Alan D. Strange, M.A., M.DIV., PH.D.
Foreword by Robert Letham

The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge

REFORMED ACADEMIC DISSERTATIONS

"Christians everywhere are confronted by the same question: Christ's kingdom is 'not of this world,' but his church is 'in the world'—so what is the church's calling? In this absorbing and, in places, tension-packed study, Professor Alan Strange traces both the theology and the activity of Charles Hodge, a key player in the nineteenth-century debate over 'the spirituality of the church.' Carefully researched, copiously annotated, and enthusiastically written, these pages provide a vibrant and fascinating account not only of a major theologian, but of issues that are still profoundly relevant to the church today."
—**Sinclair B. Ferguson**, Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries

"Charles Hodge was known as the 'Pope of Presbyterians' in the nineteenth century because of his tremendous influence and impact through his teaching, writing, and preaching. Alan Strange has plumbed the depths of Hodge's known and lesser-known writings to produce a fascinating and informative exploration of the Princetonian's doctrine of the spirituality of the church. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to learn more about Hodge and how he understood the church's relationship to the broader culture on a wide range of subjects. Strange's analysis is well researched, balanced, and enlightening."
—**J. V. Fesko**, Academic Dean and Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Westminster Seminary California

"What should be the role of the church in the affairs of the state, particularly its political process? The author explores in depth Hodge's wrestling for the answer in light of his understanding of the spirituality of the church and reflects on that effort in an illuminating way that provides helpful insight for the church today faced with the same difficult question."
—**Richard B. Gaffin Jr.**, Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology, Emeritus, Westminster Theological Seminary

"With meticulous care and great appreciation, Alan Strange gives Charles Hodge, arguably the leading nineteenth-century American Calvinist, the attention he rightly deserves. Not only was Hodge a formidable commentator on practically everything written about the Bible and theology, but his reflections extended to a wide range of political and economic developments. With Hodge, we have someone who is both theologically astute and living (and writing about) the controversies that led the United States to civil war. Alan Strange renders a remarkable portrait of Calvinist theology in the context of political and social upheaval, and sheds significant light on the often-mentioned but seldom-understood Old School Presbyterian Church."
—**D. G. Hart**, Distinguished Associate Professor of History, Hillsdale College

"When I first read Alan Strange's dissertation, I was struck by how much at home he was in his subject area, having a familiarity with the primary and secondary literature. His treatment of Charles Hodge's views on the relation between church and society is very full. He gives a good sense of the exceptional character of the Civil War and of Hodge's guidance of his church through uncharted waters. Hodge's opponents in the South, notably James Henley Thornwell and Stuart Robinson, are regarded by Strange as inflexible in their adherence to what they regarded as the spirituality of the church. And their conviction that slavery is a political and therefore not an ecclesiastical issue is treated fairly, but as a case of a principle becoming unworkable in new, unforeseen circumstances.

"In the author's work, he is assisted by Hodge's commentaries on the annual meetings of the General Assembly of his church, which Hodge wrote and published even when he had not been present at the Assembly (as was frequently the case). The author's stance is that each champion, Hodge and Thornwell, adheres to the spirituality of the church, Hodge's approach being more nuanced and Thornwell's more 'principled.' I can imagine the reaction that

he holds that Hodge's outlook is more pragmatic, and in that sense unprincipled, by comparison to Thornwell's.

"The detailed treatment of these issues is thoroughly professional, and Strange's book will be of interest to church historians of the period—and not only to them, but to anyone else with an interest in how the church must—or may—relate to the wider society."
—**Paul Helm**, Emeritus Professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion, King's College, London

"In this meticulously researched and insightful analysis of Charles Hodge's doctrine of the spirituality of the church, Professor Alan Strange advances our understanding not just of an essential element of Hodge's ecclesiology, but of the history of Reformed thought in America in the tumultuous years leading up to and following the Civil War. Among other things, Strange shows how Hodge's doctrine of the spirituality of the church 'emerged out of and was organically developed from' the defining commitments of his God-centered theology, and he demonstrates how Hodge's construal of the relationship between church and state was refined in the fires of social and political upheaval that divided the nation, and ultimately the Presbyterian Church as well. In the end, Strange claims that Hodge's doctrine of the spirituality of the church was highly nuanced and skillfully defined 'the province of the church as ecclesiastical rather than political or civil,' yet without 'keeping the church from engaging in her prophetic task to declare the whole counsel of God to all, in and out of the church.' While Strange does not presume to prescribe precisely how the theological descendants of Hodge should apply his doctrine of the spirituality of the church to issues that are pressing in our day, nevertheless his analysis is essential background reading for Reformed thinkers who have an interest in cultural engagement but are eager for the church to avoid the Scylla of marginalization on the one hand and the Charybdis of overpoliticization on the other. It is also an important contribution to a growing body of literature that is challenging the reigning

interpretation of Hodge and the theologians from Old Princeton Seminary more generally."
—**Paul Kjoss Helseth**, Author of *"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind: An Unorthodox Proposal*

"From church-state controversies in centuries past to contemporary debates over American exceptionalism, Christians have tirelessly grappled with the thorny issue of the task of the church. No one wrestled more frequently or extensively over Presbyterians' take on the unique calling of the church in the mid-nineteenth century than Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge. In *The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge*, Alan Strange expertly scrutinizes the plethora of issues in the contentious debates over slavery. Despite the prevailing view that the spirituality of the church was a Southern doctrine, Strange argues that notwithstanding flaws and changes of his ideas, Hodge argued the most nuanced view of the church's distinctive calling regarding cultural matters."
—**W. Andrew Hoffecker**, Emeritus Professor of Church History, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi

"This would be an important book merely for the sake of history. Strange weaves thorough documentation into a riveting narrative. But especially at a time when Reformed and Presbyterian Christians are wrestling more earnestly with the continuing impact of racial division in our own churches, it is a story that needs to be meditated on and widely discussed. I learned a great deal from this book and will read it again."
—**Michael Horton**, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, Westminster Seminary California

"This book is an important contribution to our understanding of Charles Hodge, perhaps the most significant American theologian of the nineteenth century, and of the challenges that the Presbyterian Church faced from the momentous events surrounding the

slavery issue and the Civil War. Strange demonstrates a mastery of these intricate issues and the shifting patterns of allegiance as new developments arose.

"At the heart of these matters was the question of how far the church should become involved in civil affairs. Strange demonstrates that Hodge trod a careful and nuanced path between those who wished to identify the church with particular political agendas and others who, on the basis of the idea of the spirituality of the church, insisted that its sole task was to preach the gospel and so to leave crucial ethical questions unaddressed. Hodge, Strange argues, was fully committed to the spirituality of the church, but he saw clearly that this also entailed a commitment to the fact that this is God's world and that the church has the responsibility to proclaim the lordship of Christ over all areas of life.

"Throughout, Strange brings to bear a thorough knowledge of this vital period of American history, a comprehensive grasp of the theologies of the various participants, and an encyclopedic eye for the minute details of ecclesiastical decision-making. In all, this represents a major advance in our knowledge of how the Presbyterian Church, and Hodge in particular, understood the church's biblical function in relation to civil society in the middle of the nineteenth century. Incidentally, it points the way for a contemporary reassessment of this relationship."
—**Robert Letham**, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Union School of Theology (formerly Wales Evangelical School of Theology)

"At a time when many necessary distinctions are so easily missed or misunderstood, Alan Strange has provided us with a study marked by sound historical and theological ones. Charles Hodge's doctrine of the spirituality of the church has been too often ignored or mishandled, even by those who claim to be scholars of the Reformed and Presbyterian heritage. Strange helps illuminate an important doctrine in the history of the church and how it was understood

by one of America's ecclesiastical and theological giants. This is a required read for clearing up the clouds of confusion regarding the church's place in her Lord's world."
—**David P. Smith**, Pastor, Covenant Fellowship A.R.P. Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

"Alan Strange has devoted many years to his study of Hodge's doctrine of the church, and his work in this area helpfully fills a gap in Old Princeton studies. Students of American Presbyterianism, and of American Christianity more generally, will greatly profit from Strange's work. Hodge's doctrine of the church and its relationship to social and political matters raises important questions that are increasingly relevant for our own day. Oh, for more studies of this kind on the great theologians of Old Princeton!"
—**Gary Steward**, Assistant Professor of American History, Colorado Christian University

"Alan Strange's work is a very welcome addition to contemporary theological literature. It not only provides a rich picture of the life and thought of Charles Hodge generally, but also effectively narrates his contribution to Presbyterian debates about the spirituality of the church. Strange's careful study should prove illuminating to everyone concerned about Reformed churches' relationship to the broader world, and to politics in particular. And for those of us committed to the idea that the church should proclaim the whole counsel of God but avoid politicization, Strange's portrait of Hodge will be both an inspiration and a prod to continue refining our understanding of the spirituality of the church and related doctrines."
—**David VanDrunen**, Robert B. Strimple Professor of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics, Westminster Seminary California

"Historically aware, theologically studied, and clearly presented. Dr. Strange offers the church, fellow historians, and students an able study of the period, of its leading Presbyterians and issues, and of a

most important doctrine. While some may not always agree with his reading of views opposing Hodge's, all will find it evenhanded. For one new to the subject or established in the discipline, this work has great utility. I heartily commend it."
—**C. N. Willborn**, Pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Adjunct Professor of Historical Theology, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; Coeditor, *The Confessional Presbyterian*

Reformed Academic Dissertations

A Series

Series Editor
John J. Hughes

The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge

Alan D. Strange

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Abstract

Charles Hodge (1797–1878) was arguably the leading Old School Presbyterian of the nineteenth century. He taught at Princeton Theological Seminary for almost sixty years and in that time trained over three thousand men to serve as ministers and missionaries in the Presbyterian and other Protestant churches. Hodge was involved with all the great ecclesiastical controversies of his day, including the question of the spirituality of the church. Some scholars have argued that the doctrine of the spirituality of the church was a profoundly conservative doctrine, developed to remove the church as a player in civil society's strife over American slavery. In Hodge's hands, however, the spirituality of the church functioned as a complex and subtle doctrine, not serving, as it did with some, as a "muzzle" for the prophetic voice of the church but as a means of keeping the ecclesiastical from being swallowed by the political.

Hodge's view of the spirituality of the church had the dual effect of ensuring that the church would remain faithful to its calling, not confusing itself or its operations with those of the state, while, at the same time, not rendering the church mute in its carrying out the task of the Great Commission, including the duty of comprehensive discipleship. Hodge's balanced vision served well to inform the Presbyterian Church how it might properly be distinguished from and not dominated by the state while not being marginalized, ghettoized, and rendered irrelevant. For Hodge, the spirituality of the church meant that the primary calling of the church was spiritual in focus, that its concerns were not, first of all, temporal but spiritual. Hodge believed, however, that even in carrying out its essentially spiritual duties, the scope of the church's concern was broader than some partisans of the spirituality of the church constructed it.

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Series Introduction

P&R Publishing has a long and distinguished history of publishing carefully selected, high-value theological books in the Reformed tradition. Many theological books begin as dissertations, but many dissertations are worthy of publication in their own right. Realizing this, P&R has launched the Reformed Academic Dissertation (RAD) program to publish top-tier dissertations (Ph.D., Th.D., D.Min., and Th.M.) that advance biblical and theological scholarship by making distinctive contributions in the areas of theology, ethics, biblical studies, apologetics, and counseling.

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We look forward to seeing the RAD program grow into a large collection of curated dissertations that will help to advance Reformed scholarship and learning.

John J. Hughes
Series Editor

Foreword

It is a great pleasure to write this foreword, since I had the privilege of being Dr. Strange's doctoral supervisor. His dissertation provides a fascinating account of a period of vital interest in United States history.

Making use of a wide range of primary materials, from General Assembly minutes to contemporary newspaper reports and unpublished incunabula from the Hodge archives at Princeton, Dr. Strange in his narrative assesses the impact on the church of events surrounding the slavery question and the Civil War. Central to the drama is the part played by Charles Hodge as he steered a path between strongly opposed forces. Throughout this tale, the central question is the role of the church. When faced by pressing issues in society, when politics is in a ferment, when civil disorder looms, when society's institutions are being questioned, where do the church's responsibilities lie? These are matters as live today as they were in the nineteenth century.

In Hodge's time, some argued forcefully that the church had a duty to uphold civil government and so to pronounce on current affairs. In the case of the Gardiner Spring resolution, this meant voicing support for the Union government.

At the other end of the spectrum, Stuart Robinson held that the church is charged to preach the gospel and so should stay out of the civil arena. The spirituality of the church, for Robinson and his friends, precluded any erosion of what they saw to be a clear distinction between church and state. With slavery a significant issue, the waters were muddied by leading ministers' and theologians'

being themselves slave owners and hardly disinterested observers. Sadly, justifications for slavery were provided by otherwise venerated figures.

Hodge trod a path between these poles, adapting to change and modifying his position as he saw necessary. Recognizing the distinctive mission of the church to proclaim Christ, he came to realize that in some circumstances, it is duty bound to address with a prophetic voice ills in the surrounding culture while simultaneously steering clear of partisanship.

