

*A Prayer for Armed Forces Day.*

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the true almighty Lord, head of the army of angels, and the real Defender of our nation:

Before we would come before your holy face, we must confess our sins, and cleanse ourselves in Christ's blood and righteousness. Then we could come boldly to your throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Today is Armed Forces Day. It is a day which our lawmakers have set aside in order to honor and to support our military personnel.

Amid the festivities, keep this day from becoming simply another May Day parade in which our nation would glory in its weapons systems, proudly display them before the public, and put its trust in them! Rather have us humbly realize that we must put our trust solely in you, our mighty Shield and Defender, who has pledged your legions of angels to surround us with protection (2nd Kings 6:17) personally and nationally, if only we would believe in our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Thus we plead for the protection of our military youth who are endangered and embattled in far-flung areas. Be their Guard and Shelter! Safely bring all of our troops home! Keep them united with their families where they belong, not separated! Likewise keep our daughters off the battlefield, for they could do the most good in their God-given roles at home.

Hence the best way in which we could salute and support our troops today, will be for us to pray to you for their well-being, that is, to pray above all for their conversion into the soul-saving belief in their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; to have you protect them not only from physical harm, but also from spiritual assaults on their souls; and then for us personally to do whatever else we could to help them.

Likewise, move our lawmakers to support our military properly in good faith, not to neglect their welfare or safety for petty political reasons! To that end, keep our national leaders from sending our forces into unjustified wars under the guise of legitimacy, in which our men unnecessarily are killed, maimed, or mentally scarred for life!

To defend our land, give us more servicemen like pious Joshua, who unashamedly confessed, "As for me and my house: we will serve the Lord"

(Joshua 24:15); like David, who willingly professed before all, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5); like the centurion of Capernaum (Matthew 8:8) who, in simple faith, confidently relied on the words of Jesus to do their job; like Cornelius who wished to hear more of the gospel, to share it with his family and friends, and to have them baptized in order to wash away their sins (Acts 10); and like the centurion beneath Christ's cross on Calvary who openly confessed before his soldiers, "This was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54); for such gospel-believing servicemen will possess that God-pleasing "righteousness which will exalt our nation" (Proverbs 14:34), not degrade it, and will move you to fulfill your pledged blessing of protection and deliverance! Indeed, this will be the highest form of patriotism.

Furthermore, show us how in your anger you have threatened "to break the bow and to cut the spear in two" (Psalm 46:9), that is, to demolish decisively the military might of any nation which boastfully has rejected you along with your gospel news of salvation! Yet assure us that as once in Old Testament times you kept this threat, and destroyed three armies which had arisen against the defenseless nation of faithful King Jehoshaphat (2nd Chronicles 20), so whenever any nation would repent of its sins, and believe your gospel pledge, you likewise will keep your promise to protect it, even if it would take a similar miracle!

Above all, teach us that in order for our nation to have outward peace from war, it first must have peace with Heaven by believing your gospel pledge of deliverance from sin and from its eternal punishment through the punishment load-bearing of our holy, crucified substitute, the Son of God; for without having this gospel belief, a state of war will exist between you and our unbelieving nation! As a result, you will punish such unbelief beginning already in this life by raising up enemies to attack us. This is our greatest national crisis. Therefore, to avoid all this, we confess our national and personal sins before you; plead with you to forgive them through your gospel grace, and humbly request of you patiently to remain at peace with us!

Grant all these requests, for we ask them confidently in Jesus' saving name! Amen!

May God bless our servicemen today!

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*A Prayer for Memorial Day.*

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet almighty controller of our country's destiny:

On this Memorial Day, which has been set aside for our nation to recall and to commemorate with gratitude those military veterans of ours who have paid the supreme sacrifice in order that we might retain our constitutional freedoms, show us all how shameful the sin of ingratitude will be if we would take not even a moment to consider the high sacrifice which these men have made, but would look upon this day merely as a time for pleasure.

Teach us, in the second place, that wars result from unchecked sin; that when men refuse to be transformed by the moral-changing power contained in your holy gospel pledges regarding Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, they remain corrupt sinners, who resort to brute force whenever they could in order to satisfy their sordid appetites for revenge and greedy gain!

Thus, not only keep us from a brazen disrespect of our veterans, but inform us also of your clear warnings in the Bible that we will have no hope of avoiding the divine punishment of a war in the future fought on our own soil, if we would persist in the greater sin of rejecting your pardoning gospel pledge: the salvation of our souls from eternal torment accomplished by Jesus after he was punished in our place on his torturous cross!

