

REV. CHARLES WADSWORTH'S THANKSGIVING SERMON.

CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR FOR PUBLICATION IN PAMPHLET.

9.
POLITICS IN RELIGION:

A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

DELIVERED IN THE

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BY REV. CHARLES WADSWORTH.  
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A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

“AND RENDER TO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD’S.”—MARK XII. 17.

WE have thus divided the verse, because, in our last Thanksgiving service, we considered more particularly its first clause, and we propose now to consider particularly its last.

The whole passage is a fine specimen of the inimitable practical wisdom of our Divine Master, uttered as an answer to some artfully disguised enemies, who sought to entangle him in the political controversies of the times. They came to him in the beguiling attitude of sincere inquirers after truth, and addressed him in the honeyed words of a most sagacious flattery. And they said—

“Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?”

“Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.”

“And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar’s.

“And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render to Cæsar

the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Now this answer is altogether matchless in its consummate sagacity. It establishes the limits, regulates the rights, and distinguishes the jurisprudence of the two great governments—the earthly and the heavenly. The image of the earthly potentate on the coin, denotes that the things which that coin represents belong specially to his earthly jurisdiction; while the image of the Invisible God, stamped on the immortal soul, denotes that its immortal faculties and powers belong specially to His higher jurisdiction and are to be employed in His higher service. To temporal governments man owes obedience and tribute: obedience to its laws, tribute unto the expenses of its maintenance;—while to the Divine government men owe as well the whole heart and soul in reverential love—the whole mind and strength in religious consecration.

But, then, over and above this great and matchless aphorism of obedience, there is apparent in the purpose of our Lord—a *divided application of the broad truth to the two antagonistic classes of mankind before him*. To the *Pharisees*, who holding their Roman rulers in abhorrence were stirring up the people to refuse the tribute money, his expostulation is, *make not God's holy religion a pretence to justify sedition*—"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." While, on the other hand, unto the *Herodians*, who out of compliment to their conquerors were disposed to do things forbidden by their Divine law, his expostulation is—*sacrifice not religious principles to the will of worldly rulers*—"Render to God the things that are God's."

Now on the former occasion we insisted entirely and at much length, upon the first clause of this answer, striving to show that all true Christians had a duty to perform towards their earthly and temporal governments, and are bound to *carry their religion into politics*.

We turn now to consider, at some length, the converse of this—as set forth in the last clause of the answer—that *all men, apart from their Christianity, and regarded only in their political character, have as well a great duty to perform toward the heavenly and divine government, and are bound to carry their politics into religion.* Then, we showed that the Pharisees should “render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.” Now, we desire to show that the Herodians’ as well, should “render unto God the things that are God’s.” “*Religion in Politics*” was our former theme, “*Politics in Religion*” is our theme to-day.

But here, as before, we must keep distinctly in mind the true definition of *politics*. We use the word only in its widest and noblest sense, as denoting the practical science of government ; or rather, we use it here in its last analysis, as denoting positively the *government itself*. We wish to show that a man’s political power and influence should be exerted, in all proper ways and to the fullest extent, in support of that religion which constitutes the tribute man owes unto God. And this definition we wish you to carry with you through our argument, else you will be quite sure to misunderstand us most sadly.

There is a common, and indeed a popular sense, in which to carry *politics into religion* is a curse and a sore wickedness. Take the word *politics* in its vulgar and most perverted meaning, as denoting the paltry chicanery of place-men for power—the low artifices of prostitute and false statesmanship for office and spoils—and the man who would seek its coalition with any great moral and religious interests deserves at our hands an indignant rebuke, and will, at God’s hand, surely meet a most sore retribution. And yet, alas for us! just such coalition is frequently sought by good men in the midst of us. Yea, more emphatically alas! even *in the sacred desk* it finds advocates and patrons.

I need not tell you that it has come to pass in these latter days, that these standing places of God's messengers to a ruined world, become oftentimes the mere platforms for political harangues. These altars of our God, where the broken heart is demanded as a sacrifice to Jehovah, become oftentimes only "seats of custom," where the worldly tribute is rendered to Cæsar. The precepts of the Divine law, thundered from Sinai; the promises of the Gospel issued in the death-cry from Calvary; alas! they are all set aside and forgotten, that these ambassadors of God may discourse political declamation upon moot-points that divide our great political parties. Either because these men find the duties of their sacred profession so light and their consequent leisure so abundant; or because they regard the care of souls so trivial a concern in comparison with the general enlightenment of society on these political questions; or, it may be, because they regard themselves as men of such prodigious powers and special inspiration, as to make it their extraordinary call to leave to their humbler and less gifted brethren the care of the ark in the fields of Bethshemish, while they strive about the golden mice with the lords of the Philistines.