In our own day, while the presenting issues have changed, these broad questions remain. Some consider the church's task to include the redemption of culture, not only by the preaching of the gospel but by transformative involvement in every sector. They see the church's spirituality as the spearhead for the advancement of the gospel and the transformation of a world in which every square inch belongs to Christ.

Others hold that God has two distinct kingdoms: one in which the church preaches the Word and administers the sacraments, its members living as exiles and pilgrims, and the other as a separate realm common to all people, in which we are to live simply as citizens. Here the spirituality of the church is focused on its peculiar ministry, with the world around to benefit from the consequences of individual Christians' activities.

Should the church address current social and political issues, and if so, how, when, and in what forms? Conversely, ought it to leave such things to individual Christian citizens and so remain aloof, above the fray? Should the church align itself, openly or by silence, with the status quo, in the manner of the "German Christians" in Nazi Germany? Should it steadfastly support government policy, on the basis of civic or national identity? Ought it to protest against open evil and destructive barbarism, and if so, when and how? Or is it better to remain silent and simply get on with preaching the gospel? If the church remains quiescent, how far might its compliance with evil damage its witness in the future? Does spirituality equate

with passivity, with the tolerance of wickedness in high places? By remaining silent in the face of corruption, how far is the church publicly granting tacit approval? Does the church have a prophetic ministry as well as a priestly one? If it does so engage, how can it avoid becoming enmeshed in the tangled mess of debate, its central message eroded or lost?

With Dr. Strange as a sure guide, I encourage you to see how Charles Hodge handled an analogous state of affairs in a tumultuous political and ecclesiastical period. Hodge may not have succeeded; he may have been mistaken in this or that. Yet either way, there is much to learn.

Robert Letham
Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology
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Preface

The phrase "the spirituality of the church" may strike many readers as curious. Contrariwise, the terms "Christian spirituality" or "spiritual theology" are likely familiar to many. Readers might have some idea what "spirituality" in broader terms means but, never having heard the nomenclature "the spirituality of the church," may be left scratching their heads. I hope to show that these concepts—"Christian spirituality" and "the spirituality of the church"—are not wholly unrelated; it is the case, however, that something rather distinctive is being addressed by what is herein referred to as "the spirituality of the church."

The doctrine, specifically addressed in terms of "the spirituality of the church," though of ancient origins, did not appear in that form until the 1850s in the Old School Presbyterian Church in America (which came into being in 1837 and reunited with the New School in 1869). Much of our focus will be on that context (the 1840s through the late 1860s) in which we will see that the doctrine has to do with the question of the province of the church and the nature and limits of its power—specifically, the contention that since the church is a spiritual institution, a kingdom "not of this world," its concern and focus should be spiritual and not civil or political. Though Old School Presbyterians rather widely held convictions about the spirituality of the church, at least as to the principle that the church is a spiritual kingdom, the *application* of the principle engendered enormous controversy.

Perhaps just a short reflection on the nexus between "Christian spirituality" and "the spirituality of the church" might be helpful here.

Many have employed the term "Christian spirituality," especially in recent years, to distinguish the theology of the Christian church from the lived experience of the Christian faith. The "spirituality of the church" highlights that the church, as the mystical body of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit, is a spiritual, not a civil, entity. The broader notion of "Christian spirituality" has to do with the specific ways in which the Christian life is lived, particularly with respect to Christian devotional practices, the spiritual disciplines that mark the Christian life, whether public or private.[1] Here one may think, for example, of the prayer life of the Christian. This would be a part of what is called "Christian spirituality" and could be set over against the devotional practices of a Muslim or a Buddhist (and thus we may speak of Islamic spirituality or Buddhist spirituality).[2]

How exactly, though, is the broader concept of "spirituality" connected with the narrower concept of the "spirituality of the church?" Spirituality broadly has to do, as noted above, with the spiritual aspects of the Christian life. These spiritual aspects, in Christian theology, are authored by the Holy Spirit, the third person of the blessed, holy undivided Trinity. Paul identifies the spiritual

[1] This is a vast field with sources ranging from the late Henri Nouwen (who wrote more than three dozen books on Christian spirituality), to books on Christian mysticism, histories of Christian spirituality (especially those of Bernard McGinn, whose four-volume *Foundations of Mysticism* and three-volume *Christian Spirituality*—both sets published Crossroad, 1995 and 1987, respectively—cover the field), and books on the spiritual disciplines by popular authors like Richard Foster. Christians from the Far East have often contributed to this field, seen in a book like Simon Chan's *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998) in which he treats the question in two parts: the theological principles of spiritual theology and the practices of spiritual theology, in which, under the latter rubric, he addresses prayer; spiritual exercises focusing on God and self, the Word, and the world; the rule of life, the discernment of spirits, and the art of spiritual direction.

[2] Spirituality in the world religions, including Christianity, receives due attention in the magisterial eighteen-volume set *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, ed. Ewert Cousins (New York: Crossroad, 1985–).

man as one in whom the Holy Spirit has worked (1 Cor. 2:1–16). The spiritual man is one who enjoys union with Christ, and has the mind of Christ, in and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit authors and fosters Christian spirituality.[3] The spirituality of the church ties in with this because the church is a spiritual entity, a corporate body of those in whom the Spirit has worked. It is this spiritual aspect of the life of the church that determines the nature and limit of its power: a spiritual power exercised in a spiritual manner within a spiritual realm. Thus, all sorts of organic connections exist between spirituality broadly conceived and the spirituality of the church properly.

The doctrine of the spirituality of the church, especially relevant in the 1860s in America, is something that has received revived attention in recent years. D. G. Hart and John Muether, for instance, historians in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, have reintroduced the doctrine, writing, "Unlike some Reformed theologians who have posited a basic harmony between church and state in the execution of God's sovereignty, American Presbyterianism has also nurtured an understanding of society that stresses fundamental differences between the aims and task of the church and the purpose of the state, [affirming a doctrine] [s]ometimes called the doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church."[4] This revival of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church has also played into the work of several Reformed scholars who are arguing that doctrines pertaining to natural law and

[3] The word "spirituality" is often nowadays pitted against "religion," so that one commonly reads that someone, while not being a practitioner of "organized religion," is, nonetheless, "a very spiritual person." Presumably, the inward is identified with spirituality and the outward with religion. Adhering to religion then is taken as merely outward and thus inherently hypocritical. Spirituality is perfectly acceptable in this schema because it's an inward virtue that does not have or require outward observances.

[4] D. G. Hart and John Meuther, "The Sprirituality of the Church," *Ordained Servant* 7, 3 (July 1998): 64. See also Hart and Muether's *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 138–43.

"two kingdoms" need reviving among the Reformed, most notably David VanDrunen, professor of systematic theology at Westminster Seminary California.[5] As part of his commitment to argue for the use of natural law and the understanding that there is a "common kingdom" and a "redemptive kingdom" that are properly separate, VanDrunen has also claimed, over against neo-Calvinist transformationalism, that recapturing the doctrine of the spirituality of the church is an important part of this project.[6] Hart, VanDrunen, and others claim that their invocation of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church is in keeping with its nineteenth-century usage, particularly that usage made by the Princeton theologian Charles Hodge's fellow Old School Presbyterians: the Border State champion of spirituality, Stuart Robinson; and the dean of Southern Presbyterianism, James Henley Thornwell.[7] This thesis may, by examining the nineteenth-century doctrine of the spirituality of the church, among other things, help to shed light on the claims of Hart, VanDrunen, and others who are seeking to reprise the historical doctrine of the spirituality of the church. Some have argued that Hart and company

[5] David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) concerns itself with surveying natural law and two-kingdom theory before, during, and after the Reformation, while his *Living in God's Two Kingdoms: A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010) focuses on the biblical foundation for such. His initial work on natural law is also useful here. See David VanDrunen, *A Biblical Case for Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Acton Institute, 2006).

[6] VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 266–67.

[7] VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 247–66; and Darryl G. Hart, *A Secular Faith: Why Christianity Favors the Separation of Church and State* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 2006), 117–19. Craig Troxel, in his foreword to a reprinting of Stuart Robinson's 1858, *The Church of God as an Essential Element of the Gospel* (Willow Grove, PA: Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2009), 5–12, commends Robinson's spirituality of the church, and Brian Wingard commends Thornwell's in "'As the Lord Puts Words in Her Mouth': The Supremacy of Scripture in the Ecclesiology of James Henley Thornwell and Its Influence upon the Presbyterian Churches of the South" (PhD dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1992).

are innovators, departing from the nineteenth-century spirituality of the church, though they claim to be reviving it.[8] The aim of this thesis is to seek to get that history right so that, among other things, we might arrive at sober assessments of such claims.

This work is specifically dedicated to explicating the doctrine of the spirituality of the church in the ecclesiology of Charles Hodge (1797–1878), whose doctrine of spirituality has received no sustained attention. Hodge was, arguably, the most influential Old School Presbyterian of the nineteenth century, laboring for more than fifty-five years at its flagship seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary (founded 1812). Hodge was Princeton's leading professor during the middle part of the nineteenth century, especially enjoying broad influence as the editor of the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, in which pages he annually gave a detailed analysis of the General Assembly of the Old School Presbyterian Church, an interpretive task that multiplied his influence in the church. Hodge, along with his fellow Princetonians, was seen as the quintessential moderate, and it is no different when it comes to the doctrine of the spirituality of the church.

Robinson, Thornwell, and others were on one end of the spectrum, the radical spirituality of the church wing, we might call it. Others in the Old School Church, especially as the U.S. Civil War (1861–65) intensified, were on the other end of the spectrum, not heedful of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church, only too ready to have the church make political pronouncements, particularly as seen at the General Assemblies of 1861 and 1865. Hodge rejected both extremes and developed a doctrine of the spirituality of the church that was supple and nuanced. His doctrine developed

[8] Sean Lucas, in his review of Hart's *Secular Faith* in his essay "God and Country American Style," *Westminster Theological Journal* 69 (2007): 185–97, notes that while Hart intends to argue for the separation of church and state (hardly a controversial position in America), what he ends up arguing for is the separation of faith and politics, which is impossible given the character of faith as properly basic and thus something that translates into action in all of life.

out of his overall doctrine of the church, which he saw as a spiritual institution, a body gathered by the Spirit and given expression in the visible institutional church. To Hodge, as for Protestants more broadly, the church was in its essence invisible, the visible church being the necessary outward expression of the inward reality of the work of the Spirit. For Hodge, that the church was a spiritual institution that carried out its tasks in spiritual, not political or civil, ways was a given that he contended for and developed throughout the whole of his theology. This thesis, then, is given to an examination of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church in the theology of Charles Hodge in which this writer will seek to demonstrate that Hodge developed his doctrine of the spirituality of the church in a subtle and nuanced fashion that permitted him to distinguish the church from the state and its political concerns while permitting the church to retain a prophetic voice to society.

How successful Hodge was in developing his doctrine of the spirituality of the church and how well such an approach served in his day—and would serve in ours, for those seeking to repristinate the doctrine of Hodge or others—remains a challenge, particularly in our pluralistic culture. Some might argue that the spirituality of the church is precisely what a pluralistic society needs: a church that minds its spiritual business and does not disturb a secularized culture that does not want the church to have a public theology. Others would see the spirituality of the church as failure on the part of a church that has privatized and refuses to call its society to repentance, as the Old School Presbyterian Church, arguably, failed to call America to repent of and for slavery. If this doctrine of the spirituality of the church kept the American Presbyterian Church from fully addressing what many would regard as the greatest evil of its day, what good was it? Many other American Christians did not believe that something called the spirituality of the church constrained them from denouncing slavery, and they denounced it in biblical terms. William Wilberforce, to cite a key non-American, condemned slavery on the basis of Christian principles, and thus

slavery in Britain suffered defeat in no small measure due to explicit Christian opposition.

On the other hand, one might argue, the spirituality of the church tends to keep the church from being overwhelmed by the world's concerns or its agenda. It helps the church maintain its identity as church, distinct from the culture around it. J. G. Machen, twentieth-century successor to Hodge at Princeton Seminary, lamented the loss of this distinction due to the loss of any sense of the spirituality of the church. He wrote,

> Weary with the conflicts of the world, one goes into the Church to seek refreshment for the soul. And what does one find? Alas, too often, one finds only the turmoil of the world. The preacher comes forward, not out of a secret place of meditation and power, not with the authority of God's Word permeating his message, not with human wisdom pushed far into the background by the glory of the Cross, but with human opinions about the social problems of the hour or easy solutions of the vast problem of sin. Such is the sermon. And then perhaps the service is closed by one of those hymns breathing out the angry passions of 1861, which are to be found in the back part of the hymnals. Thus the warfare of the world has entered even into the house of God, and sad indeed is the heart of the man who has come seeking peace.
>
> Is there no refuge from strife? Is there no place of refreshing where a man can prepare for the battle of life? Is there no place where two or three can gather in Jesus' name, to forget for the moment all those things that divide nation from nation and race from race, to forget human pride, to forget the passions of war, to forget the puzzling problems of industrial strife, and to unite in overflowing gratitude at the foot of the Cross? If there be such a place, then that is the house of God and that the gate of heaven. And from under

> the threshold of that house will go forth a river that will revive the weary world.[9]

Machen's plea is for a church that knows its spiritual calling and properly understands that it is not the world, and that it does the world the least good by seeking to be most like it.