Therefore, make us realize that the high sacrifices made by our departed veterans alone could never preserve our national blessings which have been handed down to us from Heaven, that is, our constitutional liberties, and our peace and prosperity! Indeed, if we truly would carry on with the task performed by those whom we commemorate today; if we really would resolve: "They have not died for nothing," we must put ourselves on the Lord's side humbly, so that he will bless our nation with peace and prosperity, not punish us in his anger with a war. To do this personally and nationally we must repent of our sins in our thinking, desiring, speaking, and acting, and believe his biblical, gospel pledge that God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on our guilt and punishment and paid off their sentence fully when on his cross he suffered the torments of hell in our place, for only then could we truly be transformed to put off thoughts of hatred, vengeance, and killing.

Thus make this a spiritual Memorial Day for us! That is, help us commemorate the highest self-sacrifice of all time: the death of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, on Calvary's cross, by professing: "Christ poured out his blood in death so that I could be free to live in a blessed hereafter"! Amen!

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*A Lesson from History:* Realize that four days prior to the entrance of the United States into the First World War, "President Woodrow Wilson had asked for the war. He had appealed 'for the rights and liberties of small nations', 'for democracy', for people throughout the world 'to have a voice in their own government'. When he pleaded for conflict and cried out, 'the world must be made safe for democracy', Congress rose in applause. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court led the cheering. Senators who had opposed the president rushed up to assure him that he had made his name great. Yet that evening in the White House Woodrow Wilson told his secretary: 'My message today was a message of death for our young men. How strange it seems to applaud that!' Later that same night the President laid his head on the Cabinet table and sobbed bitterly. Well might he weep if he could have foreseen that the world would not be made safe for democracy, that the rights of small nations would be cast aside, that streams of blood would flow in vain and billions would be futilely squandered. For in 1939 the powers that were, decreed that the struggle was not finished; that the whole gory thing must be done again, that youth must die again. Once more it was the same applause, and we sent a third of a million of our physically strongest men into a war from which they never returned. We destroyed one evil influence, only to see others take its place" (Walter A. Maier, *Global Broadcasts of His Grace* [Saint Louis: Concordia, 1949], page 229f.)

To be sure, Wilson, in bad faith, plainly had lied about the real reason for wanting war. "An allied commission, it may be recalled, came over shortly before the war declaration and called on the President. The President summoned a group of advisers. The head of the commission spoke. Stripped of its diplomatic language, this is what he told the President and his group: 'There is no use kidding ourselves any longer. The cause of the allies is lost. We now owe you (American bankers, American munitions makers, American manufacturers, American speculators, American exporters) five or six billion

dollars. If we lose (and without the help of the United States we must lose) we, England, France and Italy, cannot pay back this money... and Germany won't.

“So....”

“Had secrecy been outlawed as far as war negotiations were concerned, and had the press been invited to be present at that conference, or had radio been available to broadcast the proceedings, America never would have entered the World War” (Major General Smedley D. Butler, USMC, retired, *War is a Racket* [Last Word Press], pages 10-11).

Indeed, a few years back a book came out with the title, “Twelve American Wars: Nine of Them Avoidable” (Eugene G. Windchy). I contend that all twelve of them were avoidable. Yet as a Louisiana father once described it in his own earthy way in a letter to his son in the Confederate Army, “This war was got up drunk but they will have to settle it sober” (Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln* [Pleasantville: The Reader’s Digest Association, 1970], page 366).

Thus a few years after World War I, Woodrow Wilson saw this and came to the following conclusion, “Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated with the spirit of Christ and being made free and happy by the practices which spring out the spirit. Only thus can discontent be driven out and all the shadows lifted from the road ahead” (Walter A. Maier, *The Airwaves Proclaim Christ* [Saint Louis: Concordia, 1948], page 18). Indeed, only thusly will the Almighty use his power to prevent our government from unwisely declaring war, and to prevent others from making war on us.

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### *A Prayer for Flag Day.*

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all powerful director of our Union’s destiny, who raises up nations and casts them down:

On this day we commemorate the adoption of our national flag in 1777. Though this banner started out with just thirteen stars, representing a weak, war-weary, and impoverished union of colonies, you, the ruler of the heavens, gave this Union new life as a nation, and raised that number to fifty. During this

period you also blessed our Union with a golden age of gospel belief with its accompanying peace and prosperity. Thank you for all of your past mercies!

