a positive chaos out of court rulings. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned."

Ps 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

Rod Farthing, ARM National Development Director rodfar@arm.org

Rt. 5 Box 159, Salem, MO 65560

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In 2005, an ABA Bible course was mailed from ARM to a prisoner EVERY 11.3 minutes!