The danger is always there that the church ceases to be the distinct spiritual institution that it is and becomes an adjunct to the society about it. But there is also another danger—that the church becomes a ghetto that shelters its members and renders ineffectual its gospel witness. Can the church concern itself with its own "spirituality" so much that it fails in its mission to the world? It is the contention of this thesis that Hodge strove to steer a course between the Scylla of the marginalization and irrelevance of the church, on the one hand, and the Charybdis of its politicization, on the other hand, as he developed his doctrine of the spirituality of the church. How successful he was in this is left for discerning readers to decide.

[9] J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 179–80.

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Abbreviations

AAH	A. A. Hodge, *Life of Charles Hodge*
ALS	A letter sent (to or from another party), as cited in a MSS collection.
BCO	Book of Church Order (PCUSA)
BRPR	*Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*
CHMC	The Charles Hodge Manuscript Collection. Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.
CHP	The Charles Hodge Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
DCP	Charles Hodge, *Discussions in Church Polity*
FSBD	First and Second Books of Discipline (Church of Scotland, 1560 and 1578)
FG	Form of Government (PCUSA)
GA	General Assembly (highest judicatory of any particular Presbyterian Church); unless otherwise noted, it will refer herein to the GA of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
Gutjahr	Paul Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy*
Hoffecker	Andrew Hoffecker, *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton*
Minutes	*Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA*, given year.
NS	The New School of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (1837–69)

OS	The Old School of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (1837–69)
PCUSA	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
PTS	Princeton Theological Seminary (1812)
SBD	Second Book of Discipline (Church of Scotland, 1578)
SCSR	Scottish Common Sense Realism
SOTC	Spirituality of the Church
ST	Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols.
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

1

The Shape of the Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church

As noted in the preface, Charles Hodge developed his doctrine of the spirituality of the church in a subtle and nuanced fashion that permitted him to distinguish the church from the state and its political concerns while allowing the church to retain a prophetic voice to society.[1] Since mention of "the spirituality of the church" is absent until Hodge's time, one might think that the doctrine

[1] Though Hodge rarely wrote of the "spirituality of the church," at least using that specific terminology, when he did address the subject employing such terminology, he was ordinarily critical of it as untenable. His critical stance toward SOTC, particularly as he sparred with James Henley Thornwell before the Civil War and Stuart Robinson's followers during and after the war (see chapters 5–8), has prompted some historians to assume that Hodge simply repudiated SOTC. Hodge certainly did believe that the Christian faith should play an important role in public affairs, as Bradley J. Longfield notes in *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 66–67, citing also Richard Carwardine in his essay on "The Politics of Charles Hodge," *Charles Hodge Revisited: A Critical Appraisal of His Life and Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 252. Hodge thought that it was proper for the government to involve itself in the observance of the Sabbath, to protect Christian marriage, to promote the teaching of the Bible in public schools, and so on. To Longfield, this amounts to a rejection of SOTC, assuming that Hodge perceived that SOTC "unduly constrained the church's power to address societal evils" (104). While Hodge did reject SOTC in its more extreme forms, he did, as this thesis shall endeavor to demonstrate, develop a moderate SOTC doctrine in substance, if not under that rubric.

is an invention of nineteenth-century American Presbyterianism. After all, the specific term first appears shortly before the U.S. Civil War (1861–65).[2] The idea has to do, particularly as developed in this thesis and used by Charles Hodge, with what might be called the "province of the church"—the nature and limits of its power—especially its role as an institution over against that of the state. There are broader uses of spirituality, as have been noted in the preface to this work.[3] This thesis intends to show that for Hodge these broader uses link up with his particular usage of the spirituality of the church: Hodge saw the church as a spiritual institution, a kingdom "not of this world," gathered and perfected by the Holy Spirit.[4] Hence,

[2] See the debates between Charles Hodge and James Henley Thornwell [and in Stuart Robinson's work, as noted in the preface] over the nature of church power, extra-ecclesiastical Christian societies, and the Boards of the Presbyterian Church, particularly at the PCUSA General Assemblies of 1859 and 1860, reflected in Hodge's *Discussions in Church Polity* (hereafter, *DCP*) (1878; repr., Scarsdale, NY: Westminster Publishing House, 2001), 100–106, 118–33; and Thornwell's, *Collected Writings*, vol. 4 (1875; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 145–295.

[3] When the spirituality of Christianity or some other religion is in view, scholars generally focus on the spiritual disciplines (prayer, divine reading, meditation, sacramentology, etc.) that attach to those faiths and provide them with a hearty aspect and not only a heady aspect (the living of the religious life and not just the speculative grasp of the religion's theology).

[4] The reference here—that Christ has a "kingdom not of this world"—is from John 18:36, and the Greek is instructive. It reads *ek tou kosmou toutou* ("out of this world" or "from this world"), and the implication is not so much that there are two kingdoms as such (a civil and a spiritual kingdom), at least that is not the implication of this passage (I make no pretense to address the question of "two kingdoms" such as we would find in Luther or Calvin, for example), but that Christ's kingdom does not come out of, emerge from, or rely on the kind of kingdom that Pilate bears rule in—one that bears a sword; rather, the quality of this kingdom is of a different sort than that of the world from which it does not come. One may translate (as does the RSV) *basileia* as "kingship," so that Jesus is proclaiming that the authority of his kingship is not derived from or reliant on any earthly kingdom but, by contrast, has origins not in or from this world, transcending this present cosmos. Much more could be said about this, but it is not the purpose of this thesis to deal in any exegetical detail with biblical texts that might impact the question of the spirituality of the church.

the spirituality of the church for Hodge came particularly to be a reflection of this reality: the church is a body gathered by the Holy Spirit over against other societal institutions that are biological (the family) or civil (the state).

Spirituality in the Nineteenth Century, Briefly Defined

Recent scholars have been skeptical about when the doctrine of the spirituality of the church developed. Historian Jack P. Maddex, for instance, noted that "all writers have agreed . . . that Southern Presbyterians embraced 'the spirituality of the church' before 1861."[5] Maddex insisted on a different timeline:

> It is time to challenge that generally-accepted premise. Antebellum Southern Presbyterians did not teach absolute separation of religion from politics, or even church from state. Most of them were proslavery social activists who worked through the church to defend slavery and reform its practice. Their Confederate militance did not violate any antebellum tradition of pietism. Only during Reconstruction, in drastically altered circumstances, did they take up the cause of a non-secular church—borrowing it from conservative Presbyterians in the border states.[6]

It is the contention of this thesis that Maddex is both right and wrong. He is right that Presbyterians in the South (and in the North, for that matter) before the U.S. Civil War did not teach an absolute

[5] Jack P. Maddex, "From Theocracy to Spirituality: The Southern Presbyterian Reversal on Church and State," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 (1976): 438. One of Thornwell's leading biographers, James O. Farmer, Jr., is in essential concord with Maddex. See Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 258–61.

[6] Maddex, 438–39.

separation of religion from politics[7] and that Reconstruction Southerners were particularly influenced by certain Border State Presbyterians (like Stuart Robinson in Kentucky).[8] He is wrong, however, to assert that the doctrine of the spirituality of the church is not only terminologically but conceptually a novel idea invented by Southerners in Reconstruction. The notion of the spirituality of the church in some sense extends back through the entire history of the church, even to biblical times. It is the contention of this thesis that not only did the concept of the spirituality of the church precede the nineteenth century but also that a usage other than that of supporting slavery was made of it, as we see in the case of Charles Hodge.[9]

[7] This is a point made forcefully in the excellent collection of sermons preached before and during the Civil War, in Maddex, *"God Ordained This War": Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830–1865*, ed. David B. Chesebrough (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

[8] Robinson published before the Civil War his great work arguing for his version of the spirituality of the church, *The Church of God as an Essential Element of the Gospel, and the Idea, Structure, and Functions Thereof* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1858). This work became greatly influential in the South after the war when Robinson came into the Southern Church and served as an early moderator of it.

[9] E. P. Thompson, whose magisterial three-volume set—*Presbyterians in the South* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963–73)—remains indispensable, also argued that the doctrine of the spirituality of the church was a novelty invented by the Southern Church to evade the issue of slavery and to separate faith and politics. See both his *Presbyterians in the South* and his smaller work, *The Spirituality of the Church: A Distinctive Doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1961). E. Brooks Holifield, in *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978), 154, takes the position as well that the spirituality of the church served as a cover during the slavery controversy and that the Presbyterian church in the South otherwise "never truly abstained from social comment." This writer finds a good deal of truth in the arguments of Maddex, Farmer, Thompson, and Holifield insofar as the doctrine of the spirituality of the church was frequently adduced in the South, especially after the U.S. Civil War, particularly with respect to matters of race and slavery, to squelch unwelcome discussion. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the spirituality of the church also had a deeper pedigree than nineteenth-century American slavery discussions, as this chapter attempts to

While some who adduced the spirituality of the church did intend thereby to silence the church from criticizing slavery, this was not Hodge's approach. Hodge's more careful and modest use of the doctrine restricted the church from purely political involvement while permitting some civil engagement. He asserted that the church has a proper interest in addressing issues that may have civil implications, like Sabbath observance, the place of religion in public education, and slavery.[10] In fine, Hodge maintained that though the church ought not to concern itself with the purely political, at the same time it ought not to restrict itself in addressing matters treated by the Bible simply because such issues may have certain civil or political ramifications. Where to draw the lines—between spiritual and civil, between church and state—is, Hodge acknowledged "an exceedingly complicated and difficult subject."[11]

The Doctrine of Church and State in Biblical Times[12]

It is typically asserted that in the Bible, at least in the Old Testament, church and state are seen as one, an inseparable unity: Israel was constituted by God to serve him in every sphere of its national life. Yahweh commanded the full allegiance of Israel as she expressed her life in state, church, and family. Scholars often refer to Israel after Sinai as a theocracy, meaning that it claimed to be under the rule of God in the sum of its national life. But Israel was not a theocracy in the classic use of that term, as were some of its

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show and as Charles Hodge himself demonstrated.

[10] This is discussed in chapters 4–5 of this thesis.

[11] From an article written by Hodge during the U.S. Civil War, "Relation of the Church and State," in *BRPR* 35, 4 (1863): 679. Much of the rest of this chapter deals with this, the most pivotal piece penned by Hodge treating the question of the relationship of church and state.

[12] This section on the relation of church and state during biblical times through the Reformation draws at several places from Alan D. Strange, "Church and State in Historical Perspective," *Ordained Servant* 16 (2007): 93–100.

neighbors that had either priestly rule or rule by "divine" monarch.[13] Israel's priesthood did not rule the nation (judges, prophets, or kings did), and her kings did not act as priests.[14] The king was also limited by the law (not a law unto himself) and clearly was not regarded as divine.[15] In this sense, then, Israel, though under Yahweh in all spheres, distinguished the civil ruler from the priest and both of them from the deity.

The origins of the institutions of church and state in the Old Testament are also debated. Confessional churchmen would argue that the church began in Eden before the fall (Genesis 2–3), making its appearance at the same time as the family.[16] One might argue that though there was some sort of civil order from the beginning, the state did not make an appearance more explicitly until after the

[13] The historic definition of theocracy as either priestly rule or rule in which the monarch was not distinguished from the priest, or was regarded as himself divine, clearly does not fit Israel, and thus Israel is not in that sense a theocracy. However, if the definition of theocracy is made to include a nation that sees itself as under the direct rule of its God, though the priest does not rule and the king is not divine, then Israel may rightly be considered a theocracy. Some also distinguish the nature of the rule before Sinai, during Moses' leadership, in the period of the judges, and after the establishment of the monarchy. For our purposes, it seems clear enough to designate Israel as a theocracy, qualified in all the ways that it is qualified herein, particularly going from a more direct rule of God under Moses and the judges, to a less direct rule in the times of the kings. See "Theocracy" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 1184, for a definition along these lines and for a strict, legal definition ("government of a state by the immediate direction of God"). See also *Black's Law Dictionary*, 6th ed. (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1990), 1478.

[14] See, for example, 2 Chronicles 26:16–23.

[15] See, for example, Deuteronomy 17:14–20.

[16] So argues Paul Woolley in *Family, State, and Church: God's Institutions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965). Woolley contends, over against some exegetes, that the state was not a purely postlapsarian institution and that humans before the fall would need government, even though morally pure. He gives as an example the side of the road on which one should drive: there needs to be a controlling authority to make such a decision, but whichever side is chosen, right or left, it would need to be made even in a world without sin.

flood and disembarkment, with God instructing Noah in the establishment of rudimentary government (Gen. 9).[17] While in Israel a much closer tie between church and state exists after the covenantal development at Sinai (Ex. 20) than in the patriarchs' time, a distinction remains: there is a ruling class, particularly with the development of the Davidic kingship (2 Sam. 2), as noted above, which is separate from the priestly class, the Levites. Again, this means that the priestly class was not the ruling, or kingly, class, though the Levites did have some functions that might be said to be civil. In short, though there was a distinction of sorts between church and state, all of life for Israel was directly under and closely regulated by Yahweh.

