

Abilene Christian University

Digital Commons @ ACU

Stone-Campbell Books

Stone-Campbell Resources

1944

The Kingdoms of This World

J. Harvey Dykes

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dykes, J. Harvey, "The Kingdoms of This World" (1944). *Stone-Campbell Books*. 324.
https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books/324

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stone-Campbell Resources at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stone-Campbell Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

THE
KINGDOMS
OF
THIS
WORLD



J. Harvey Dykes

This sermon was first published in 1939. Previous to that it had been preached in various places over a period of years. This edition leaves the original text of the sermon exactly as it was.

**THE
KINGDOMS
OF
THIS
WORLD**



Copyrighted, 1944, by
J. Harvey Dykes

Second Edition



SCRIPTURE:—

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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 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: 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. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience's sake. 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.

—Romans 13:1-7.



The Kingdoms of This World

*

The kingdoms of this world render an indispensable service. The sword is the only language some know how to speak. The sword is the only language they can understand. Governments speak this language. The intractable and vicious will not listen to the gospel of God from the kingdom of God. Therefore, these evil doers are restrained by another instrument from another institution. They are held in check by the sword which is wielded by the government. The government is sent for vengeance on evil-doers. (Rom. 13:4) So long as evil-doers are to be found the government will have a service "for good" to render. And the wicked will continue to the return of Christ. (1 Thes. 5:3)

The kingdoms of this world are of divine commission. It was God who gave them their charter for existence. For the powers that be are ordained of God. (Rom. 13:1) It was God who imposed upon them their purpose. He defined their fundamental goal when he sent them for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. (1 Pet. 2:14) These kingdom are ministers of God for us.

God never restricted this commission to one form of administration. The democracy can claim divine commission. The monarchy can boast the same claim. We may have our personal preference, but as Christians we are to respect the government regardless as to its form. However, this does not mean the governments are left free to run into any and every policy of administration and legislation that lust might dictate. Soon notice will be given to the answer they must give to God for their conduct. But for this paragraph attention is called to the fact that a monarchy may accomplish the divine commission and purposes. The worthiness and acceptableness of the government, to God, is determined by its quality and moral worth; determined by whether or not it follows the policy and accomplishes the purposes of God. It is no issue, within itself, with God, whether the voice of rule be the voice of one man or the voice of a hundred men.

All authority possessed by the kingdoms of this earth is delegated to them. Primary authority is in God alone. Pilate had only such power as was given him from above. (Jn.19:11) The bishops in the churches have power that entitles them to be called rulers. (1 Tim. 5:17) Yet their power has been granted to them by him who has all power. The husband is the head of the home. He, too, was given

his limited rule by the God who rules all. Satan's power is granted and prescribed of God. (Job 1:12) Delegated authority may sometimes bear more the appearance of sanctioned authority. However, the fact remains that all power is of God. Some delegated authority God gives to bring vengeance upon evil-doers. Two things must be noted in this connection. First: Christians are to be like God. Like him in integrity. Like him in holiness. Like him in love. BUT in vengeance Christians cannot be like him. Vengeance belongs to HIM, not to us. (Rom. 12:19) True, God has ministers of vengeance. (Rom. 13:4) Their ministry is not the Christian's ministry. Second: Since this authority comes from God we treat of the answer they must return to God for their use of it.

All the kingdoms of this world are amenable to God for their conduct. If they were in themselves and from themselves authority they would need to answer to themselves alone. But they must answer to God. Nor does this account of their stewardship await the eternal judgment. God has set them up and upon their failure he will cast them down and plant others. (Dan. 4:25) Witness the rise to power of kingdoms of the past. See next their abuse. Then behold their removal.

This judgment of God upon the kingdoms of this world is carried out by one whose ways are above our ways. (Is. 55: 8-9) Sometimes we wonder God does not overthrow some power immediately. Yet even in such cases we have lived to see the confirmation of God's wisdom. At other times we can but trust him who doeth all things well and allow him to work out his own program. We are too limited to take upon ourselves the work that is the prerogative of God.

Every kingdom of this world is of limited tenure. Survey the past in the light of Daniel's second chapter. His prediction was that one kingdom would give place to another. His prediction has not failed. On through time it has been the fate of the most stable of governments to bow to change that extinguishes them. Every kingdom of this world must someday pass away. If time does not see their demise the end of time will ring down the curtain on them all. They are but for a season. This transitory nature of the kingdoms of this world is a birthgift. Mortal they are at birth, mortal they must remain. For whosoever takes the sword must perish by that same instrument. (Matt. 26:52) And all kingdoms of this world are swordborn.