Nevertheless, in the very midst of such amazing growth and success, our people treacherously turned their backs on you, discarded your priceless, soul-saving gospel, and despised their sin-removing Savior. As a result, a new, dark chapter has opened in our history. America now has joined that long list of nations which have done the same thing in the past, and now has to pay the awful price, not only by suffering from its own self-imposed miseries of a heathen, gospel-less society, but also because of America's backsliding, you have been put in a punishing mode, and for decades now have sent your biblically-threatened punishments of bad government and of plagues, for instance. Though our national coins still say, "In God we trust," the vast majority of our citizens no longer do that.

Just the same, on this memorable day, as we commemorate that point in time when our infant nation's existence apparently would have been short-lived, you listened to the cries of our gospel-believing people, and in your grace aided them with unusual success in the face of defeat, and raised up our nation out of the ashes of war. Do so again! Turn our people once more to you! Use your current punishments to awaken our nation out of its pride and have it kneel down before you in sorrow, shame, and deep regret over its damnable sin of gospel unbelief! As our land now enters one more dangerous chapter in its history; when for the third time again our Union is no longer "one nation under God," but divided bitterly, and our national flag, in effect, has been torn again into three parts representing the left, right, and the non-committed political factions, remind our people of your pledge, "If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2nd Chronicles 7:14)!

Therefore, enlighten our land with the sober realization that its core problem is spiritual, not political; that its political and societal problems are merely the symptoms of a much deeper evil of gospel rejection, which every American must address!

Then direct our hearts to Christ! Reassure us that by believing that the Son of God died on his cross as our Substitute in order to satisfy Divine Justice with the full payment for our sins, not only will we escape Judgment Day and the sentence of hell, but then we will possess that God-pleasing righteousness

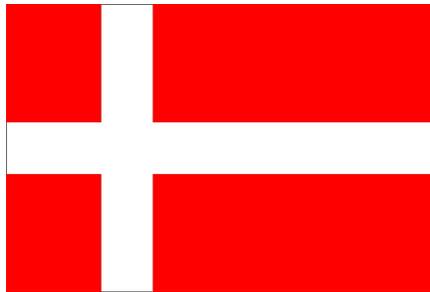
which alone will exalt our nation (Proverbs 14:34) and not degrade it in the public eye; which happily will move you to fulfill your pledged blessing of protection and deliverance! Indeed, this will be the highest form of patriotism.

So “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; and deliver us and purge away our sins, for your name’s sake” (Psalm 79:9)! Amen!

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Also consider the following on Flag Day!

While Denmark was the first of the Scandinavian countries to adopt a white cross on a field of red for use as its national banner, in time this design was adopted by the other Scandinavian countries as well: Sweden and Norway, as well as Finland. Iceland adopted it, also.



This cross has been termed a “Nordic cross” because of its uniqueness. That is to say, it is a Latin cross which has been laid on its right side.

This national flag unashamedly represents Christianity.

While Israel inserts the star of David on its flag; while Muslim countries display the Islamic crescent on their flags, to put a Christian cross on a national banner, though not biblically commanded, will be a commendable national testimony of gospel belief.

As you may recall from history: The flag which Columbus planted on the shores of America was neither the star of David, nor the Muslim crescent, nor the swastika, nor the hammer and sickle, but the cross of Christ.

Indeed, at this point in time; at this crucial moment in American history, when our very national existence is threatened again for the third time, our people would do well to insert in spirit the saving cross of Christ back into their national thinking, return their repentant hearts to their Savior, and confess publicly, "Without his gospel grace we are nothing"; hence the following picture of the holy white cross of Jesus Christ overlaid on our premiere national flag of 1777.

Have a God-blessed Flag Day!

### The American Flag of the Cross



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### *A Prayer for the Fourth of July.*

It is clear from the various passages in both the Old and in the New Testaments that it is the will of God that believers should also pray for their government and for the citizens of the land in which they live. With that in mind the Christian residing in America could and should pray for his country. Pray

this prayer, then! In fact, the whole purpose of prayer is to exercise your trust in God's promises!

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all-powerful Creator of our Union, and the Director of its destiny, who raises up nations and casts them down:

On this Fourth of July, the day on which our Continental Congress formally signed the "Declaration of Independence", make our souls surge upward to you in thanks for your divine mercy in that you used such events to form a new nation! Indeed, as one historian has praised you, "God never showed more visibly his gracious providence and love" than when he blessed our Union with a successful birth (George Bancroft).