"The spirituality of the church" was not absent during this theocracy: there was always at the heart of all old covenant worship a true spirituality that highlighted a worship of and devotion to Yahweh that regarded not only outward circumcision but the circumcision of the heart.[18] In other words, even in the Old Testament, Moses and the prophets privileged the inward over the outward and saw acceptable outward service as flowing from a truly spiritual inner life.

Whatever distinctions obtained between church and state in the life of Old Testament Israel, such were considerably magnified in the New Testament context. The New Testament has in view not an ethnically distinct people in a geographically defined land, as was true of Israel. Rather, the followers of Jesus Christ believe that

[17] Here is the first explicit mention of what may be said to be a government and censure for sin or crime: command is given to shed the blood of the one who sheds blood.

[18] All the prophets pointed to such: Isaiah and Amos, for example, called for a heart religion that not only rendered the requisite sacrifices (understanding the need for the shedding of blood to cleanse from sin) but also that manifested what the sacrifices symbolized—namely, a life that reflected love of God and neighbor, showing itself in care of the widow, the orphan, and the poor. True spirituality thus was not to be divorced from the expression of love and care of God and his creation but showed itself outwardly through such.

not only is he the Messiah sent to redeem Israel but the one sent to redeem the world (John 3:16). Since, in the Christian context, the faith would no longer be limited to a discrete people group but would be made up of disciples from all nations, the relation between church and state, whatever it was for Old Testament Israel, would of necessity be different for the New Testament church.

The Doctrine of Church and State in the Ancient Church

Hodge himself, in his article on church and state, begins his analysis of the question with Christians in the Roman Empire before the conversion of Constantine (312). He writes, "Before the conversion of Constantine, the church was of course so far independent of the state, that she determined her own faith, regulated her worship, chose her officers, and exercised her discipline without any interference of the civil authorities."[19] The church, in spite of suffering ten waves of persecution during the three centuries before the conversion of Constantine, was left to develop its own institutional life.[20] Hodge writes, "Her members were regarded as citizens of the state, whose religious opinions and practices were, except in times of persecution, regarded as matters of indifference." Hodge supposes that the Romans granted the church, more or less, the same privileges as the Jews in conducting their own religious affairs.[21] While this is not quite accurate, at least de jure, between the waves of persecution, the church was often ignored de facto and flourished increasingly as time went by.[22]

[19] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 679.

[20] Chronicled in Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, *Ante-Nicene Christianity. AD 100–325* (1910 edition; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), chap. 1–4.

[21] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 679.

[22] W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), esp. 271–336. See also Robert M. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine: The Rise and Triumph of Christianity in the Roman World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1970), esp. parts 3–4.

When Constantine converted, he assumed that as the Christian of imperial rank, he was entitled to significant say in the affairs of the Christian church. Hodge notes, "When Constantine declared himself a Christian, he expressed the relation which was henceforth to subsist between the church and state, by saying to certain bishops, 'God has made you the bishops of the internal affairs of the church, and me the bishop of its external affairs.'"[23] Hodge notes that this meant that the church was left to determine her doctrine and to manage her church order. It was left to the state, in this schema, "to provide for the support of the clergy, to determine the sources and amounts of their income, to fix the limits of parishes and dioceses, to provide places of public worship, to call together the clergy, to preside in their meetings, to give the force of laws to their decisions, and to see that external obedience at least was rendered to the decrees and acts of discipline."[24]

Constantine's legacy has been hotly disputed.[25] Some have seen him as personally lacking and "hardly deserv[ing] the title of Great . . . either by his character or his abilities."[26] Others are tired of his being "a whipping boy" and are ready to defend him as a Christian and a zealous church leader.[27] Perhaps the truth is somewhere in

[23] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 679.

[24] Ibid., 680.

[25] Perhaps the classic work of recent years on Constantine is Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great* (1949; repr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), esp. 292–335 for his views on Constantine and the church. See also Michael Grant, *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 156–86.

[26] A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 201.

[27] Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 9. Leithart notes that in popular culture (e.g., Dan Brown, *Da Vinci Code*), among bestselling historians (e.g., James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword*), and among theologians (Stanley Hauerwas, John Howard Yoder, and their followers), Constantine's name is identified with tyranny, anti-Semitism, hypocrisy, apostasy, and heresy. He was, according to such critics, a hardened power-politician who never really

the middle. At any rate, one may safely assert that things were never the same in the church after his conversion.[28] The emperor's claim to be the external bishop, Hodge argued, was not as nice and neat as it sounded. This internal/external distinction, Hodge noted, was "too indefinite to keep two mighty bodies [church and state] from coming into collision."[29] And collide they did: "if the magistrate provided the support of the bishops and sustained them in their places of influence, he felt entitled to have a voice in saying who should receive his funds, and use that influence." Similarly, if he was to enforce conciliar decisions and see that discipline was carried out, even to the point of banishment (or later death), he felt some obligation to ascertain the justice of such proceedings. On the other hand, Hodge wrote, "if the church was recognised as a divine institution, with divinely constituted government and powers, she would constantly struggle to preserve her prerogatives from the encroachments of the state, and to draw to herself all the power requisite to enforce her decisions in the sphere of the state into which she was adopted, which she of right possessed in her own sphere as a *spiritual*, and, in one sense, voluntary, society."[30]

Here is Hodge's objection to the Constantinian model: the church is a spiritual institution and ought to be spiritually constituted and governed, not brought together and ruled by an agent of civil society but by the Holy Spirit and those church officers who minister, rule, and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit.[31] This is for Hodge the true nature of the church and thus that which constitutes its spirituality. Constantinianism for Hodge compromised

became a Christian, a hypocrite who harnessed the energy of the church for his own political ends, "a murderer, a usurper, an egotist." Leithart demurs and defends Constantine from these charges.

[28] Raymond Van Dam, in *Roman Revolution of Constantine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), asserts that due to Constantine's influence, the Roman Empire was forever altered, as well as the Christian church.

[29] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 680.

[30] Ibid., emphasis mine.

[31] This thesis is developed below, particularly in chapter 4 of this thesis.

the spiritual and voluntary character of the church. Hodge wrote that the church was, in one sense, a voluntary society: he did not mean by this that all men did not have a divine obligation to become a part of the church or that one came into the church only as an individual and not as a part of a family. Hodge thought rather that confessing Christ as Lord and Savior, as the mark of true discipleship, was to be done only voluntarily and never under coercion, not as an act of submission to the state. Though Constantine did not require all Romans to profess Christ and did not ban other religions, his successors did, creating ultimately a sort of one-to-one identity between a professing member of the church and a loyal Roman citizen.[32] This to Hodge was at its most fundamental a violation of the notion that the church was essentially a spiritual institution.

Among some of the church fathers during Constantine's time, notably Lactantius and Eusebius, this identity between church and state became quite celebrated. Eusebius, the father of church history, saw the conversion of the emperor as nothing less than the triumph of the Christian religion over paganism, affording an opportunity for the once despised and persecuted religion to conquer the world and to do so without carefully distinguishing church and state.[33] Eusebius, in other words, had no problem with the emperor assuming a leading role in the life of the church and carrying that forth into his imperial work. The caesaropapism that came to prevail in the East[34]

[32] It was not Constantine but Theodosius I (in 380) who made Christianity the state religion and forbade the practice of other religions, in his edict *Cunctos Populos*, all a part, arguably, of what Ramsay MacMullen calls "conversion by coercion" in his *Christianizing the Roman Empire, A.D. 100–400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 86–101.

[33] Reflected in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, of course, and helpfully treated in Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), esp. 126–47.

[34] It should be noted that the conventional usage of caesaropapism—"the allegedly unlimited power of the Byzantine Emperor over the church"—is, according to many scholars now, "a misleading and inaccurate interpretation of

captures the sort of vision that Eusebius had for a Christian emperor carrying out his combined work of civil ruler and "first Christian" of the empire.[35]

Not all church fathers were so sanguine about the new Christian emperors, however. When Theodosius I, an orthodox, anti-Arian Christian emperor, in response to the death of a Roman official in Thessalonica, permitted a massacre there, out of proportion to the crime, Bishop Ambrose of Milan excommunicated him, declaring that the emperor is "in" and not "over" the church.[36] This particular incident provides an interesting case study in early church history of the relative relationship of church and state after the conversion of Constantine. In this case, Theodosius submitted to the discipline of Ambrose, repented, and was ultimately restored to communion, being subject to discipline like any other member.[37]

Was this use of the power of the keys by Ambrose an

Byzantine political reality," especially when one remembers that "not a single Byzantine emperor tried to act as 'pope' or patriarch, whereas the bishop of Rome did on occasion assume the role of Caesar," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 364–65.

[35] This becomes one of the distinctions between the church in the East and the church in the West. As the Imperial seat moves from Rome to Constantinople in the fourth century, the emperor tends to retain control functionally in both church and state. The patriarch of Constantinople never rises to, or seeks to attain, the same level as the bishop of Rome, who came to claim that he was Peter's successor and as such enjoyed primacy over the whole church. With the emperor gone, the bishop of Rome remained unrivalled in the West and in the power vacuum created in the civil sphere by the absence of a ruler as strong as the emperor, began to take on, and claim, civil powers as well as ecclesiastical ones.

[36] William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, 2 vols. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912–13). Volume 2, *Rome and the West, 298–300*, cites Theodoret (393–466) in his *Ecclesiastical History* as even affirming that Emperor Theodosius "knew well the distinction between the ecclesiastical and the temporal power."

[37] "Letter of St. Ambrose," H. De Romestin, trans. in Library of *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series* (New York: 1896), 10:450–53 is both kind to Theodosius, noting his customary piety, and entreating—pleading with him, as Nathan with David, to repent.

encroachment on the prerogatives of the state? Was he using the keys to dominate the state as Constantine sometimes used the sword to dominate the church? Or was it a proper call to repentance by a church governor to one under his due ecclesiastical authority?[38] Some might argue that Ambrose violated the doctrine of the spirituality of the church by disciplining Theodosius as he did since the latter was carrying out the duties of his office as a civil governor. If severity was necessary to stem a revolt, then Theodosius was arguably justified in his use of force. If, on the other hand, Theodosius was involved in an immoral act, not merely a political act, carrying out his civil duties in a way inimical to the Christian religion, then he was due the kind of censure that he received from Ambrose. This vignette shows the complexity surrounding the doctrine of the spirituality of the church and the challenge in distinguishing between the political and the moral. Hodge believed that a clergyman promulgating purely political views in the exercise of his office violates the spirituality of the church; on the other hand, a clergyman who fails to preach prophetically against immorality fails in his job as a watchman promoting the law of God and gospel of Christ.

Avoiding the triumphalism of Eusebius, and perhaps even the overreach of his mentor, Ambrose, the great Augustine in his *City of God* distinguishes those who are of the City of God from those who belong to the City of Man. Picking up on the great biblical distinctions between good and evil, light and darkness, God and Satan, Augustine argues that every person is a member of either the City of God or of the City of Man. Those in the former love God to the exclusion of self, and those in the latter love self to the exclusion of God.[39]

[38] More recent historians, noting that the story comes only from ecclesiastical sources, have questioned what really went on between Ambrose and Theodosius. See Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 315–30.

[39] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. and ed. R. W. Dyson

Augustine developed this model to answer both pagan and Christian critics who, after the sack of Rome in 410 by the Huns, wondered why Rome was falling to barbarians if it had become Christian. Augustine wrote *City of God* to answer both those who wanted to return to the "old time religion" of the pagans in order to save the Roman Empire in the West, and those Christians who had succumbed to the triumphalism of Eusebius and assumed that the now-Christian Roman Empire would gloriously reign supreme over the world.[40] Augustine wrote this work to demonstrate that Christianity was far superior to the pagan past and had benefited Rome more than paganism ever had. God's kingdom—the City of God—was not dependent on Rome or on any earthly kingdom for its welfare. Empires come and go—the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and now the Romans—Augustine argued, but the City of God is an eternal kingdom that shall never perish and shall flourish regardless of the rise and fall of merely earthly kingdoms.[41]

Augustine never identifies, *simpliciter*, the City of God with the church or the City of Man with the state, but he did see the City of God as finding a primary expression in the church.[42] Augustine did not simply equate the visible church with the City of God, because he knew the visible church to be a mixture, containing mainly the redeemed but also containing those who were not God's elect. The City of God and the City of Man were thus both everywhere and a part of every institution, sacred or secular. The City of God comprised those truly redeemed (elect) and the City of Man those not or not yet redeemed. The redeemed were to live as the redeemed wherever they went—in the forum, the marketplace, at work, or at home. Given this sharp antithesis, then, between the two cities—everyone belonging to one or the other city—Augustine did not put forward his two-cities construct as a kind of two-kingdom theory in which

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.13 (609) and 14.28 (632).