The kingdoms of this world are all established and maintained by the sword. They bear the sword. (Rom. 13:4) This

is the only method of maintaining any earthly kingdom. Seasons of prosperity and peace may come in which the sword is obscured. But once the sword is allowed to rust and the arm that wields it disintegrates, an overthrow from within or without is bound to come. The sword is not palatable to the Christian. That is, the Christian shudders when the sword is brandished. The sword of steel speaks of carnal and coercive methods that shut out the spiritual and are in contrast with the methods used to maintain the heavenly kingdom. Like all others the Christian would perish by the sword if he employed the sword. (Matt. 26:52) His only sword is the word of God. (Eph. 6:17) The heavenly kingdom and its members never employ the sword for self or others. Nor do they cower at its threat. The sword must and will remain here by the law of God.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE

As a member of the church of Christ and in honor of Jesus our head we should display a superior citizenship as citizens of the kingdoms of this world. The service rendered us by the government is due our highest moral attainments. Our debt to the government is not all that is involved. Our very loyalty to Christ is at stake. For we not only wish to be fair and reciprocate the services rendered us, but

we must needs be in subjection also for conscience's sake. (Rom. 13:5)

The civil obedience upon the part of members of the church of Christ is our duty. Our fulfillment of this duty is borne out by actual records. It must be admitted that occasionally a criminal act is committed by a member of the church of Christ. Such misconduct is a greater embarrassment to the church than it is to the government. It is against the teaching of the church, it is against the aims of the church, it is against the reputation of the church. Yet no religious group of any age has ever been able to hold all its members in perfect standing. If ever a group does score one-hundred per cent it will be, it can be, only because that group stands for nothing in particular and allows everything in general. Nevertheless, the church of Christ has an enviable record. The per cent of its membership that burdens the government with court costs and prison upkeep is so small as to be almost beyond detection. This church as a church ranks high in every land as model and superior citizens. For this God is to be thanked.

Can our superior citizenship include our saluting of the flag? Can we follow our Christ and salute the flag if we are to do so? Let it be said once for all that we can be loyal to Christ and salute the flag without even being asked to do so.

There is a book off the press asking its followers to pray for the destruction of all civil powers. This book is not the book that Holy Spirit inspired. The Holy Bible, the book inspired of the Spirit, the book followed by the church of Christ, tells its members to pray for kings and all that are in high places. (1 Tim. 2:1-2) The prayers of the church of Christ always beseech the favor of God to be upon the rulers of the land; upon them officially and personally.

Honor to whom honor. This is the Christian's slogan. (Rom. 13:7) Only one object of worship can be enshrined in the heart of a Christian. This one object is the true and living God and his son, Jesus. But we have not compromised our worship of God when we remove our hats as honor to the presence of women. We do not misplace respect when we bow to men, man to man giving honor to whom honor is due. Christ lived when a low bow was ordinary practice; yes, even a falling upon the knees before another. Christ himself washed his disciples' feet. The idea that acts of respect and honor are always idolatrous is sure to make a worshipper of men out of Christ. This it too much.

But the flag is an idol! This cry is all cry and no truth. Truth, flags COULD be so used. Yes, and anything visible or in-

visible could be so used. (Col. 3:5) But the flag is not so used. It is an emblem. One averse to emblems still retains his judgment when confronted with the cross bones and skull on a bottle. Christ said the image of Caesar on the coin bound men to render a use of that coin in respect to the Caesar who wrote it. (Matt. 22:20-21) In his salute to the flag the Christian gives honor to whom honor, fear to whom fear by respecting the country for which it stands. And he respects the flag itself for what it stands for because Jesus said give deference to the coin because of what it stood for.

The allegiance due the kingdoms of world is a limited allegiance. God is obeyed without qualification, limit, or condition. Nothing may go contrary to the King of Kings and demand our obedience. The husband is God's appointed head of the home. There can be found cases where obedience to the husband would mean disobedience to God. So with bishops over a church and parents over children and governments over men. Cases can be found when these appointed by God for certain things have presumed to attempt to do things outside their pale.

Who is the person having a right to claim his loyalty to God demands he disobey some authority of minor rank? The wife who seldom complies with her hus-

band's wishes is not claiming the truth when she rejects him in some particular on the ground God would not want her to do it. The habitually disobedient child is making the wrong claim when it claims its conscience is involved when asked to do wrong. The criminal citizen is claiming the wrong reason when suddenly affirming he cannot obey the government because the government asks him to disobey God. All who constantly disrespect authority God requires them to honor, are constantly disrespecting. Those who are by habit disrespecting God cannot consistently claim their respect for God is the basis of their disobedience to men. He who has learned the rule may learn the exception. He who knows only the exception has not learned the rule.

Who is he that says we should be subject to every ordinance of man? None other than the example of magnificent disobedience, Peter the apostle. (1 Pet. 2:13) Before duly constituted authority he affirmed he must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29) He simply appealed his case to the higher court.

Peter had lived a life according to the rule of God; a life that was obedient to every ordinance of man. Now, having lived the rule he observes the exception. For the same God who inspired Peter to write the rule inspired him to proclaim

the exception also. The man who knows not the exception knows not God, for God is the author of the exception.

If men command us to curse:

"Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not." Rom. 12:14

If men command us to hate:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5:44.

If men command us to starve our enemy:

"Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Rom. 12:20

If men command us to take the sword:

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt 26:52.

If men command us to fight:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Jn. 18:36.

If men command us to avenge:

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12:19.

If men command us to war after the flesh:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty thru God to the pulling down of strongholds." II Cor. 10:3-4.