To be sure, that "Declaration" was also a declaration of war, in which the peace would be broken, and that death, destruction, and the devil would begin their reign of misery. Indeed, teach us that this war, as any other, comes down on the unrepentant evils of the people as your punishment for their gospel unbelief, yet as a divine wake up call to their repentance and faith! Awaken our generation today to this realization!

Remind us also that in this War for Independence, when the end of our new nation was in sight multiple times because the colonies could no longer sustain their war of resistance, you kept your biblical promise ultimately to listen to the cries of your people for help (1st Peter 3:12), no matter how deep their guilt, and how dark their sin, and, by the miracle of your might, you formed this nation out of the ashes of war, and gave it a subsequent golden age of gospel belief with great spiritual blessings, along with material prosperity and peace! Thank you for all of your past, magnificent mercies!

Just the same, over time our nation fell away from a love of your priceless gospel pledge, which delivers us from sin's guilt and punishment, and stubbornly has refused to hear your warning calls to repent and to return to this gospel faith on a nation-wide basis. Keeping your threat to destroy any nation which would reject your gospel, our land currently is subject to your unrelenting anger which you have been pouring out on our land through spiritual and

political enemies both foreign and domestic. Yet we deserve it. We have no excuses to offer.

To this end, keep our citizens from a false sense of national security without you, and by the divine power of your almighty Word, assure our hearts of your promised favor after we would confess our national sins, sorrow over them, and apply to you for full pardon and mercy to spare our land from the punishment which it so justly deserves in your holy eyes! Reassure us in praying thusly for the peace of our land (Jeremiah 29:7), that such prayer could and should avert your punishment in the form of a devastating, third, internal war (Psalm 10:17; Ezekiel 22:30-31)!

Thank you for all of your past mercies!

We pray this prayer with confidence and conviction, heavenly Father, because we pray it according to your will, according to your promise, and in the blessed name of Jesus, our Savior. Therefore, hear us! Keep your pledges! Act on them! Amen!

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A reminder regarding the birth of our nation:

God had kept North America unsettled until rather late in the history of the world.

What was God's purpose in keeping North America unsettled? It was what his providence has always been in regards to man: it was in view of man's afterlife: That the Lord of heaven and earth wants all those born in time to recognize their sins, to be sorry for them, and to receive from him his promised gift of salvation, obtaining it by an act of faith. After that the Lord will take all those who have believed in his promised salvation home to be with him. In this case God kept North America unsettled in order to provide a home, a nursery, if you will, for those followers of his recent Reformation in Europe. That is, he had reserved a promised land in which his gospel could grow and spread, indeed, to become one more westward stepping stone from where the gospel could proceed full circle around the globe before the end of time.

After the handful of explorers of the 1500's and 1600's, settlers started to come to North America with the intent to establish a permanent home. Just the same, of these initial settlements some were disastrous failures; others barely survived. Of those that did survive, even these amounted to little more than tiny outposts which clung to the shores of the Atlantic. Hence it appeared that nothing much would ever become of these homesteads. At this time, 130 years after Columbus, immigrants came in only as a trickle as compared to the waves of immigrants from northern Europe and Scandinavia in the latter third of the 1800's which poured into this country in the hundreds of thousands. Thus America was settled in the beginning in various places sparingly, in fact, in human estimate, randomly and haphazardly, with no unified intent or purpose with a view toward any future consolidation.

Yet, unknown to these settlers, God had a different plan in mind. In his providence he kept his sheltering arms over the infant years of our land, and supported it with his hand as it labored to take its first steps.

As it is the will of God, according to his Ten Commandments, that men should live peacefully, and accomplish their goals and projects accordingly, as when Canada, for instance, became an independent nation in the 1800's in a peaceful manner, so America could have done the same. Nevertheless, certain men refused to have it so, and plunged this land into desperate war in 1775, not one against foreign invaders, but of brother against brother. Far from meeting up with a quick success, the rebels paid a heavy price for their rebelling. In fact, things looked so hopeless for their cause that in late 1780 Alexander Hamilton admitted that if they could not get yet another loan from France, the rebel army would have to be disbanded, and they would have to "make terms with Great Britain." Despite this, the Lord listened to the cries of his believers to deliver them, kept his biblical pledge to do so, and, with an intent unknown to the colonists, by his marvelous might raised up an American Union out of the ashes of war.