[40] Augustine, *City of God*, Books 1–10.

[41] Ibid., Book 11.

[42] See, for example, ibid., 19.17, 945–47.

a Christian has proper citizenship in both.[43] Had Augustine seen the state as the City of Man, *simpliciter*, he would have forbidden the Christian from participating in it; he most decidedly did not do this. In fact, he argued that the Christian should participate in the state as a citizen of the City of God and by such participation bring a sanctifying influence to what was often dominated by the spirit of the City of Man.[44]

Hodge addresses none of this in his article on church and state except to note laconically, "simple and plausible, therefore, as the relation between the church and state, as determined by Constantine, may at first sight appear, the whole history of the church shows that it cannot be maintained. Either the church will encroach upon the peculiar province of the state, or the state upon that of the church."[45] Hodge concludes, "It would require an outline of ecclesiastical history, from Constantine to the present day, to exhibit the conflicts and vacillations of these two principles. The struggle though protracted and varied in its prospects, was decided in favour of the church, which, under the papacy, gained a complete ascendancy over the state."[46] It is the case that after Augustine, the church aimed for an ascendency over the state. To say that it gained such is either hyperbole or nineteenth-century Protestant papal rhetoric. The struggle between church and state continued and increased in the Middle Ages without either institution achieving a decisive victory, at least one that was long-lasting for either church or state.

[43] Two-kingdom theorists, unless Anabaptist, posit that the Christian properly operates in both spheres: Christ's redemptive kingdom (the church) and Christ's common kingdom (the world). This is quite different in this respect from Augustine's two-city theory, in which the redeemed are not part of the City of Man and the unregenerate are not part of the City of God. A person could be in only one of those cities—never in both—at any given point in time.

[44] Augustine argues, in fact, "that where there is no true religion, there can be no true virtues," in *City of God*, 19.25, 961.

[45] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 680.

[46] Ibid., 680–81.

The Doctrine of Church and State in the Medieval Church

The struggle between church and state in the Middle Ages was richly textured. No small part of it stemmed from a political power vacuum that arose in the western part of the empire after the departure of the capital from Rome, ultimately to Constantinople.[47] When Leo the Great, for instance, met Attila the Hun in 450 and negotiated the sparing of Rome, Leo, as bishop of Rome, was not usurping the prerogatives of a civil ruler but had become, by default, the strongest leader in the area and the one most capable of engaging the Hun.[48] The removal of the imperial capital to the east permitted the bishop of Rome to become the closest thing to a universal ruler in the west.[49] The rise of the papacy, in other words, had as much to do with its filling a civil role as with any ambition on the part of the Roman pontiff to loom over all the other office bearers in the church.[50]

[47] "Modern Istanbul. Dedicated by Constantine I in AD 330 on the site of ancient Byzantium," in *Dictionary of Ancient History*, Graham Speake, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 174.

[48] Leo the Great (440–461), as he became known, was the earliest bishop of Rome to wield the kind of authority that he did. His *Tome* (449) is remarkable and provides the basis for the christological formulary at Chalcedon (451). See Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, 77–87. A combination of Leo's personal magnetism and genius led to a considerable enhancement of real papal power and influence, and he set the course that would be followed in Rome by Gregory the Great (590–604) and others.

[49] The story of the departure of the Imperial Capital and the establishing of the empire in the East is well-told, from an Eastern perspective, in Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 13–146.

[50] The Roman Catholic Church played a large role in supporting the orthodoxy of Athanasius and in opposing the heterodoxy of Eutyches, for example; Rome's support of Athanasius is seen in Alvyn Petttersen, *Athanasius* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1995), 1–18, and Rome's role in orthodox Christology more broadly seen in Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 520–39.

Whatever confusion between church and state Hodge saw in the Middle Ages, nothing could quite compare with the religion developed out of Judaism and Christianity in Arabia that came to dominate the Levant and beyond—Islam. John of Damascus and other medieval theologians came to regard Islam, in fact, as a Christian heresy that denied the Holy Trinity. In its take on monotheism, arguably, Islam posited such a radical oneness that everything collapsed back into Allah, leaving only his voluntaristic will and no place for any sort of distinctions. On this schema, there was no place for distinctions between church and state, Islam claiming to present a comprehensive worldview that addressed all of life from a Qur'anic viewpoint. In the West, church and state may have vied for supremacy, but all could distinguish the institutions—that separability made for a perpetual battle between them—and no one thought that the priest, as was true of the caliph or the mullah in Islam, was the civil leader.[51]

Though Hodge saw the papacy gaining ascendancy over the state, in the long battle between church and state that continued through the Middle Ages, it was as likely that the state would prevail at any given point. While, for instance, there was no emperor in the West, the pope tended to enjoy dominance there.[52] There was not a like clerical dominance in the East, and there the emperor continued to have marked influence in and over the church. After the rise of the Merovingians and Carolingians in the West in the eighth century, however, particularly with the crowning of Charlemagne on Christmas Day, 800, the papacy had a rival that, with the

[51] Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last Two Thousand Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 133–56, shows a clear contrast between the Christian and Muslim conception of the state. In the Muslim conception, "there was no distinction between *imperium* and *sacerdotium*, as in the Christian empire" (138).

[52] The empire in the West fell in 476, while the Eastern half of the empire continued until the fall of Constantinople in 1453, almost a thousand years later.

subsequent development of the Holy Roman Empire, challenged its claims, even its ecclesiastical claims.

In what would become known as the Investiture Controversy, for instance, kings claimed the right to have a say in the selection of bishops in their lands. The papacy disputed this as a civil encroachment.[53] Gregory VII's claims in his "Dictatus Papae" (1075) for the "spiritual independency of the church" overreach the doctrine of the spirituality of the church, as it came to development in Scotland and America.[54] Gregory, formerly the monk Hildebrand of the reforming Cluny movement, claimed authority over the state when he excommunicated Emperor Henry IV and absolved his subjects from obedience to him.[55] Though Gregory likely did what he did to secure the ecclesiastical integrity of the church, his claim that the church was over the state compromised his ecclesiastical authority

[53] Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) is an excellent study of the deeper roots of this controversy, which actually trace back to the fifth century, when the state in localities far removed from Rome (especially) began to appoint men to serve as local clergy. That this went on even this earlier is testified to by the canon law banning it in Canon 3 at Nicaea II (787) and Canon 12 at Constantinople IV. See *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, ed. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 140, 175.

[54] The *Dictatus Papae* is a compilation of twenty-seven statements authored by Gregory VII in 1075 that served to define church (specifically papal) power, particularly over against state power. Dictate 3 provides that only the pope can make or remove bishops; Dictate 12 claims that the pope can depose emperors, and Dictate 27 that he can absolve subjects from fealty to wicked rulers. Other dictates claim that all is subject to the pope's judgment and that he is subject to none. Understandably, rulers saw this as a direct affront to their civil claims. See Brian Tierney, ed., *The Middle Ages*, vol. 1, *Sources of Medieval History*, 4th ed. (repr., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 142–43.

[55] Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologica*, II a II ae 12, affirmed Gregory VII, writing, "As soon as the sentence of excommunication is passed upon someone by reason of apostasy from the faith, his subjects are *ipso facto* absolved from his lordship and from the oath of fealty by which they were bound to him." See Aquinas, *Political Writings*, trans. and ed. R. W. Dyson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 277.

and made it look like the church was involved in a power grab. Certainly the state saw it that way.[56]

Hodge would portray the church in this time as taking to itself civil prerogatives in a number of ways: Gelasius's theory of the two swords,[57] Boniface VIII asserting the power of the pope over all civil authority,[58] and, in general, Roman Catholic suzerainty claims with respect to the civil magistracy. As a part of this, Pope Urban, and others, preached Crusades to recover the Holy Land, and Gregory VII even made Henry IV stand barefoot for three days in the snows of Canossa before granting him an audience. So while popes would put nations under interdict and release them from obeying civil rulers who were the objects of their discipline,[59] emperors would kidnap popes (the Avignon papacy is an extended exercise in French dominance of the papacy) and would otherwise interfere in church matters as in the Investiture Controversy.[60]

[56] For a through treatment of Gregory's life, see H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[57] See J. H. Robinson, "Letter of Gelasius I to Emperor Anastasius (494)," in *Readings in European History*, (Boston: Ginn, 1905), 72–73. This is one of the earliest written statements extant in which the Roman pontiff makes explicit the superiority of the sacred authority of the priest over the royal power of kings.

[58] In 1302, Pope Boniface VIII, in his confrontation with Philip IV of France, issued the bull *Unam Sanctam* as the logical conclusion of Gelasius's two-sword theory, declaring it necessary for "every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." This was the high watermark of papal claims: the supreme pontiff ultimately possessed all civil and spiritual power. See *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 14 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1967), 382.

[59] Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, II, Dist. 44, quaest. 3), in support of strong papal claims, wrote, "Secular power is subject to spiritual power as this is ordered by God." Aquinas does concede that "in those things which pertain to the civil good, the secular power should be obeyed before the spiritual," in keeping with Christ's injunction to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21). "Unless," Aquinas continues, "the spiritual and secular powers are conjoined, as in the pope, who holds the summit of both powers," in *Political Writings*, 278.

[60] See the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* on church and state, esp. 3:729–33.

The Doctrine of Church and State in the Time of the Reformation

In the Middle Ages, church and state dealt in a highly politicized fashion with each other. Both seemed to see their relationship as a zero-sum game: one had to "win" and the other had to "lose." While the Reformation addressed far more than ecclesiology, having a particular concern for soteriology—especially the doctrine of justification by faith alone—ecclesiological issues were significant. Prominent among such was the question of the distinctness of church and state and the relative authority of each with respect to the other. Not only did the Reformers seek to throw off what they took to be the ecclesiastical usurpation of the bishop of Rome, but those rulers who supported the Reformation (like Frederick the Wise or Philip of Hesse) also sought to resist the tyranny of the one that many of them dismissed as an "Italian prince."[61] In this process of rejecting the claim of the papacy in "Unam Sanctam," that the state's sword is to be exercised under the authority of St. Peter's keys, many Reformed princes went the opposite direction and embraced what ultimately came to be a form of Erastianism, in which the state is over the church.[62]

There had, as noted, always been civil resistance to hegemonic ecclesiastical claims: caesaropapism in the East and resistance by emperors and kings in the West. After the onerous claims of the medieval papacy in particular, the newly burgeoning Protestant states often experienced a backlash, and rather than recognize the relative place of church and state, including the spiritual independency of the church, a new civil dominance arose, often designated as Erastianism, named after but going beyond the Swiss medical doctor (and theologian) Thomas Erastus (1524–83). Because

[61] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 3–52, chronicles this great sea change.

[62] Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 302–3.

Erastus wrote a treatise in which he argued that the state and not the church should exercise the power of church discipline (including excommunication), his name came to be identified with state control of religion.[63] Erastianism goes beyond establishmentarianism and insists not only that the state establishes the official religion but that the officers of the state possess suzerainty over the officers of the church, including the conduct of the government, discipline, and even worship of the church.

This reversal in the West, from churchly claims to Erastian claims, came about due to a number of things, among them the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, in which Lutheranism or Roman Catholicism became the established religion of a territory, depending on the religion of the civil ruler—the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* (a privilege not formally extended to Calvinism in the Holy Roman Empire until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, at the end of the Thirty Years' War).[64] One of the practical effects in Protestant lands of the state assuming power over the church was that the power of excommunication was taken out of the hands of the clergy and given to civil governors. John Calvin (1509–64) experienced this in Geneva in 1538 when he sought to keep those whom he judged unworthy from the Lord's Table, only to be overruled by the civil magistrates. Though Calvin was brought back from his three-year exile to Strasbourg in 1541 and ultimately granted some of the ecclesiastical and disciplinary modifications to the church order that he sought, he continued for the rest of his life to battle with the Genevan city officials, who, from his perspective, sought to intermeddle with ecclesiastical affairs.[65] Thus developed among Protestants, especially Calvinists, an animus against state interference with the church; retaining the notion of Christendom, however, Calvin

[63] Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2:59–61.

[64] MacCulloch, *Reformation: A History*, 497–501.

[65] Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 260–61.

and others expected state financial support as well as enforcement of church directives (but not interference with those directives). Here are the seeds, coming from an Augustinian sense of two cities, of the spirituality of the church, developing out of an anti-Erastianism in which state support of the church was welcomed but state control of the church was not.

It is perhaps understandable why the Genevan officials, and those in a host of other towns, cantons, provinces, and so on of the Reformation, did not trust the clergy with the power of excommunication. Church discipline had previously, in the ancient and medieval church, been sometimes misused in the heavily politicized church/state relationship. The church had used discipline not only to address heresy and immorality but also to settle political scores with civil rulers and fellow churchmen. Even in the ancient church, Athanasius's Arian opponents (many in the imperial courts)[66] and Chrysostom's local and Alexandrian opponents[67] abused church discipline to persecute these renowned fathers. In the Middle Ages, many became quite cynical about the papal abuse of church discipline, recognizing that the pope often used discipline, even interdict, to punish his opponents.[68] Many Reformational rulers thought that something as important as church discipline could scarcely be left to the clergy.[69] Thus, many Reformed princes went

[66] Petterson chronicles the political/religious persecution of this champion of orthodoxy in *Athanasius*, 9–18.

