



“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,  
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance

“The Lord looks from heaven;  
He sees all the sons of men.  
From the place of His dwelling He looks  
On all the inhabitants of the earth;  
He fashions their hearts individually;  
He considers all their works.

“No king is saved by the multitude of an army;  
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.  
A horse is a vain hope for safety;  
Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him,  
On those who hope in His mercy,  
To deliver their soul from death,  
And to keep them alive in famine.”



We pray for our country. We pray that God would give wisdom to our rulers, and spread his Kingdom of grace throughout the land. We thank God for the principles of liberty and justice that have made our nation great. These principles are most certainly derived from the teachings of Holy Scripture. For example: when we say that we possess the inalienable right to life, what are we saying but that all life comes from God? Life is precious because God has created all men in His image and has redeemed them with His own blood. When we say that we have the right to liberty and property, what are we saying but that God gives us all we have, including our life, and that we are accountable to Him above all?

There is a sense in which we can call the United States a Christian nation. Principles of liberty and equality under the law were borne and established within a historically Christian context and mindset. Or maybe we can refer to America as a Christian nation because of our freedom to worship according to the dictates of our conscience? Well, such liberty surely is a uniquely Christian development in the history of political theory. The Gospel does not coerce, after all. It persuades and woos by the means of grace. Granting the freedom of conscience to both believer and unbeliever alike is actually to the advantage of the Church. Let the sword of the Spirit (the word of God) do *its* work, and let the sword of the government do *its* work. May God grant wisdom and justice to our rulers to protect this precious right of ours. We thank God for such a wonderful freedom of religion. We cannot overstate how precious this is.

Now, perhaps we could also call the United States a Christian nation referring to the fact that there are a lot of Christians who have lived and who currently do live in America. But, of course, our influence is waning, isn't it? We ought to be careful when we talk about our nation as a Christian nation. Do we mean to say that we have a Christian government? Well, this is simply not true. Do we mean to say that God has chosen America as his own inheritance? Well, no. Jesus died for the sins of the *whole world*. Kingdoms fall; and there is nothing special about the USA. The Kingdom of God is spread not by one country prospering over others, or by our great military enforcing freedom and tolerance around the globe. No! God's Kingdom spreads by the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments as Christ sent the Ministers of His Church to do.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Oh, we pray for our dear nation to be blessed. We pray that our Father's Kingdom of Grace might come to earth, and especially in this land of ours. But thank God that our inheritance does not depend on this worldly nation accepting God's word. No, instead, God creates a nation, a people, unto Himself to inherit what He has prepared. He creates faith through the word of the forgiveness of sins. He creates faith by giving us what Christ has lived and died and risen to earn for us. Christ is our Lord. Christ is our inheritance. Blessed are we who in faith turn to God for mercy through Christ our Savior.

The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;  
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.  
The counsel of the Lord stands forever,  
The plans of His heart to all generations.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,  
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.  
Our soul waits for the Lord;  
He is our help and our shield.  
For our heart shall rejoice in Him,  
Because we have trusted in His holy name.

Amen. (*Psalm 33, select verses*)

— Pr. John Christian Preus