Certain we are that for some reason, into their religion, such as it is, they carry some of the veriest abominations of ruffian and radical politics. Their pulpits become platforms, where all questions of practical morals are discussed as side issues with some aim of the demagogues. The cross of Christ is taken down from its high place, as the crowning glory of the sanctuary, and in its stead—as an engine of reform—is lifted the ballot box; and the popular passions are lashed into storm, that with their suffrages as freemen they may carry a Maine Law or defeat a Nebraska bill. And with this advocacy and patronage in the Church's high places, it has, not marvelously, come to pass that the edification of the audiences should be after their kind.

Certain we are at least of the fact, that many a Christian man looks to-day to the foulest machinery of partizan politics as an efficient auxiliary in a reformation of morals. Temperance—moral reform—religious education—universal brotherhood—indeed all things that are true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, are—to speak technically—by a species of moral log-rolling, linked as twin issues with the foulest aims of ruffian demagogues seeking preferment and place. Nay, verily, alas! these heavenly moral virtues, that as white robed angels on radiant wings should be all unsoiled by dust and soaring sweetly in God's sunshine, are harnessed side by side with bank charters and tariff provisions, to drag the chariot of some unprincipled placeman into honor and power.

I am not, of course, condemning, nor will I be misunderstood as condemning, any conscientious endeavor to legislate crime out of a community. Oh, no. I hold it to be my right (and I will not insult your understandings by attempting proof of such a trueism) I hold it to be my right, nay, I hold it to be my most bounden duty, to seek all honorable legislation to aid me in the suppression of popular iniquities. Intemperance,—oppression,—sabbath-breaking,—profaneness,—these, and the whole great catalogue of flagrant immoralities, are as very felonies on a man's civil rights, as are highway robbery, or adultery, or murder. And as an integral part of society for whose widest welfare the government is only created, I can come to that government, not asking as a favor, but claiming as a right, that it protect me and my beloved ones from such foul felonies on my interests.

But then, as Christian freemen, in a high-minded and manly way, to seek legislative action in maintenance of these great interests, this is one thing—but another thing is it altogether, to enter into foul partnership with political partisans for the sake of such legislation—making temper-

ance and Sabbath-keeping, and the Bible in schools, and all or any great practical morality twin-measures, co-ordinate and co-equal issues, with the charter of a Sabbath-breaking rail road, or a swindling banking house, or a monopolizing gas company. The first is only a goodly, and lawful, and noble *carrying the grand science of government into religion*; while the last is manifestly an ignoble carrying of *politics*—politics in its most vulgar and abhorrent sense, with all its monstrous shapes and gigantic abominations—*politics—politics into religion!* Oh, no, no. The beautiful chariot of God's moral government—wheel within wheel, all lustrous with the colors of the beryl of heaven—is not to be dragged triumphantly on by a team of foul monsters. The strong and stormy passions of bold and brutal ruffianism are not things to be appealed to in an attempt to spread abroad over God's lost world the glory of a high and a heavenly regeneration.

Taken in its common and most perverted meaning, and politics should be held an outcast from the whole household of religion. But in the high sense already insisted on, politics should be welcomed, and indeed claimed, as a hand-maid of religion.

What we mean, then, by the proper carrying of *politics into religion*, is the duty of the political power, as embodied in government, to take care, in its lawful sphere and exercise, of the interests of religion. And in discussing this subject I have no time nor occasion, as surely I have no taste, for entering at length into the great church and state question. We will admit at the very outset that of all unions abhorrent to an unseared conscience, this church and state union is the most monstrously abhorrent. We will go, indeed, on this point the whole length of the rankest infidel legislator, admitting most frankly that human governments were never designed for the propagation of Christianity. They were created for a different end and a

different object; and to strive by any false logic to make the salvation of men's immortal souls an end or an object of human governments, is as foolish as to pretend that the soul's salvation is an end for which we charter a bank, or a hospital, or a college. The corporation of a hospital, or a bank, or a college, may indeed have peculiar facilities for propagating the Gospel; nevertheless they were never designed for any such purposes. And just so of government. Its grand end is, beyond all controversy, *the protection of the temporal interests of person and property*. And although a man's immortal interests are confessedly vastly more important than his mortal interests, yet it is after all the mortal interest of which the human government takes care, leaving the immortal interests in care of the higher government of Jehovah.

Now all this we admit—nay, all this we insist on. Temporal prosperity is, and must be, the grand end of all earthly government. Nevertheless, if it appear, as it surely will appear to every philosophic mind, that the Christian religion is itself at least a mighty mean of this temporal prosperity, then, as an efficient auxiliary in the attainment of its great end, should the earthly government, in its lawful influence and sphere, take earnest care of the interests of such a religion. And so the right, and indeed the duty, of human legislation,—not perhaps as its great end, but as a mean unto that great end,—to guard carefully the vital interests of Christianity, can never be questioned by any thoughtful and honest man, whether he be truly a Christian, or only soundly a philosopher.