Therefore, realize that in his fathomless plan of mercy, the true and triune God of heaven had kept this continent as a trackless wilderness so that, as it is obvious from its subsequent history, he could provide a home for his followers of the Reformation, which had restored the biblical gospel, to be guided by him

from inception to form a Christian nation, and to be blessed by him with a golden age of gospel believers, who could and should be a soul-saving beacon to the rest of the world! This is exactly what transpired.

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#### Some quotes for the Fourth of July

Former President Rocca of Argentina confessed, “The immense superiority of North America came from the Bible, which the Pilgrim Fathers brought to Plymouth, while the South American invaders placed their faith in force and violence.”

“The Reformation of Luther introduced the principle of civil liberty into the wilderness of North America” (Daniel Webster at Bunker Hill).

“See how the Almighty directed America’s course from the outset! He kept this continent undiscovered, preserving it for us. We might have come under Spanish rule, but He directed birds which led the ships of Columbus to the West Indies. We might have been brought under French rule, but God’s wind destroyed a mighty armada of French ships which set sail from Nova Scotia to capture the New England colonies. We might have stayed under British rule, but He gave unusual strength to the ragged regimentals, pre-eminent wisdom to our leaders, and we became a free, vigorous people. We might have been split into two or three opposing nations, but the Lord kept us together” (Walter A. Maier, *America, Turn to Christ!* [Saint Louis: Concordia, 1944], page 90).

“I believe the fate of a republican government is indissolubly bound up with the fate of the Christian religion; and that a people who reject its holy faith will find themselves the slaves of their own evil passions” (Lewis Cass, Secretary of State under President Buchanan).

Think on these things, and have a God-blessed Fourth!

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The following musical selection is recommended for your listening edification: The American Centennial March by Richard Wagner (1876).

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*A prayer for Labor Day.*

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all-powerful Creator of our Union and the Director of its destiny, who alone could “establish the work of our hands for us” (Psalm 90:17):

On this day our nation commemorates the labor of its citizens, though most Americans will view this day simply as another time for vacationing. That is all.

Just the same, from your commands and pledges in the Bible, first of all teach us that ever since the beginning of creation, when you took Adam “and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and to keep it” (Genesis 2:15), it has been your will that man should “labor, working with his hands the thing which is good” (Ephesians 4:28), holding up to us both the dignity and the worth of faithful labor by assuring us, for instance, that the laborer is worthy of his pay (Luke 10:7), and the workman of his food (Matthew 10:10)!

Show us, in addition, that our toils will be a means by which you would supply us with our daily bread! Then encourage us to be diligent in our work with your pledge: “When you eat the labor of your hands, you will be happy, and it will be well with you” (Psalm 128:2)!

Nevertheless, remind us that without putting ourselves first on your side through true repentance of our sins, and also with trust in your gospel pledge of salvation for our guilty souls, even the cleverest of our efforts will be unsuccessful without your approval and your blessing, for “Unless the Lord would build the house, they will labor for nothing who would build it” (Psalm 127:1)! So keep your promise: “Blessed is every one who fears the Lord.... And it will be well with you” (Psalm 128:1)!

To be sure, the highest work which we ever could perform will be to grieve over and to regret our shocking crimes of rebellion against Heaven, and to obtain possession of a pardon from you, by trusting your pledge that Jesus Christ, our Savior, has undergone our sins’ punishment for us.

Indeed, as our divine substitute from above, Christ’s guilt-bearing and punishment-suffering work is the highest labor of love which anyone anywhere

ever could do for us, and could and should be commemorated above all else on this day.

Therefore, awaken in us the motive to thank Christ by performing our daily tasks gratefully out of love to the divine Savior “who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5)!

Finally, help us to solve the question: “What has man for all of his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all of his days are sorrowful, and his work grievous” (Ecclesiastes 2:22-23), by assuring us of your promise of the “rest that remains for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9), that is, the complete rest in heaven with you!

We pray these things confidently in the Savior’s saving name, since your promises to us are certain. Amen!

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Today our nation will commemorate the labor of its citizens. Most Americans, however, will view this day simply as a time for relaxation. Indeed, many regard work as something to avoid, or to get done with as quickly as possible. Even in ancient times the people commonly had this attitude. For instance, the Egyptians said: “Labor is degrading; idleness is honorable.” Likewise 2,000 years ago work commonly was held to be fit only for slaves, or for the lower class, but not for gentlemen.

Nevertheless, labor is not degrading or something to be avoided. The Bible gives the proper view toward work, and commands regarding the necessity and the nobility of labor: “Work with your hands... so that you may command the respect of outsiders and be dependent on nobody!” (1st Thessalonians 4:11-12.)