[67] J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), esp. 145–62. Chrysostom's opponents took advantage of his guilelessness and hounded him to death.

[68] Many in Europe came to believe that papal power was sometimes used for wrong ends. See David Whitton's essay in *The Oxford History of Medieval Europe*, ed. George Holmes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 131–34.

[69] Marcia Colish sees antecedents for this "reconfigured Christian Commonwealth" in the work of the English pre-Reformer John Wycliff and the Bohemian pre-Reformer John Huss, in *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400–1400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 253–62.

in the opposite direction from Rome: they adopted some form of Erastianism, in which the state is over the church.

Calvin, in insisting on the right of the consistory (instead of Geneva's civil rulers) to admit to the Lord's Table, obviously saw the church as distinct from the state. Unlike the Anabaptists, however, who had such a strong sense of Augustine's two cities—seeing themselves as the City of God and civil society as the City of Man—Calvin argued for the propriety of the participation of believers in civil society; Calvin insisted that there was not only one realm—the spiritual—that rightly concerned the Christian, but another as well—the temporal.[70] The church pertained primarily to the spiritual and the state to the temporal, though God was Lord and ruler over all. Martin Luther (1483–1546), though affirming a two-kingdom model, saw church discipline as a function of the kingdom of the "left hand"; as such, it belonged to the state. Luther, from a Reformed perspective, compromised the spiritual character of the church and its discipline. Luther not only allowed the prince to reform the church in an emergency situation (*Address to the German Nobility*, 1520) but also gave the state more authority than his theory would ever warrant, perhaps because he feared further peasant revolt and anarchy and figured a strong, even dominating, state to be a small price to pay for peace and security.[71]

Church and State in England and Scotland

The story of the English Reformation is well known: Henry VIII was no adherent of Luther but simply wanted the crown, and

[70] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics (1559; repr., Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 3.19.15, 4.20.

[71] Euan Cameron, in *The European Reformation*, 153, is willing even to designate this Lutheran capitulation to state control, somewhat surprising given Luther's strong two-kingdom view, as Erastianism.

not the pope, to run the church in England.[72] He was followed by children of varying sentiments in this respect—his son, Edward VI, was a committed Reformer, though he died young; his daughter Mary was an ardent Roman Catholic, who wanted to return the English church to papal submission; his other daughter, Elizabeth, was a complex figure, whom some say was merely a *politique* seeking a via media between Rome and Reformation, while others maintain that she was more genuinely Protestant. Elizabeth died in 1603 without an heir, so the crown passed from the Tudor line to the collateral Scottish Stuart line.[73] James VI of Scotland became James I of England. Though he was reared under George Buchanan's tutelage, he embraced episcopacy, rejecting Buchanan's Presbyterianism and his anti-"divine right of kings" sentiments. James I's son Charles I held such views more fiercely than his father, which led England into civil war (1640–49).[74]

Charles particularly made himself detestable to the majority Protestant party ("Puritans") in both England and Scotland. His archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, sought to impose the liturgical forms of the Church of England on all in England and Scotland. This demand for thoroughgoing ecclesiastical conformity came to be known as Laudianism; it, together with Erastianism, was vigorously resisted by the Puritans in England as well as by the Scots.[75] The Scots had been Reformed since the days of John Knox, beginning with the Scots Confession of 1560 and the First and Second Books of Discipline (1560 and 1578, respectively).[76] Thus, in

[72] Some more recent scholars have claimed that Henry's Protestant sympathies ran deeper than has been commonly assumed, particularly in his later years.

[73] This is all magisterially chronicled in A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1991).

[74] David L. Edwards, *Christian England*, vol. 2, *From the Reformation to the 18th Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 181–299.

[75] Ibid., 255–99.

[76] Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 1–47.

response to the efforts of Laud to impose episcopacy and conformity to the Book of Common Prayer, the Scots rebelled, adopting a document in 1638 called the National Covenant. This was a mutual pledge among its numerous signatories to submit only to Scripture in the doctrine, government, discipline, and worship of the church. This document rejected both Laudianism and Erastianism, proclaiming what came to be known as the "spiritual independency" of the church.[77]

The evident concern of this early statement of the spirituality of the church was not so much that the church should not interfere unduly with the state (though that was there, secondarily) but that the state should not interfere with the church. This sort of concern, so sharply put by the Scots, came into view in the English context when the English and Scots, as an extension of the principles contained in the Scottish National Covenant of 1638, concluded the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643, part of which included Scottish participation (without vote) in the work of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–49).[78]

While there are more distant antecedents for the doctrine of the spirituality of the church, nearer Presbyterian roots lie in the Scottish context, especially in the Second Book of Discipline (1578).[79] While the First Book of Discipline (1560) touched on the spirituality of the church, it is the Second Book of Discipline (SBD) that develops the notion, particularly in its first

[77] John Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1973), 66–102.

[78] Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 40–41.

[79] This fact was not unfamiliar to many in nineteenth century Old School Presbyterianism, most notably to Stuart Robinson, who, in his seminal work on the integrality of the church to the gospel (1858), appended to his study the Second Book of Discipline, among other works, as key to the development of the doctrine of the spirituality of the church. As is seen below, the seminal principles of this work were carried over into American Presbyterianism in the Church Order under which Hodge and his fellows labored.

chapter.[80] This first chapter sets forth both the distinction of civil and ecclesiastical government as well as the relationship of the two. It starts by giving a broader definition of the spirituality of the church, noting that the "Kirk of God" sometimes refers to the whole visible church, which is "a company and fellowship, not only of the godly, but also of hypocrites professing always outwardly a true religion." A contrasting definition of the kirk is "the godly and elect only." Further, the kirk can be defined as "them that exercise spiritual function among the congregation of them that profess the truth."[81] For the local kirk, this would be the session, composed of the minister(s) and elders. The session is the local gathering of elders that governs the congregation by a "spiritual" rule and is that body referred to as "the church" in a passage like Matthew 18:15–20, in which Jesus instructs his disciples to "tell it to the church" when an impenitent sinner refuses to hear the one whom he offended or the two or three who accompany the offended party to act as witnesses.[82]

The SBD then noted that the "kirk in the last sense," the kirk as constituted by her governors, "has a certain power granted by God, according to the which it uses a proper jurisdiction and government. . . . This power ecclesiastical is an authority granted by God the Father, through the Mediator Jesus Christ, unto his kirk gathered, and having the ground in the word of God; to be put in execution by them unto whom the spiritual government of the kirk by lawful calling is committed."[83] Note that this kirk government is called "spiritual" over against civil government. This "spiritual government"

[80] This chapter is titled, "Of the Kirk and Policy Thereof in General, and Wherein It Is Different from the Civil Policy," in The First and Second Books of Discipline (repr., Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1993), 121.

[81] Ibid.

[82] It is a core conviction of Presbyterianism that when Jesus says "tell it to the church" with respect to a recalcitrant sinner, he does not mean tell it to the congregation as a whole but tell it to the body that spiritually rules and represents the congregation, in this case, the kirk session.

[83] First and Second Books of Discipline (FSBD), 122.

exercises a twofold power, one being an authority to preach the Word and administer the sacraments—something carried out by individual ministers—and the other being a collective exercise of church power, such as when the kirk session meets to administer discipline and to admit professors to the Lord's Table.[84]

This spiritual power pertaining to the kirk "is different and distinct in its own nature from that power . . . which is called the civil power," though "they are both of God, and tend to one end, if they are rightly used: to wit, to advance the glory of God, and to have godly and good subjects." Part of the difference is that "this ecclesiastical power flows immediately from God, and the Mediator Jesus Christ, and is spiritual, not having a temporal head on earth, but only Christ, the only spiritual King and Governor of his kirk."[85] The church has no temporal head (as the pope claims to be), "Christ [being] the only Head and Monarch of the kirk." The power of the kirk derives from the "word immediately as [its] only ground." Church power "should be taken from the pure fountain of the Scriptures, the kirk hearing the voice of Christ, the only spiritual King, and being ruled by his laws."[86] While "it is proper to kings, princes, and magistrates to be called lords and dominators over their subjects, whom they govern civilly . . . it is proper to Christ only to be called Lord and Master in the spiritual government of the kirk." Others that serve on Christ's behalf are "only ministers, disciples, and servants." This is because "it is Christ's proper office to command and rule in his kirk universal, and every particular kirk, through his Spirit and word, by the ministry of men."[87]

The SBD, over against the teaching of the Roman Catholic

[84] This is the classic distinction between *potestas ordinis* and *potestas jurisdictionis*, the former being the ministerial exercise of power in the preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments and the latter being the collective exercise of power in the exercise of church discipline by the ministers and elders. See FSBD, 122.

[85] Ibid., 123.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 123–24.

Church that ecclesiastical persons were exempt from civil jurisdiction, asserted that "ministers and others of the ecclesiastical estate are subject to the civil magistrate." Further, "so ought the person of the magistrate be subject to the kirk spiritually, and in ecclesiastical government. And the exercise of both of these jurisdictions cannot stand in one person ordinarily. The civil power is called the power of the sword, and the other the power of the keys." These powers are distinct but are also related: "The civil power should command the spiritual to exercise and do their office according to the word of God." This last statement makes clear that the drafters of the SBD equate "spiritual" with that which comes from the Word of God.[88] And the civil power has the right and obligation to command the spiritual to act in accordance with true spirituality—in other words, that which is in accordance with the Word of God. And the spiritual power, though distinct from the civil, "should require the Christian magistrate to minister justice and punish vice, and to maintain the liberty and quietness of the kirk within their bounds."[89]

The civil magistrate "handles external things only, and actions done before men." In contrast to this, "the spiritual ruler judges both inward affections and external actions, in respect of conscience, by the word of God."[90] Continuing to sharpen the definition of "spiritual," the SBD continues, "the civil magistrate craves and gets obedience by the sword and other external means, but the ministry by the spiritual sword and spiritual means." Here *spiritual*, which is moral and suasive, is contrasted with *civil*, which is physical and coercive. The role of the civil ruler is set forth in this way: "The magistrate neither ought to preach, minister the sacraments, nor execute the

[88] This is why they see Roman Catholic power as coercive and temporal, because it does not profess to come from the Word of God exclusively, but the magisterium taps both Scripture and tradition in developing the canon law of the church. Thus the SBD sees "spiritual" as stemming exclusively from a ministry of the Word of God, over against the imposition of the hierarchy of the RCC.

[89] FSBD, 124.

[90] Ibid., 124–25.

censures of the kirk, nor yet prescribe any rule how it should be done, but command the ministers to observe the rule commanded in the word and punish the transgressors by civil means." And "ministers exercise not the civil jurisdiction, but teach the magistrate how it should be exercised according to the word."[91] Note that each has his own role with respect to his own jurisdiction and with respect to the jurisdiction of the other.

With respect to the civil magistrate interacting with the church, "the magistrate ought to assist, maintain, and fortify the jurisdiction of the kirk." With respect to the church interacting with the state, "ministers should assist their princes in all things agreeable to the word, provided they neglect not their own charge by involving themselves in civil affairs." The SBD gives a final note in this first chapter: "As ministers are subject to the judgment and punishment of the magistrate in external things, if they offend; so ought the magistrates to submit themselves to the discipline of the kirk, if they transgress in matters of conscience and religion." By these statements, the drafters of the SBD sought to set forth both the proper distinction from and relationship to each other of the church and state. And that which characterized the power and operation of the church was most commonly denominated as "spiritual."

Confessional developments subsequent to the sixteenth-century Scottish church constitutional documents superseded but did not abrogate those documents.[92] The emphasis of the SBD on "spiritual" does not continue to the same degree, however, in much of what followed in ecclesiology and church polity.[93] It was present,

[91] Ibid., 125.

[92] *Dictionary of Scottish Church History*, 751.

[93] The SBD itself, while gaining GA approval in 1578, failed to secure full endorsement from the government. "By 1592, Parliament ratified the Church's Presbyterian constitution, but the SBD was still denied statutory recognition by Crown and Parliament." See James Kirk, "Second Book of Discipline," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel S. Cameron (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 766.

however, in 1595–96 when SBD drafter Andrew Melville twice confronted King James VI with his famous "two kingdoms" speech on the separation of the ecclesiastical (spiritual) and secular (civil) jurisdictions. This "two kingdoms and two kings" emphasis found an echo in the National Covenant of 1638, forged by the Scots in response to James's son, Charles I, seeking to impose rigid forms of worship on Scotland. Through the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, the Scots introduced the idea of this into their alliance with the English in the production of the Westminster Standards.