The “Pharisee” unquestionably should render some things “to Cæsar.” But as unquestionably should the “Herodian” render some things unto God. And this very claim of religion upon government is admitted as a principle, and demonstrated as a power, in the very proclamation of the Executive which has called us together. For what is this day of

Thanksgiving, but a religious service, appointed by government?—and so only a governmental provision for a great interest of religion. And on such a day, and after such explanations and definitions, I am surely justified in insisting on this duty of carrying *politics into religion*, and dwelling desultorily on those things which the Herodian should render unto God.

What, then, without surpassing its appropriate sphere, or transcending its peculiar prerogatives, can an earthly government do for the interests of religion?

And I answer, first of all—*That a government can, in its own peculiar and appropriate sphere, advance the interests of religion by manifesting as an example the power and goodness of all Christian graces.*

The aphorism that corporations have no soul, and so no moral character, so that men may do in associations what they would not for their life dare to do as individuals, is, alas, a truth deduced from the very widest observation. But then it ought not to be so. Shame on us that it is so. Corporations should have both soul and heart. They should have a lofty and lovely moral character.

A civil government, in its union of legislative and executive functions, is as verily bound as any of its individual officials, or subjects, to make exhibition before the world of a character adorned with all qualities that are pure, and true, and lovely, and of good report. I speak not here of any positive legislation in behalf of good morals. I speak only of that mighty power of example which goes along with the general character and acts of a government, almost irresistible in its influences either for good or evil.

Over and above the peculiar power which men in official stations exert in the exhibition of personal moral character, the government itself has the same powerful moral character, and is bound by every possible motive of good unto the government to make its example a savor of moral purity and life to its individual subjects.

A government, in a word, is bound to be virtuous: By a public and unvarying manifestation of a reverence for every principle of high-minded morality. By rigidly maintaining in every legislative and executive act all that conscientious regard for truth, and mercy, and impartial justice, and enlarged philanthropy, which are reckoned as radiant adornments of individual character. By an exhibition towards other governments, and foreign powers, of all that moderation, that sincerity, that magnanimous uprightness and honesty, that mingled beneficence and justice, which, on the one hand, refrains from all unfair advantages; and resists steadfastly, on the other hand, all unfair encroachments. An exhibition, I say, of all these fine moral qualities which characterize the conduct of an individual man at once benevolent and brave in his intercourse with his fellows. By manifestations such as these, of a heart, and a soul, and a conscience, should a government cherish in its every subject a moral sense of his own dignity as a man—and as well of his brotherhood with the whole human family.

Governments have a moral character as patent and as paraded as the device on their banner folds. The elder Rome was an unscrupulous robber. The elder Greece was an exquisite voluptuary. Russia to-day is a sturdy and selfish churl. France is an ambitious and unprincipled man of fashion. Spain is a wasted and wrinkled and scorned courtesan, in the decay and decrepitude of her dissolute living. England is a cross breed between the Pharisee and the prize fighter. And America is a well trained yet most passionate youth, of whom it is altogether a problem whether the manhood be a fine Christian gentleman or an unprincipled ruffian.

Governments have such moral character which in the influence of an omnipresent example is almighty either for evil or good on the moral character of their subjects. And

I say then first of all, and by no means least important of all, that in its appropriate sphere a government should make exhibition of all that truth, and purity, and loveliness which are so graceful and goodly in individual character.

Meantime, over and above all this silent and negative influence of example, should a government do much for religion—positively and powerfully—*by precept and penalty*. And so we remark—

Secondly. That every government is bound to put forth its appropriate power in the suppression of public vices.

Sin, indeed, as a principle of our nature latent in the heart, is subject only to the higher jurisprudence of Jehovah. But sin, when it becomes sensible, developing itself openly in flagrant iniquities—becomes a legitimate object of earthly jurisprudence—and should be met promptly and resolutely by the sternest rebuke of executive authority. While the great end of all legislation in regard of public vices should be—the prevention of crime and the reformation of the criminal; and so should be always characterized by great moderation and mercy: nevertheless, such legislation should be powerful and prompt; at once impartial in its application and unyielding in its enactments. *It should be impartial in its application.* And here, perhaps, more than elsewhere, is the short-coming of our criminal code. It bears unequally upon the castes of society. Its type is too truthfully a spider's web, strong as a hempen cord around the wing of a poor fly; but weak as gossamer to the golden plumes of the humming-bird. It punishes without mercy the shivering beggar who makes theft of a coat to keep him from freezing; but smiles graciously on the fraudulent bankrupt who, out of enormous robberies, can rear a palace of marble and crowd it with the magnificence of an oriental monarch. It is all iron to the poor drayman who happens to jostle your carriage and mar a wheel or a panel; but only poppy and rose-leaf to a titled

commander who, in mad race upon the water, runs his bark into shipwreck—the ruthless murderer of your beloved ones. It has fetter and dungeon for the poor coiner who utters a spurious shilling; but only ottoman and cologne for the swindling officials of a banking-house, flooding a whole land with utterances as worthless. Verily, the criminal jurisprudence of our times has the Pharisee's moral conscience; straining out with shuddering recoil the poor *gnat* of iniquity, yet swallowing without shrug or contortion, hump and all, the whole monstrous *camel*.