If men command us to resist:

"But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matt. 5:39, R. V.

Further:

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." I Pet. 2:19-20.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: --- who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." I Pet. 2:21-23.

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29.

"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and af-

ter that have no more that they can do." Lu. 12:4.

We are free under God to do what is right, with men and for men, with or without citizenship papers, with or without uniform, with or without enlistment papers, in or outside the army. We cannot do what is wrong for men, nor for flag. If Caesar exact tribute of coin, time or effort we will pay. (Rom. 13:7; Matt. 5:41) If he uses our tribute for slaughter, we are free from guilt. It is our business to obey the specific command of God and pay. It is Caesar's answer to God as to what he does with it. We know it strengthens our government to raise a crop, pay our debts or manufacture articles for him. We do not object to his strength nor to being a source of it. We are his instruments in every-day life; we complain not. Nor will we complain to be his instruments for special service, if that service is not sinful in itself. We will give him that service and he will use it as he wishes. But we will not, God being our helper, be his instruments to do things that in themselves are wrong. We will not for him hate, curse, wound, slaughter, war, resist, fight.

In regard to the kingdoms of this world every Christian should have a composed mind. While others are troubled and skeptical the true member of the church of Christ is at peace and is trustful. Those

in the church are protected by a sober, converted and thoughtful mind that enables them to better react to the distressing news and predictions concerning the kingdoms of this world. A Christian's mind is a disciplined mind. Care is taken to retain balance and reason. News disseminating agencies can feature an international tragedy in an ever rising crescendo. They can tell the truth in such an agitating manner as to sweep the public into a frenzy of excitement. Minds are disconcerted. Desperation is felt. Hatred is fanned into a consuming fire. Reason is lost and whole nations will espouse a cause with death and destruction that a generation later they will admit was folly.

A Christian's heart is no stone. It knows more than other hearts how to weep with those that weep. (Rom. 12:15) Yet the Christian's mind has been schooled in the gospel of Christ. Sanity, reason, poise, composure, discrimination, **faith, HOPE AND LOVE** distinguish the Christian as one who has been with Jesus. The Christian shares in the world of sickness, death and disappointments. Howbeit he has a victory that overcomes the world, even his faith. (1 Jn. 5:4) In times of tribulation the Christian demeanor shows he is living above this world. He has set his mind on things above. (Col. 3:2)

The church is not sent to police the world. It is sent to evangelize the world. If given the power to establish boundaries and decree government the church and the Christian know they are unqualified to do so. A composed mind keeps the Christian with the proper appraisal of himself.

The Christian's answer to the kingdoms of this world is the salt of righteousness. By righteousness in self and by converting others to righteousness a Christian provides the salt for the earth. This is the salt that preserves. For ten righteous souls God would have spared Sodom. (Gen. 18:32) Sodom lacked salt and was destroyed. God does not number the implements of war, he does not count the standing armies, God inspects the standing of righteousness. God will as easily and surely overthrow a million guns as a dozen guns. Arms for defence are of no value to defend except God be with that government. Christians trust not in the arm of flesh; their trust is in God who can rule and overrule. IN GOD WE TRUST!

The Christian's answer to the kingdoms of this world is a mighty faith. A faith that he has received a kingdom, the church, that cannot be shaken. (Heb. 12:28) O faith that this kingdom will stand in eternity.

A mighty faith. A faith that can look upon the flag and say, "You need not conscript me for service to my fellow man. I am ready to serve. You cannot conscript me to destroy my fellowman. I will not kill." A faith for service but not for slaughter. A faith for suffering but not for retaliation. A faith for love but not for hate. A faith to die for loyalty to Christ. A faith that fears no firing squad. A faith that fears not them that would kill the body. (Matt. 10:28) A faith that is Christian. A faith in the Bible. A faith in the immortality of the soul. A faith in Christ. A faith in his church. A faith in his Father. A faith that is mighty, MIGHTY FOR GOD!

The Christian's answer to the kingdoms of this world is a mighty love. Mighty in love for country. Mighty in love for its rulers. Mighty in love for other countries. Mighty in love for enemies. Mighty in love for all. Mighty in love for right. Mighty in love for Christ. Mighty in love for his church. Mighty in love for his heaven. Mighty in love for his Father. MIGHTY IN LOVE FOR GOD!

SCRIPTURE:—

Bless them that persecute you: bless and curse not. Rom. 12:14.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Rom. 12:19.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. 11 Cor. 10:3-4.

But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matt. 5:39, R. V.

For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief,—Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. 1 Pet. 2:21-23.

We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Lu. 12:4.

"THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD"

by

J. Harvey Dykes

1 copy.....	\$0.10
3 copies.....	.25
18 copies.....	1.00
100 copies.....	5.00

Address all orders to:

J. Harvey Dykes,
1248 College Ave.,
Topeka, Kansas.

The KINGDOMS of THIS WORLD

The Christian prays for
their stability.

The Christian endeavors to be
their most valuable citizen.

The Christian's example of
magnificent disobedience.

The Christian's faith in
world-wide service.

The Christian's love is
mighty for God.

J. Harvey Dykes.