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### *A Prayer for Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.*

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all-powerful Creator of our Union and the Director of its destiny, who has revealed yourself through your sacred Scriptures as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one essence:

Before we would come before your holy face, we must sorrow over our numerous sins, confess their guilt, realize their damnableness, and cleanse

ourselves from them with Jesus' blood and righteousness before we ever could get a hearing with you.

On this day our federal government commemorates the formation of and the signing of our national Constitution, and also recognizes the efforts and the responsibilities of its citizens.

While we lift up our hearts today in rejoicing over the high gift of our national Constitution which you gave to our citizens at the birth of our Union; a form of government freer perhaps than any other society ever has known, remind us that as with all of your gifts, this one was not to be used shortsightedly, that is, for this life only, but to bring our neighbors and ourselves into that greater citizenship in heaven!

Though numerous American Christians in the past dutifully did this, starting in the last century many citizens began to use their freedoms, along with your blessing of peace and prosperity, merely for their own worldly purposes. As a result they ignored willfully the consequence that any people who would reject your gospel pledge, will become immoral, and hence slaves of their own evil desires, producing governmental leaders with the same bent.

Therefore, Constitution Day and Week should be canceled because, for all practical purposes, this document is dead: our federal government no longer has the will to abide by its provisions, unless it would be to their own advantage. Likewise some citizens only wish to retain the Bill of Rights so that they could pursue their "Me first!" attitude, not to use it to serve you or your church in the saving of souls for heaven.

Thus we apologize for our national guilt in the destruction of your gift: a constitutional republic.

Now that our land no longer is a Christian nation, you biblically have threatened to punish. Show our citizens that it is their biblical duty to pray for the peace of our land (Jeremiah 29:7); that is, they are to confess our national sins, to plead to you for their forgiveness, and thereby to act as a firewall between your destroying fury and this guilty, God-defiant land (Ezekiel 22:30)!

Scatter those citizens who are quick to hate and to retaliate, preaching violence against fellow citizens and elected officials in order to solve our nationally moral problems!

Admonish the hot heads in our society that if treacherous tyrants in our government would need to be toppled, you will strike them down yourself in your due time, after you have used them first to punish the lesser, "Me first!" tyrants that abound in our citizenry!

Thus protect us in these precarious times, not merely from political enemies foreign and domestic, but especially from domestic, spiritual traitors to you who are obsessed with hatred, with retaliation, and with being "Me first"!

Direct America's heart to Christ so that willingly our citizens regard him as their Savior from damnation, humbly confess their sins, submit to the Holy Spirit's biblical guidance for righteous behavior that only could bring peace and harmony to this land, while they wait for heaven! Amen!

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Lewis Cass, the Secretary of State under President Buchanan (1857-1860), once observed, "I believe the fate of a republican government is indissolubly bound up with the fate of the Christian religion; and that a people who reject its holy faith will find themselves the slaves of their own evil passions and of arbitrary power."

"Liberty has not existed outside of Christianity" (Lord Acton).

"If we would preserve our liberty as a nation, we must educate our youth religiously" (George Washington).

"Nobody knows how to teach morality effectually without religion. Exclude religion from education, and you have no foundation upon which to build moral character" (Charles Eliot of Harvard).

### **A Prayer for an election eve.**

Realize, beforehand, that the purpose of prayer would not be to inform the Almighty of our wants since he already would know them! Rather the purpose of prayer will be for us to put our trust in those promises of the Lord which already would cover the matter at hand, namely, the thing for which we are about to pray.

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all-powerful Creator of our Union and the Director of its destiny:

As our nation prepares for a critical election tomorrow with anxious hearts and with high hopes, move our citizens to make a choice which, under your divine power and guidance, will bring peace to our land, not strife!

Bring our voters to the realization that as once you gave the wise man Solomon to a nation to govern in peace without enemies foreign or domestic, so you could do the same today for America, if only our citizens would humble themselves, admit their sinfulness, and with remorse receive divine pardon from you!

To this end, assure the voters that you are in control of this election, and that your plans will be carried out on earth as they are in heaven!

While some voters may keep their distance from the polls because of corruption, voting fraud, and broken campaign pledges, remind them of their biblical duty to seek the peace of their country, and to work toward it!