Government should legislate impartially, *and then execute impartially*. It should frown as severely on the rich and the noble, as on mendicant and menial. Indeed, as crime committed in high places has less to excuse it, and reaches further in its mal-influence, so should its punishment in high places be more sternly inflexible. And instead of the monstrous judicial iniquities so paraded in the midst of us, whereby the richer villain goes free and the poorer villain suffers—instead of this, I say, only the more lacerating for the fine garment should be the law's iron scourge—only the heavier for the pampered flesh, the iron links of the fetter. In a word, a government owes it to its subjects that its laws against crime should be few and simple—based on justice, but tempered with mercy—impartial in their operation, and inflexibly executed.

But with no further limits to enlarge on these general principles which should characterize legislation in the suppression of iniquities, let me dwell in illustration, for a moment, on a few of the many public immoralities a government should set itself to prevent or punish. Of course, in these illustrations, I shall select only such as are not sufficiently regarded in our land's jurisprudence.

I. Take then, first, as an example, the vice of *Intemperance*.

Now you are all aware how this vice has come to be

regarded rather as a misfortune to be pitied, than a crime to be punished. But all this is manifestly most unwise and most wicked. The intemperate man, say what you will of him, is not, like a robbed man in the street, the poor victim of another's cupidity. He is a most bold and brutal violator of all social and domestic rights. He commits high felony on the property and prerogatives of his neighbors. He robs his children of their rightful bread. He lashes his wife with a sorer scourge than a scourge of hot scorpions. He brings down to the grave with a very murder, *his* gray hairs who begat, and *her* broken heart who bore him. He racks with more than inquisitorial torments those hearts that are bound to him by love's deathless affections. And comes, therefore, as directly and manifestly into the legitimate province of severe criminal law, as a man who commits arson on his own house, or murder on his own family.

And as of the intemperate man himself, so as well of *the man who makes traffic of Intemperance*.

As observed before, I will not insult your understanding, with an argument to prove that government has the right to rule out of the land this whole infamous commerce. I would sooner spend breath on the proof that the law could restrain me from importing whole herds of lions, from the Indies, to let loose in our forests; or whole dens of deadly serpents from Africa, to scatter abroad in our gardens. Government has, indeed, already and always assumed this right as its prerogative, in its whole system of license laws. *Its right to license presupposes its right to restrain*. But then this license system is not sufficient. It works partially and imperfectly.

It is, indeed, nothing better than a legislative re-enactment of the grotesquely horrible old *Bull of Papal Indulgences*. Written fairly out as a business transaction, and how would the doings in this matter by a Board of Excise read? Why something like this :

“Know all men by these presents, that on this day of this year, Anno Domini, —, because Mr. A. B. seems morally qualified for such a business, and in consideration of value received, we hereby license him to destroy property, to bring misery into families, to take away bread and raiment from small children, to make parents childless and wives widows, to fill poor houses with paupers and prisons with criminals, to send bodies to the grave, and souls to damnation——”

This—this, and this only, is the moral significance of our license system. And I say it works at best partially and imperfectly. I am not thinking here to speak of what would be in this matter a wise and wholesome legislation. I am not satisfied that as yet any proposed system of enactment meets the case's great exigencies. I am as heartily sick as any man can be of all that ruffianism of moral reforms, which will link temperance as a twin issue with the foul ends of political partisanship. I am not projecting the provisions of a bill. I am only insisting on the grand principle of prerogative. That it is the *manifest right*, and the *bounden duty*, of all human governments to rise up each in its place, and put its heel in all its omnipotent strength on this monstrous Hydra of modern civilization.

II. Take next as an example the vice of *Sabbath-breaking*. And we say it is the duty of the government to prevent or to punish it.

This hue and cry of “*Church and State*,” which is ever boisterously raised when we seek aid from executive power for such sanctification of God's Sabbath, is as little countenanced by our Federal or State Constitutions, as it is by common sense. A public recognition of the Sabbath, as holy time, has from the first been accorded to the day by our Federal Constitution. On that day, the high civil functions of the Chief Magistrate of the nation—the business of the Supreme Court—the sessions of both houses of Con-

gress—the operations of the War and Treasury and Navy Departments—all are suspended by constitutional provisions. And so all the individual States of the Union, in their capacity of sovereign powers, do provide for the Sabbath's sanctification, by precept and penalty.