It is perhaps ironic that the greatest statement of the faith and practice of Presbyterians, the Westminster Confession of Faith (and its allied documents), was not the product of the church as such but of a body called to advise the parliament of England. As Sinclair Ferguson notes, "Despite a royal proclamation prohibiting the Assembly (22 June 1643), Parliament proceeded with its own Ordinance, and the Assembly was opened on 1 July with a sermon by Twisse [the prolocutor, or moderator]. It was therefore a gathering under parliamentary, not ecclesiastical, authority, in R. Ballie's words, 'no proper Assemblie, but a meeting called by Parliament to advyse them in what things they are asked.'"[94] Yet even in this Erastian context—though the English Parliament was full of Puritans, there were many Erastians there, albeit comparatively few among the Westminster divines—the doctrine of the spirituality of the church was not absent. In the confession itself, there are several places that address matters touching on church/state relations (e.g., chapters 19–24, and 31).

The last citation, WCF 31, "Of Synods and Councils," makes clear that in the established church of that day there was to be a mutual working between magistrate and minister, with the former having the right to call a church synod for consultation, and the ministers themselves having such right "if magistrates be open

[94] *Scottish Dictionary of Church History*, 863. The Baillie quote is from *Letters and Journals*, 3 vols., ed. D. Laing, (Edinburgh, 1841–42), 2:186.

enemies to the Church." In any case, what a church synod was to do was to apply the Word of God to the cases at hand, whether involving morals or doctrine. "Synod and councils," 31.4 made clear, "are to handle or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical." This is a restatement of the spirituality of the church. The church, in its proclamations and preaching, is "not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate." These same "civil magistrates," according to WCF 23.3, "may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Here is the standard distinction of the Reformation: the church and state are separate institutions with separate officers. However, the quasi-Erastian nature of this becomes clear in the next sentences: "Yet he [the civil magistrate] hath authority, and it his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed." To carry out such duties, the civil magistrate "hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." Though other documents produced by the Westminster Assembly reflected the spirituality of the church, it was in these passages of the confession, especially 31.5, that the doctrine was chiefly reflected.

Church and State in the American Context

Though the first Presbyterian churches in the colonies were planted in the seventeenth century and the first presbytery (Philadelphia, 1706) and synod (Philadelphia, 1716) started but ten years apart, the Westminster Confession of Faith and its allied documents

were not adopted until 1729. The Adopting Act of 1729 noted that the Synod of Philadelphia did "declare their agreement in and approbation of the Confession of Faith with the larger and shorter Catechisms of the assembly of Divines at Westminster, as being in all the essential and necessary Articles, good Forms of sound words and systems of Christian Doctrine; and do also adopt the said Confession and Catechisms as the Confession of our Faith." In the afternoon session of that same day, those at the synod made clear that they did have "scruples" with regards to some clauses in chapters twenty and twenty-three of the confession, taking exception to them and stating, "the Synod do unanimously declare, yt [that] they do not receive those Articles in any such sense as to suppose that the civil Magistrate hath a controlling Power over Synods with Respect to the Exercise of their ministerial Authority; or Power to persecute any for their Religion, or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain."[95] These "exceptions" or "scruples" were repeated in following years until the adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms at the First General Assembly (in Philadelphia) in 1789, at which time the commissioners modified the Westminster documents to expunge Erastianism and to have a confession that expressed support for disestablishment and the separation of church and state.[96]

These articles from chapters twenty and twenty-three "thus excepted to," J. Aspinwall Hodge wrote, "were altered after the independence of the United States was established, and the Synod considered 'the church of Christ as a spiritual society entirely distinct from the civil government, having a right to regulate their own ecclesiastical policy, independent of the interposition of the

[95] Guy Klett, *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1706–1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1965), 103–4.

[96] David W. Hall and Joseph H. Hall, eds., *Paradigms in Polity: Classic Readings in Reformed and Presbyterian Church Government* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 348–64, 409–21.

magistrate.'"[97] The doctrine of the spirituality of the church flourished in the American context and made a new appearance, akin to that in the SBD, in the "Preliminary Principles" adopted by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1788 and prefixed to the Form of Government, making its way into the First Book of Church Order (at the First GA in 1789) and in many subsequent editions, including the 1821 revision, which served as the Book of Church Order during most of Hodge's career.

Chapter 1 of the Form of Government opens with these words: "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America [PCUSA], in presenting to the Christian public the system of union, and the form of government and discipline which they have adopted, have thought proper to state, by way of introduction, a few of the general principles by which they have been governed in the formation of the plan."[98] The PCUSA then stated eight "Preliminary Principles" that guided it in working out its church polity, several of them stemming from its doctrine of the spirituality of the church. It begins: "They [the PCUSA] are unanimously of opinion

> I. That "God alone is Lord of the conscience; and has left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship"; therefore they consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and inalienable; they do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and, at the same time, be equal and common to all others.

[97] Quoted in J. Aspinwall Hodge, *What Is Presbyterian Law as Defined by the Church Courts?*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1886), 18.

[98] "The Form of Government" in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839), 405.

II. That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ has appointed; that, in the exercise of this right, they may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.

III. That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible church, which is his body, has appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments; but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation of both truth and duty; and, that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous; observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the word of God.

IV. That truth is in order to goodness, and the great touchstone of truth is its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Savior's rule, "by their fruits ye shall know them." And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. On the contrary, they are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth, or to embrace it.

V. That while under the conviction of the above principle, they think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all

who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith; they also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these they think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance towards each other.

VI. That though the character, qualifications, and authority of church officers, are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution; yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.

VII. That all church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now though it will easily be admitted that all synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity; yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made and common to all who profess the gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.

VIII. Lastly, that, if the preceding scriptural and rational principles be steadfastly adhered to, the vigor and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any church. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the

countenance and blessing of the Great Head of the church universal.[99]

While all of these points address the doctrine of the spirituality of the church broadly, several of them particularly do, notably, principles I, VII, and VIII. The first, in highlighting Christ as Lord of the conscience (citing WCF 20.2), points out the rights of private judgment and that no hierarch can command obedience apart from the Word. The seventh principle asserts that church power is only ministerial and declarative and that the church can only bind as God in his Word binds. The eighth principle maintains that discipline is purely moral and spiritual, picking up the concern of the SBD to distinguish the spiritual nature of church power over against the exercise of civil power. Hodge was indeed in a church that, like the Old Scottish Church, believed in the spiritual character of the church.

Hodge's View of the Doctrine of Church and State in the Reformation

Returning to Hodge's article on church and state, it is evident that Hodge saw the Reformation as a watershed in church/state relations. He wrote, "As the Reformation involved the rejection of the doctrine of the visible unity of the church under one infallible head, it of necessity [as did the change from Moses to Christ and a theocracy to a worldwide kingdom made without hands] introduced a change in the relation between the state and the church."[100] Given that there were, as Carter Lindberg has perceptively written, "Reformations," and not just a single one, "this relation" between church and state, as Hodge recognized, "was very different in different countries,

[99] "The Form of Government," in *Constitution of the PCUSA*, 406–9.

[100] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 682; see also Hodge, *ST*, 2:313–77 for a discussion of his view of the differences in the administration of the covenant of grace under Moses and under Christ, in which he sees the former as more outward and legal and the latter as more inward and evangelical.

and that difference was evidently not the result of any preconceived theory, but of the course of events. It was, therefore, one thing in England, another in Scotland, and another in Germany."

Hodge focuses particularly on the church in England, where Erastianism had its fullest expression in the West. Hodge shows himself to be an opponent not only of the "church over state" view of Rome, as noted above, but also of the "state over church" view of Erastianism. Unlike the milder Erastianism of the Continent in which reformation was ecclesiastical in origin and afterward came under the civil power (or, alternatively, acted coterminously with the civil power), "with regard to England," Hodge wrote, "the Reformation was affected by the civil power. The authority by which all changes were decreed, was that of the king and parliament. The church passively submitted, subscribing articles presented for acceptance, and adopting forms of worship and general regulations prescribed for her use."[101] Hodge complains that King Henry VIII "rejected the authority of the pope, though he adhered to the doctrines of Romanism. He declared himself by act of Parliament the head of the church, and . . . that all ecclesiastical power flowed from the sovereign, and that the bishops acted in his name, and by virtue of power derived from him."[102]

The clearest proof that the ecclesiastical structure "rested on the authority of the king is, that as soon as he died they [the particulars of

[101] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 862: Hodge further noted here that "this fact [of civil establishment of the church] is so inconsistent with the high-church theory, that every effort is made by advocates of that theory, to evade its force, and to show that the change was the work of the church itself." Hodge argues that "episcopal writer themselves" admit that in the time of Henry and his son Edward, "the great majority both of the clergy and the people, i.e., the church, was opposed to the Reformation." That the Reformation in England was unpopular is a somewhat controversial observation in Hodge's day, although later scholarship has testified to the veracity of Hodge's claim. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

[102] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 862–63.

his reforms] were discarded, and a doctrinal formulary of an opposite character adopted" under his son and successor, Edward VI. Though Edward and his regents were committed Protestants, and this meant that the Reformation developed apace (and many first-rate Reformation scholars came and contributed to the burgeoning reform), the controlling authority in matters religious remained civil. This was also the case under Elizabeth I and her successors. All of this to Hodge was wrong. He sums it up this way: "The actual relation of the church to the state in England is sufficiently indicated by these facts. The king was declared to be the supreme head of the church, i.e., the source of authority in its government, and the supreme judge of all persons and causes ecclesiastical, of whatever kind. The clergy were brought with great difficulty to make this acknowledgement, and therefore it cannot be said to the spontaneous act of the church. It was rather an usurpation." Hodge thus regards the way that the Reformation occurred in Britain as involving the Crown and Parliament's usurpation of the prerogatives of the church.[103]

Hodge noted critically: "The king then, as head of the church, changed the form of worship, introduced new articles of faith, suspended and appointed bishops, visited all parts of the church to reform abuses, issued edicts regulating matters of discipline, granted commissions to the bishops to set in his name, and by acts of Parliament declared that all jurisdiction, spiritual and temporal, emanates from him, and that all proceedings in the episcopal courts should be in his name." Hodge judges that "these principles have ever been acted on in the church of England; though with less flagrancy of course in the settled state of the church than at the Reformation."[104] Hodge further notes, as proof of these claims that "everything still

[103] Ibid., 683–84. Hodge notes that the qualification in the king's oath that he was head of the church "as far as the law of Christ permits," as to its effect "was to declare that Christ did allow the king the power which he claimed and exercised."

[104] Ibid., 684. Hodge defends this assertion by citing actions of monarchs from Elizabeth through William III (1558–1702).

rests on that foundation. The king still appoints all the bishops, and has the legal right to suspend them; all the binding authority of the Articles and Prayer Book rests on Acts of Parliament. No man can be refused admission to the church, no matter what his opinions or character, against the will of the state; and no man can be excommunicated but by civil process; and the ultimate decision, even in the trial of a bishop for heresy, is rendered by the king in council."[105]

Hodge notes that "different theories have been devised to justify this entire subordination of the church to the state." He reflects that the "early Reformers, Cranmer especially, were thoroughly Erastian; and held that the king was intrusted with whole care of his subjects, as well concerning the administration of the word, as in things civil and political; and as he had under him civil officers to act in this name, so he had church officers, the one class being assigned, appointed, and selected by the authority of the king, as much as the other."[106] Hodge writes about "a second theory" that "supposes there is no difference between a Christian state and a church. A church is a people professing Christianity, and they may adopt what form of government they please. This supposes not only that the details of church government are not prescribed in Scripture, but that there is no government in the hands of church officers at all ordained by Christ."[107] Hodge notes that such is unacceptable to high churchmen, who maintain that "all the leading facts of the Reformation were determined by the church." However, this forces the high churchman to "maintain that what the king did on the advice of a few divines was done by the church." Hodge finds that as untenable as referring the "sanatory or legal regulations of a kingdom to

[105] Ibid.

[106] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 684. Hodge further noted that "Cranmer did not even hold to the necessity of any ordination by church officers, considering the king's commission all-sufficient. This whole theory rests on an exorbitant notion of the regal power" (684–85).