Above all on this election eve, enlighten voters to choose you as the leader of our nation's souls! To accomplish this, impel our people by your biblical words to have heartfelt regret for the damnable wrong in their lives, but to rejoice that the substitutionary suffering of their Savior, Jesus Christ, on Calvary's cross, has removed your divine punishment from them! Thereafter, prompt them to declare themselves for Christ!

Despite our land's selfish endeavors and its neglect of you, you have kept our Union together for these many past elections. Thank you for all of your past mercies and blessings! In Jesus' saving name: Amen!

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### **A prayer for Veterans' Day.**

Before 1954, this day was observed as "Armistice Day," the day on which World War I officially ended.

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all-powerful Creator of our Union and the Director of its destiny:

Today is Veterans' Day. It is a day which our lawmakers have set aside in order for us to honor, to appreciate, to thank, and to support our military veterans.

First of all, thank you for raising up and moving both enlisted and officers to serve our country, even to the extent of putting their lives in harm's way in order to defend our land so that we might exist in peace!

Likewise, move our lawmakers to support our veterans properly in good faith, not to neglect their welfare for petty political reasons!

Yet, amid today's festivities, have us humbly to realize that we must put our trust solely in you, our mighty Shield and Defender, who has pledged your legions of angels to surround us and our veterans with protection (2nd Kings 6:17) personally and nationally, if only we would believe in our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Hence the best way in which we could salute and support our veterans today, will be for us to pray to you for their spiritual well-being, that is, to pray above all for their conversion into the soul-saving belief in their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; to have you protect them not only from physical harm, but also from spiritual assaults on their souls; and then for us personally to do whatever else we could to help them.

Furthermore, to defend our land, give us more servicemen like the pious veteran, Joshua, who unashamedly confessed, "As for me and my house: we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15); like David, who willingly professed before all, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5); like the centurion of Capernaum (Matthew 8:8) who, in simple faith, confidently relied on the words of Jesus to do their job; like Cornelius who wished to hear more of the gospel, to share it with his family and friends, and to have them baptized in order to wash away their sins (Acts 10); and like the centurion beneath Christ's cross on Calvary who openly confessed before his soldiers, "This was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54); for such gospel-believing servicemen and veterans will possess that God-pleasing "righteousness which will exalt our nation" (Proverbs 14:34), not degrade it, and will move you to fulfill your pledged blessing of protection and deliverance! Indeed, this would be the highest form of patriotism.

What is more, show us how in your anger you have threatened "to break the bow and to cut the spear in two" (Psalm 46:9), that is, to demolish decisively

the military might of any nation which boastfully has rejected you along with your gospel news of salvation! Yet assure us that as once in Old Testament times you kept this threat, and destroyed three armies which had arisen against the defenseless nation of faithful King Jehoshaphat (2nd Chronicles 20), so whenever any nation would repent of its sins, and believe your gospel pledge, you likewise will keep your promise to protect it, even if it would take a similar miracle!

Above all, teach us that in order for our nation to retain an outward peace from war, it first must have peace with Heaven by believing your gospel pledge of deliverance from sin and from its eternal punishment through the punishment undergone in our place by our holy, crucified substitute, the Son of God; for without having a gospel belief, a state of war will exist between you and our unbelieving nation! As a result, you will punish unbelief beginning already in this life by raising up enemies to attack us. This would be our greatest national crisis. Therefore, to avoid this, may we confess our national and personal sins before you; plead with you to forgive them through your gospel grace, and humbly request of you patiently to remain at peace with us.

Grant all these requests, for we ask them confidently in Jesus' saving name! Amen!

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### **A Prayer for Thanksgiving Day.**

Dear God of our Christian forefathers, the unseen yet all-powerful Creator of our Union and the Director of its destiny:

We thank you that you have blessed us with a bountiful harvest once again which has given us plenty to eat. You also have shielded us mercifully from war, from disaster, and from contagious diseases. While this day has been set aside as a national day of thanksgiving, we, nevertheless, have every reason daily to thank you for your uncountable gifts of goodness; for your compassions for us do not fail. They are new every morning. Daily and richly you have provided us with all which we would need to support our body and life.

Just the same, we are not worthy of the least of your mercies. In fact, we never could thank you sufficiently for such kindness.

Still greater than these, however, are your bountiful, spiritual blessings in which you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, down to earth for the gracious purpose of assuming our sins' guilt, and for suffering the world's punishment to enable us to attain heaven. What a giver of every good gift you are!