And that, in such legislation, governments have acted only in their appropriate sphere, needs surely no argument. The Sabbath is man's spiritual blessing not only, but his great *temporal* blessing. Confessedly, Sabbath breaking, as a crime, is the grand source of all crimes. Philosophically considered, the Sabbath is the world's great public recognition of the being and sovereignty of a God, whose laws are over us. And so to degrade it from its sanctity, is to fling a loose rein on the neck of all the wild passions that spring out of Atheism. And as a fact of observation, just as you blot out the Sabbath you blot out civilization. How was it with France? Why as long as the Sabbath stood untouched, so long there rose a strong bulwark of adamant to stay and beat back the wilder flood-tides of iniquity. But so soon as with insane hands they blotted that hallowed day from the calendar, and enacted a decade to the Goddess of Reason, just so soon was the roused ocean let loose from its bounds, and a tide of crimson and fiery desolation overwhelmed the whole nation. *The Sabbath is not merely a Saint's day of religion, it is God's gift to the race as a great temporal blessing.* The Sabbath was made for man, for every man, his nature craves it, his constitution requires it. It is identified with his pursuits, and with all his moral tendencies. And, therefore, is as manifestly the prerogative of earthly governments, to legislate inexorably for its observance—to see to it that no breath of blasphemous infidelity breathe a stain upon its shining garments—to guard it carefully from every rolling wheel and every trampling foot. As manifestly, all this, the prerogative of human governments, as to protect my dwelling from an incendiary's torch, and my fields from an invading enemy.

III. Take again—and lest we should weary you, finally, for example : *Any one or all of that great class of public vices, whose unpunished influence in our midst, is to lower the standard of Christian morals, and destroy the moral purity of the rising generation.* I need not pause here in an enumeration of these vices, their name is legion. Profane Swearing, Blasphemy, the Race Course, the Card Table, Libertinism, the Polluted Utterances of a Licentious Literature—the monstrous shapes of sin that link themselves with our Theatres, the bribery in Jury-Boxes and Elections, these—and such as these—are but specimens of a great class of public vices, whereby morality is stricken down in our streets, and a wounded Christianity lies bleeding at her own holy altars.

And we say it is the prerogative of civil power to suppress such iniquities. I know how these men say that the civil power is only for the protection of temporal interests. But be it so—and what then? Do these temporal interests, which Cæsar's jurisdiction guards, include only the pecuniary and personal well-being of our estates and our bodies? Hath the man no purely temporal interests that pertain to the home, and the heart, and the social life of himself and his beloved ones? Shall the civil power punish a man who injures his neighbor's cattle, and yet leave that man free to injure his neighbor's children? May he rob me of my peace of mind, while he dare not rob my pork barrel? May he break my heart, while he dare not break my walking stick? Must a leper be quarantined lest he fill the breeze with contagion, and the poisoner of my well, go to prison—and all this because the civil power guards the *bodies* of my beloved ones? And yet shall the man walk lawlessly abroad if he fill God's pure air with pestilent blasphemies, and poison the sweet wells of the old Saxon tongue with libertine literature, till he destroy all the

peace and the purities of my household, and bring the very *hearts* of my beloved ones as festering corpses to the sepulchre?

Ah! No, sirs! No, sirs! As a member of society, and a subject of government, I may have bank stock and a body, which deserve protection; but then I have a *heart*, too, and a *soul*, which deserve protection. And so all the temporal interests of my soul and my heart are as strictly under the guardianship of the civil law, as are my body and my bank stock—as are the products of my farm—and the property of my merchandise.

I can not enlarge further on this point of the subject. Enough has been said at least to illustrate the proposition—that *civil governments are bound—on every principle of right and prerogative—to put forth all their power in the suppression of public vices!*

Now we had designed, at this point of our discourse, to consider at some length—

Thirdly. The duty of the civil government to promote and provide for the religious education of its subjects. I say the *religious* education—because, to discuss such a duty in regard to education in general, were to waste words on a self-evident truism. Universal education is an obvious and absolute prerequisite to universal suffrage. The man who can not read the ticket he votes at the ballot-box, has manifestly no suffrage at all, save that of an automaton. Of *all* civil governments the education of the subject is a duty, growing out of their guardianship of mere temporal interests. And of *our own* civil government—it is not only a duty to the subject, but an absolute dictate of self-preservation. Here, popular suffrage, without popular education, were not only monstrous, but positively suicidal.

But, then, not merely general education, but general *religious* education we claim as a right at the hands of our

government. On this point, we have no space for extended argument. But in such an argument, we should claim such education, only, of course, on the ground of its temporal advantages. You are all of you aware of the infidel endeavors to exclude the Bible from our public schools—and such exclusion every patriot will resist on the simple ground of a *temporal wrong doing to society*. And this wrong doing is most apparent. If education be a duty of the civil power at all, it is because it fits its subjects for the duties of good citizenship. But, then, what are these duties? Merely physical—or intellectual duties? No, indeed, but in the main, *moral* duties—those duties, social and civil, whose performance requires an educated moral sense. And so every system of popular education, if it accomplish its designed ends, must have some standard, and universal text book of morals. Simple intellectual culture does not furnish a man knowledge as to the duties of citizenship. Will a man learn, what is only commercially right and wrong by the study of arithmetic? Will he learn the meaning of a judicial oath, and the power of its awful sanctions, by studying the grammar of language? Will he be trained to the obedience of civil law, by watching experiments in chemistry and natural philosophy? Will he be fitted to understand civil relations, and observe social proprieties, and compass the whole complex moral economy of good citizenship, by the mixed mathematics of navigation and surveying, or the speculative mathematics of calculus and geometry? Will you fit a man for the moral duties of society by training his intellect? Why, you might as well fit him for those duties by strengthening his muscles in the gymnastics of the athlete. Oh! no—no—moral duties presuppose moral culture—and popular moral culture demands a standard text book of morals. And the world has no such text book but the Bible. Find a better