[107] Ibid., 685. This theory holds, Hodge notes, that the "best and most healthful form of church government is that which most fully identifies the church with the state."

the authority of the physicians or lawyers who may be consulted in drawing them up."[108]

Hodge argues that some high churchmen fall back "on the theory suggested by Constantine, which assigns the internal government of the church to bishops, and the external to the king." Such theorists accordingly deny that "the king can, either by himself or by officers deriving their authority from him, pronounce definitions of faith, administer the word or sacraments, or absolve or excommunicate. He may, however, convene Synods, and preside in them; sanction their decisions, and give them the force of laws; he may refuse to sanction them, if contrary to the doctrines of the catholic church, or injurious to the state; he may receive appeals from church-courts; preserve subordination and unity in the church; prevent, by civil pains and penalties, all secession from her communion, and found and endow new bishoprics."[109]

Hodge concludes, "This doctrine rests on the assumption, 1. That it is the design of the state, and the duty of its officers, to promote and sustain religion by civil pains and penalties; 2. That the church is a divine institution, with a prescribed faith and discipline; and 3. That the marks of the true church are so plain that no honest man can mistake them." He opines, "The only point in which this system differs from the papal doctrine on this subject is, that it allows the civil magistrate discretion whether he will enforce the decisions of the church or not."[110] This is because the Tractarians who supported this scheme did not regard provincial synods as infallible whereas "Romanists maintain that the Pope, speaking *ex cathedra*, is infallible."[111]

Hodge, after noting that in Lutheran lands the state possessed what he thought to be inappropriate "ecclesiastical power,"[112]

[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 685–86.
[110] Ibid., 686.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 688.

proceeds to treat the Reformed church. He notes that the relation of the church and state in "the Reformed Church of Geneva, Germany, France, Holland, and Scotland" was set forth in Turretin. There are things that the magistrate may not do: "a. The magistrates cannot introduce new articles of faith, or new rites or modes of worship. b. He cannot administer the word and sacraments. c. He does not possess the power of the keys. d. He cannot prescribe to pastors the form of preaching or administration of the sacraments. e. He cannot decide on ecclesiastical affairs, or on controversies of faith, without consulting the pastors."[113]

On the other hand, "a. [The magistrate] ought to establish the true religion, and when established, faithfully uphold it, and if corrupted, restore and reform it. b. He should, to the utmost, protect the church by restraining heretics and disturbers of its peace, by propagating and defending the true religion, and hindering the confession of false religions. c. Provide proper ministers, and sustain them in the administration of the word and sacraments, according to the Word of God, and found schools as well for the church as the state. d. See that ministers do their duty faithfully according to the canons of the church and the laws of the land. e. Cause that confessions of faith and ecclesiastical constitutions, agreeable to the Scriptures, be sanctioned, and when sanctioned adhered to. f. To call ordinary and extraordinary synods, to moderate in them, and to sanction their decisions with his authority."[114] Hodge concluded this section by noting that "the question, 'whether the state can rightfully force its subjects to profess the faith,' is answered in the negative. The question, 'whether heretics should be capitally punished,' is answered in the affirmative, provided their heresy is gross and dangerous to the church and state, and provided they are contumacious and malignant in the defense and propagation of it."[115] Hodge notes finally that "The Westminster Confession, as adopted by the Church of

[113] Ibid., 689.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 689.

Scotland, taught the same general doctrine" of an established church allied with a Christian magistrate.[116]

Hodge's View of the Doctrine of Church and State in America as a Development of the Scottish Position

The passage addressing a clear role for the civil magistracy in the life of the church has, as Hodge put it, "always been part of the Confession of the Church of Scotland, (and was, it is believed, retained in the Cambridge and Saybrooke Platforms as adopted in New England)."[117] Nonetheless, "history shows," Hodge happily declared, "that the church in Scotland has ever been, in a great measure, independent of the state, and for generations in conflict with it." Hodge continued, "The practical interpretation, therefore, of the doctrine here taught, has been to deny the civil magistrate any real control in ecclesiastical affairs."[118] The Scots, both clergy and lay, did not hesitate to resist royal/parliamentary encroachments on the church. Scottish clerics like John Knox, George Buchanan, Samuel Rutherford, Richard Cameron, and others were pioneers in developing resistance theory.[119] Jenny Geddes's flung stool was emblematic of the disposition of even lay Scots to the Laudian impositions. George Gillespie, the youngest commissioner at the Westminster Assembly wrote, arguably, two of the most trenchant refutations of

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 690.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Calvin may have taught the right of the lower magistrate to resist tyrannical overlords, but his successor Theodore Beza developed this resistance theory beyond Calvin's position in his *Right of Magistrates* in 1574 and *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* in 1579. It was the Scotsmen listed who took it further with Knox (*Monstrous Regiment of Women*, 1558) and Buchanan (*De juri regni apud Scotos*, 1579) teaching the right of resistance of all subjects, not only other rulers. Rutherford taught constitutional government against royal absolutism (and the divine right of kings) in *Lex Rex*, a covenantal idea that Richard Cameron and the Covenanters sought to enforce in the following years: the notion that the nation, including its rulers, were in covenant with God.

Erastianism.[120] The rise of the Covenanters in the seventeenth century and the Seceders in the eighteenth century were expressions at the time of the sentiment that the Erastian claims of the state over the church were fatuous and ought to be resisted by the church.[121]

Churchly resistance of Erastianism came to a head in the Scottish context in the Disruption of 1843 in which the Free Church of Scotland came out of the Church of Scotland. This was the culmination of the so-called Ten Years' Conflict, the heart of which had to do with the questions, "Who chooses the minister in a local congregation or chapel? Is it the local kirk session and congregation or is it the patron who sponsors the position?" This matter went to court and the Moderates won, meaning that the patron—the local nobleman—was given the right to choose whom he saw fit for the position. The Evangelicals viewed this as Erastianism, which was to them an intolerable dominance of the state over the church. Thus there was a significant exodus from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland, a church that was not established. It should be noted, however, as it has often been put, that those who left the establishment did so on establishment principles. The Free Church left, one might say, on the grounds of the first chapter of Second Book of Discipline.[122] An established church continued in Scotland; Hodge, however, was decidedly supportive of the Free Church, except that he did not entertain their establishment principles.

Hodge's good friend and prominent Free Church theologian

[120] Gillespie's *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded upon the Church of Scotland*, published in 1637 after the Jennie Geddes' affair, was an Anti-Laudian, Anti-Erastian tract. Gillespie's fullest attack on Erastianism and defense of the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction of the church was *Aaron's Rod Blossoming, or the Divine Ordinance of Church-Government Vindicated* (1646).

[121] Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History*, 103–88.

[122] This story of the Disruption of 1843 and the Free Church has been told recently in an excellent volume by Alexander (Sandy) Finlayson, *Unity and Diversity: The Founders of the Free Church of Scotland* (Fearn, Ross-Shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2010).

William Cunningham argues that "by the civil magistrate is to be understood the supreme civil power; and that the Confession merely teaches what the civil ruler will find to be his duty when he comes to the study of the Word of God."[123] Further, "the rule of all his [the magistrate's] judgments is the Word of God." And, finally, "the Confession denies to the civil magistrate all right to the ministration of the word and sacraments, or to the power of the keys, that is, to the management of the ordinary affairs of the church of Christ; and states, that as it is the duty of every private person to judge for himself whether the doctrines, disciplines, and decisions of a church, are according to the word of God, and if so, then to receive, obey, and promote them; so also it is the duty of the civil magistrate, in his sphere, and in the exercise of his legitimate authority and influence, to do the same."[124] This remains an establishmentarian position, but one that is decidedly anti-Erastian. This Scottish emphasis on the "spiritual independency" of the church is the root in the more immediate sense (acknowledging that this has deeper biblical and Augustinian roots) of what will come to be called the "spirituality of the church" in nineteenth-century American Old School Presbyterianism.

Hodge has one more thing to treat before he discusses the relation between church and state that has come to prevail in America after its War for Independence and adoption of the U.S. Constitution: the relation that prevailed between church and state among the Puritans, particularly in New England. The Massachusetts Bay Colony, and other such settlements, had what Hodge described as a theory of church and state that "was more that of a theocracy" than Scotland ever had.[125] "All civil power was confined to the members of the church, no person being either eligible to office, or entitled to the right of suffrage, who was not in full communion of some church. The laws of the church became thus the laws of the land,

[123] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 690.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 690.

and the two institutions were in a measure merged together."[126] And one became a member of the church, at least in some of these New England colonies, only by a narrative of grace sufficient to convince the congregation that one was truly converted.[127] Hodge continued, "The duty of the magistrate to make and enforce laws for the support of religion, for the suppression of heresy and punishment of heretics, was clearly taught. John Cotton even wrote a book to prove that persecution was a Christian duty."[128]

Hodge finally turns to set forth "the relation between the church and state" in the United States.[129] He immediately admits, "The doctrine current among us on this subject is of very recent origin. It was unknown to the ancients before the advent. In no country was religion disconnected with the state. It was unknown to the Jews. The early Christians were not in circumstances to determine the duty of Christian magistrates to the Christian church. Since the time of

[126] Ibid., 690–91.

[127] I deal with this in my "Jonathan Edwards and the Communion Controversy in Northampton," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 14 (2003): 57–97, esp. at 65–71.

[128] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 691.

[129] The literature on the relationship of church and state in the American context, particularly the separation of church and state, is vast. The section treating the questions about the relations of church/state and faith/politics in America in the Firestone Library, Princeton University, occupies approximately sixteen shelves, yielding at least 500–600 volumes. An example of a work dealing with church and state in early America is Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda, eds., *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). An example of works focusing on the contemporary relevance of church/state issues is Ann W. Duncan and Steven L. Jones, eds., *Church-State Issues in America Today*, 3 vols. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008). These address matters of religion and government; religion, family, and education; and religious convictions and practices in public life, including creation-evolution debate, school vouchers, abortion, homosexuality, conscientious objections, immigration, the green movement, and so on. In my view, the best recent treatment of the question of the relationship of Christianity to the American nation—one that is well-balanced and careful—is John Fea, *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011).

Constantine, in no part of Christendom, and by no denomination, has the ground been assumed, until a recent period, that the state and church should be separate and independent bodies."[130] While, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, there were distinctions made between church and state of some sort in the West for centuries, even in the Old Testament, after Constantine, and especially in the Reformation, Hodge is quite right about the American experiment: the disestablishment of the church and the institutional separation of the church and state of the sort that America witnessed was a new thing in world history.

In spite of its novelty, Hodge argues, "Yet to this doctrine the public mind in this country has already been brought, and to the same conclusion the convictions of God's people in all parts of the world seem rapidly tending." Hodge then seeks to examine, briefly, he says, the grounds of what he concedes is a "novel, yet sound, doctrine": the American Presbyterian view of the relation of church and state—

> 1. In the first place it [the notion that the church and state are separate and independent bodies] assumes that the state, the family, and the church, are all divine institutions, having the same general end in view, but designed to accomplish that the end by different means. That as we cannot infer from the fact the family and the state are both designed to promote the welfare of men, that the magistrate has the right to interfere in the domestic economy of the family; so neither can we infer from the church and state having the same general end, that the one can rightfully interfere with the affairs of the other. If there were no institution than the family, we might infer that all means now used by the church and state, for the good of men, might properly be used by the family, and if there were no church, as a separate institution

[130] Hodge, "Relation of the Church and State," 691–92.

of God, then we might infer that the family and the state were designed to accomplish all that could be effected. But as God has instituted the family for domestic training and government; the state, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives; and the church for the promotion and extension of true religion, the three are to be kept distinctive within their respective spheres.

2. That the relative duties of these several institutions cannot be learned by reasoning *a priori* from their design, but must be determined from the word of God. And when reasoning from the word of God, we are not authorized to argue from the Old Testament economy, because that was avowedly temporary, and has been abolished; but must derive our conclusions from the New Testament. We find it there taught,

(1.) That Christ did institute a church separate from the state, giving it separate laws and officers.

(2.) That he laid down the qualifications of those officers, and enjoined on the church, not on the state, to judge of their possession by candidates.

(3.) That he prescribed the terms of admission to, and the grounds of exclusion from, the church, and left with the church its officers to administer these rules.

These acts are utterly inconsistent with Erastianism, and with the relation established in England between the church and state.

3. That the New Testament, when speaking of the immediate design of the state, and the official duties of the magistrate, never intimates that he has those functions which the common doctrine of the Lutheran and Reformed churches assign him. The silence, together with the fact that those functions are assigned to the church and church officers,

> is proof that it is not the will of God that they should be assumed by the state.
>
> 4. That the only means which the state can employ to accomplish many of the objects said to belong to it, viz., plans and penalties, are inconsistent with the example and commands of Christ; with the rights of private Christians, guarantied in the word of God, (i.e., to serve God according to the dictates of his conscience,) are ineffectual to the true end of religion, which is voluntary obedience to the truth, and productive of incalculable evil. The New Testament, therefore, does not teach that the magistrate is entitled to take care that true religion is established and maintained; that right men are appointed to church offices; that those officers do their duty; that proper persons be admitted, and improper persons be rejected from the church; or that heretics be punished. And on the other hand, by enjoining all these duties upon the church, as an institution distinct from the state, it teaches positively that they do not belong to the magistrate, but to the church. If to this it be added that experience teaches that the magistrate is the most unfit person to discharge these duties; that his attempting it has always been injurious to religion, and inimical to the rights of conscience, we have reason to rejoice in the recently discovered truth, that the church is independent of the state, and the state best promotes her interest by letting her alone.[131]

This is Hodge's doctrine of the spirituality of the church in theory, particularly as that theory has come to expression in America. How Hodge applies and develops this doctrine in practice is the concern of the rest of this thesis.

[131] Ibid., 692–93.

DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, the church in the United States wrestled with how to respond to that era's major social, political, and ethical issues—slavery and the Civil War and its aftermath. Should the church's role be only to evangelize society, or should she also speak prophetically? Strange brilliantly shows how Charles Hodge defended a view of the spirituality of the church that permitted it to maintain a witness to its culture while not being overwhelmed by the politics of the day. Hodge's nuanced understanding of the church's spirituality is as profoundly fresh and relevant now as it was then.

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