Nevertheless, many citizens, in fact, will sit down to eat today without so much as saying a prayer of thanks to you. Indeed, many will spend their day setting their hearts solely on the things of their flesh in regards to overeating, overdrinking, entertainment, and shopping, while they would give no thought to acquiring that relationship with you which only could rescue them graciously from the Judgment and the dark night of death to come.

In light of this, move our hearts to appreciate both you and your gifts of grace more!

Indeed, teach us that we only could thank you properly from our hearts after you would have converted us powerfully by your gospel words to receive a new heart which truly loves you and appreciates your gracious salvation!

Especially on this day, comfort the grieving and the afflicted! Lift up their hearts to receive joy from your gracious, gospel pledge of pardon! Befriend the widows and orphans with your gospel promise of sustaining strength for their lonely souls!

Above all, bless you for blessing us!

We pray this in Jesus' saving name. Amen!

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#### Thanksgiving Day: a little history.

"Since the days of President Lincoln the custom has been observed in our land that the President of the United States issues a thanksgiving proclamation and advises all the inhabitants to meet in their houses of worship on the last Thursday in November and to return thanks to God for the blessings which He bestowed on the nation during the past year. It is not generally known that this custom dates back no further than to the time of the Civil War. But the fact is that no President has issued a thanksgiving proclamation prior to Lincoln, excepting Washington, the first President of the Union. His example was not followed by his successors in the presidential office, because the Governors of the different States appointed days of

thanksgiving for their own States on various dates. But since the days of Lincoln the Governors throughout the country issue a thanksgiving proclamation for the same day which the President appoints, and the last Thursday in November thus came to be the national Thanksgiving Day observed in every State of the Union. Though the majority of our inhabitants, according to statistics, attend no church, yet... the President advises us to thank God, which we may do with a cheerful heart" (Henry Sieck, *Sermons on the Gospels* [Saint Louis: Concordia, 1906], page183).

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"The American nation has been called upon by its government to celebrate a day of thanksgiving. In the past this was different. Then the government called upon our nation to observe not only a day of thanksgiving, but at the same time a day of penitence, prayer, and fasting, a day of humiliation before the great God because of its great sins. No longer does the government dare to summon our people to do that. It knows that most of its citizens would merely deride the suggestion.

"The very call to observe only a day of thanksgiving, there, clearly shows spiritual condition of our nation. True, it wants to hear about a day of thanksgiving, but why? Perhaps, so that it might thank the Lord for his undeserved, inexpressible blessings? Alas no! but because by a celebration of thanksgiving people for the most part now understand a day set aside for the lust of the flesh. Therefore, on no other day is God more shamefully forgotten than on this very day, this so-called Thanksgiving Day.

"What does God say about such a thanksgiving celebration? He says thus: 'They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children; they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise'? (Deuteronomy 32:5-6.) However, 'I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it' (Malachi 2:3)" (C.F.W. Walther, *Standard Epistles*, translated by Donald E. Heck [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1986], page 504f.).

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"It is a laudable custom that the president of the United States and the governor of our commonwealth annually issue a proclamation setting apart the last Thursday in November for a day of public thanksgiving. And though we, according to a custom received from our fathers, celebrate a harvest home earlier

in the year when we return thanks for the products of the field; yet we assemble on this day in the house of worship in recognition of the goodness of God towards our nation in general. That all our Christian citizens have ample reason for thankfulness in this respect is sufficiently evident from this one fact that our chief magistrates do not *command* the keeping of a thanksgiving day, but only *recommend* it. While in many other lands the civil authorities meddle in matters of religion to the oppression of the consciences of many citizens, we enjoy the high privilege of untrammelled liberty to worship God after the dictates of our own conscience, and herein the common law of our land protects us, guaranteeing to every citizen the right to worship as he thinks proper. Even this one privilege renders it eminently that we annually keep a day of thanksgiving.

“The custom of keeping such a day dates from colonial times when this country was yet subject to England, and originally it was intended more for a day of fasting and prayer, but in the last half century of our national history it has always been appointed for a day of thanksgiving with but one interruption. During the civil war between the states the president of the United States called on the citizens to make this day a day of humiliation and prayer, and to implore God for the removing of the scourge of an awful and bloody war. But since those gloomy days the condition of our country and nation has always been such that this day could be kept for a day of thanksgiving. Especially in the present decade our nation has enjoyed such wonderful prosperity that its wealth has multiplied rapidly, and immigrants are attracted to our shores by the ten thousand” (Frederick Kuegele, *Country Sermons*, volume 3 [Crimora, Virginia: Augusta Publishing Company, 1908], page 334f.).