one—nay, find one as good—nay, find any one, however imperfect, which shall be chosen, (as the Bible is chosen,) by popular majority; and then let that be the great text book of morals in our State system of education. But till this be done, we claim, as a right, the Bible in our school system. Claim as a right!—nay, we claim it as a dictate of social self-preservation. Why, look ye!—where would be our whole social system, but for the sacredness of the *judicial oath*? But what is this oath?—what, but a simple imprecation of the vengeance, and a renunciation of the favor, of the *God of the Bible*, if the utterance be false or the official duties be unfulfilled. Yes, and this very oath administered on the Bible. But how then, I pray you, can the awful meaning of such an oath be understood without a full knowledge of that Bible, wherein its sanctions are alone defined, and on which alone it is administered?

Administer oaths on the Bible, and yet not require the subject of such an oath to understand the Bible! Why the world has never heard of a parallel to such suicidal absurdity! All as safely to your liberties, might you inaugurate a president or empannel a jury, by pressing to the man's lip some old volume of Pagan mythology, which the man had never read—whose gods he did not know—whose authority he did not recognize. Alas! alas! the outcry against the Bible in our schools of popular education, is a war cry against our whole social system. If general education be—as it confessedly is—a duty of civil government—it must be such an education as prepares for our peculiar franchises. It must educate *the whole man* for the functions of good citizenship. Not merely the man's body—that might make him only a strong limbed giant. Not merely his intellect—that might make him only a cold blooded demon. Over and above all this, it must educate as well,

his *whole moral nature*. So training his sensibilities—so refining his manners—so directing and establishing his principles—his feelings—his habits of thought. In a word, so elevating and educating his moral sense into an understanding of what, as a good citizen, he owes to society—that, together with a strong body and a trained mind—a trained and tender conscience as well, may fit him for honorable citizenship in this freest, and fairest, and noblest nation on the face of the earth.

The grand plea of these men, that the Bible should be excluded from our schools because it may be perverted in the hands of sectarian teachers into a sectarian text book, is just as logical, as a plea against teaching penmanship in our schools, because some unprincipled instructor might teach his pupils how to commit forgery. When a man dares to teach sectarianism out of the Bible, then displace that man as unworthy his office. But destroy not in the midst of us a great social right, on account of some possible or actual abuse of it. Do not cut off every man's right arm, lest some men should commit murder! Do not annihilate the whole atmosphere, because it has sometimes been a vehicle for the malaria of pestilence.

Alas! alas! either for the common honesty or for the common sense of these men. For without the length of the argument we had intended to pursue, we hold that it only needs the smallest share of both common honesty and common sense, to perceive and to feel that from every consideration of *duty* and *self-preservation*, a *civil government should provide for the religious education of its subjects*. We pass then to observe

IV. *That it is the duty of government jealously to guard the religious liberties of its subjects*. After what has been already advanced, we can not be honestly misunderstood on this point. We have already abundantly acknowledged,

that earthly governments were not designed for the propagation of Christianity, nor for the establishment of religion. Nay, more—we have conceded it. That being established for special temporal purposes, they have no more to do with the strictly religious expressions of a people, than they have with a people's dress—or equipage—or domestic arrangements and social customs. But then to legislate in religious matters, is one thing. And to protect religious rights, is another thing altogether. And while, though not legislating in such matters, yet governments do guarantee to their subjects the widest liberty in regard of dress and equipage and social conventionalisms—so should they in religion. Indeed, in respect to our own government, this protection of religious freedom, is, in the constitution—our great bill of rights—guaranteed to its subjects, as a special provision.

Religious liberty as distinctly as *civil* freedom, was a grand end for which our fathers bled in the battle, and legislated in the Senate house; and its protection is indeed *part of the specific purpose for which our government was established*. I am not pretending that the civil power should recognize any religious sect—or establish any system of Bible doctrine—or form a national creed. On the contrary, should the time ever come—which God forbid—when bigoted sectarianism, or even bigoted Protestantism, shall seek to lay the lightest finger of legislative oppression upon either Catholic or Jew—upon either Infidel or Pagan—then will every true-hearted follower of Christ be found as the first man to resist the wrong and roll back the iniquity. All we ask at the hands of our government, is the largest religious liberty for ourselves and for all men. We insist only on a free Sabbath—a free sanctuary—a free Bible—a free conscience—a free Christianity, in a word, that shall walk forth untrammelled and untouched, by all these

waters, and through all these valleys, and athwart all these hills wherever and whenever it listeth. That shall enter as a thing rightfully at home, into every high place and low place under the shadow of our eagle. And while it asks not, nor will receive one morsel of sustaining bread from the hands of civil authority, yet brooks not, nor will bear one spider's web of restraint from such civil authority.

Meanwhile, this protection of religious rights which the government guarantees to its every subject at home, we claim as resolutely from that government *in all our wanderings abroad to the very ends of the world!* And on this point do we often blush for our country. This religious freedom is part and parcel of an American's birthright, as patent among the provisions of the Constitution, as the freedom of his limbs, and the right to his life. And go where he will, he should carry it abroad guaranteed by his government. I say *guaranteed*, for this government has the power of such guaranty amid the farthest tribes of this world, where its pilgrim subject may wander.

Our eagle does guard jealously and well our *civil* rights. Let a man—I care not how unknown—I care not how insignificant—from the banks of the Connecticut or the ridges of the Alleghanies—let him go abroad to the ends of the earth with merchandise for commerce, and with the stars and stripes waving over him—woe be unto the prince or potentate who dares to lay ruthless hands on one cord of his tent, or one ware of his traffic! Touch but his pilgrim staff, or his sandal shoon, or his scrip, or his garment, and then beware! The eagle! the eagle! How he swoops and screams! But now let this same man go abroad as a *religious* being, pitching his tent as a sanctuary for the living God, and opening therein his blessed Bible as bread from heaven. And then let oppression rock his dwelling into dust, and burn his heavenly treasure into ashes, and alas for the eagle now! It

will swoop you as gently as "*any sucking dove,*" and scream you as softly "*as it were any nightingale.*"

And I say, shame, shame, on the eagle! thus to care for the meanest right and neglect the noblest—thus to guard the small fraction of a man, but forget his whole manhood. To sit as an omnipotent protector on a barber's pole by the Rhine—and be scared from a heaven-pointing spire of God's temple in Italy. To flash his eyes in wrathful fire when men dare to shiver my wine flask—and doze like an owl in the sun when they tear away my Bible. Shame! Shame! on the eagle!

Why, sirs, the Christianity of this Bible, was that eagle's nursing mother. When overborne in long struggles for freedom in the Old World, it fled across the ocean. Then did this Heavenly Spirit open shelter and eyrie in these great forests—and as its bright eye grew dim, and its strong wing fainted, did she take it gently to her bosom, and cherish it with bread and sweet water, till the eye flashed again, and the plumes strengthened, and the heart bounded; and as a marvel and a terror to its old tyrants, it soared again to the sun. And now to forget, in its glorious flight through heaven, this, its only protectress, in the hour of its homeless desolation! Shame, shame, shame on the eagle.—Yes, yes!—a thousand times yes! do we claim as a part of an American birthright, protection here, and everywhere, and always, for every religious interest of our being. Here, and everywhere, and always, a Free Bible—a Free Conscience—a Free Sanctuary—a Free Sacrifice—a Free Spirit. Free to go forth on benevolent ministries to men's perishing immortality. Free to worship the God of our fathers, in spirit and in truth.

Now there is more, much more that we had designed to say in illustration of our subject; but our limits are exhausted, and we may not enlarge further. These are

only specimens of a large class of duties, which all governments, and especially our government—so founded, so furnished—can perform, and are bound to perform, for the interests of religion. These are but several items in the tribute which the Herodians of politics should render unto God.

While, confessedly, was no government established for the propagation of the Gospel, our own government, at least, most certainly was established in the broadest recognition of its entire subordinacy to the higher government of the Eternal. In theory we never were an Infidel government; and, God helping us, we never will be an Infidel government. The baptism in tears and blood of our young giant of nationality was a *Christian* baptism—a *Protestant* baptism. And it is not in American motherhood to send the young babe from her bosom to the unnatural and monstrous nursing of Infidelity and Anti-Christ. No, no. True to that baptism shall the nation grow up, Christian and Protestant. And if die it must, it shall die and be buried Christian and Protestant.

The framers of our constitution recognized their obligation to act as in the everlasting presence of a higher than human authority. And they did act as in such presence. Protestant Christianity is positively part of our common law, and part of our constitution. The civil law of this land lifts a Protestant Bible in every official inauguration—and proclaims the Sabbath as consecrated to God, alike in the halls of our higher national council, and in the rudest hut of the borderer. Thus recognizing God's authority as supreme over all the nations on his footstool. And whatever we might be in truth compelled to say, were our vine planted amid the ancestral despotisms of Europe—yet sitting safe under its blessed shelter in Christian America, we do say—not as Christian sectarians, nor as Protestant bigots

—but we say simply, as free born American citizens, that while “*rendering carefully unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,*” we are bound “*to render as carefully unto God all those things that are God’s.*”

Verily, my brethren, as a great and free people, we *owe something unto God*. *Something?* Ah me! how mighty—how magnificent should be the tribute Christian America rejoices to lay at the feet of Jehovah! What has God done for us? Alas, I have no strength and no words for the argument. You know what God has done; the whole world knows the story by heart. Look at America this day as she is. Behold her broad boundaries—her glorious scenery—her new and noble civilization—the breadth and wealth of her husbandry—the pomp of her great cities—her seaboard, the market places of a world—her canvas of commerce whitening all oceans—her matchless progress in manufactures—and the arts, and literature, and science—the spread of her mighty population—the strength and style of her magnificent specimens of manhood. Oh, look at America to-day, as the world looks at her. Amid the nations of the earth that are moaning under task-masters, and lying down under burdens, and heaving and tossing, and passing away in God’s anger—she, sitting like a fair child crowned for holiday, all peaceful and prosperous, and law-abiding and blessed. The Ararat, whereunto moves the Ark of the Race from the sweep of the Deluge. The glorious Jerusalem, unto which all earth’s scattered tribes look from their exile and home-sickness. The purest, the fairest, the most joyous, the most hopeful, the most magnificent dwelling-place for man on the face of the globe.

And *whence* all this? Why from God, and God only. No statesman lives, or has lived, who dare say, “My wisdom has done this.” No political party dare utter the

bold blasphemy, the transparent falsehood, of pretending to have been even God's "hewer of wood" in this magnificent temple building. Old Nebuchadnezzar, had he lived amid these cities, would have sunk to a fouler beasthood than he did, and instead of eating grass as an ox, would have crawled, eating dust, as a veriest reptile; had he dared to say of such glory as this, "*Behold this great Babylon which I have builded.*" No, no, it is *God's* work, all of it; the wisdom of his counsel, the work of his Omnipotence. And tell me then, if you can, what should we render, as a nation, unto God for all His great mercies? If the *tribute money unto Cæsar—what, what unto God?*

I need not tell you how little we are rendering. I have indicated already how greatly we come short in our duties toward Jehovah. I have spoken of God's broken laws—of God's murdered Sabbaths—of God's forgotten presence—of the crimes that go unpunished through the midst of our streets, and the iniquity that rolls as a flood over all our high places. And alas for it all. I am afraid for my country, when I think of God's munificent gifts, and God's terrible justice. As "Herodians," at least, "we do render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." We have demanded for our civil rights the exactest "tithe of mint, and anise and cummin." Our government has been *great* in its *little things*. Like little Zaccheus, climbing into a tall sycamore tree, to show himself the chief of the tax gatherers. It has been a worthy "publican," sitting amid the farthing boxes, at the receipt of custom. All praise unto our great statesmanship! We have made magnificent battle for cod-fish on the Banks—and guano in South America. We have blustered for the Black Warrior's cotton in Cuba, and thundered with great guns for national honor at Greytown. We have bearded all Europe on the grand question of diplomatic costume, and maintained, in the face

of all creation, our inalienable rights to wear either broadcloth, or velvet, or homespun, as we will, everywhere and always.

Glorious things are spoken of us! We are accomplishing feats of statesmanship, such as Washington never dreamed of. The "stripes"—at least the stripes are belted broad on our banners, be it as it may with "the stars." *Cæsar, at least, ought to be satisfied.* We have tithed all the meanest herbs of the earth in tribute to his treasury. The eagle has gathered straws for his eyrie, if he have not soared to the sun. The *Eagle!* nay, henceforth paint me an *Owl* as the blazon on our banners. A bird that can see every reptile in the midnight, but not even Mount Blanc or Niagara in the blaze of the sun. Alas, alas for our greater things. "*Woe, woe unto us, for we tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God.*"

This, this unto Cæsar, but then unto God! Our great and glorious Preserver! Our Benefactor! Our Rock in every storm! Our great shield in every battle! What, what unto God has America rendered? I have said, and said truly, that in theory at least, we are a Christian people; that our very Constitution recognizes God's authority as supreme over the nations of his footstool. But then practically, as God requires, can we call ourselves a Christian people? Well, then, commend me to Christianity as the choicest livery of the menialhood of the Evil One. We acknowledge God's authority, theoretically and in general, but trample it under foot practically, in each and all its specific requirements. Our national religion is very much like the old Hindoo's, who worships the great white elephant, once a year, with great ado of prostrations and burnt incense. Meanwhile, though, keeping their divinity carefully guarded in the temple, lest he should break forth and set foot on

some practical field of the secular and social. We, a Christian people! Ours a religious government! We, "*keep God's commandments!*" We, "*have no other gods before Him!*" We, "*make no graven images!*" We, "*take not the name of the Lord in vain!*" We, "*keep the Sabbath holy!*" "*not coveting,*" nor "*killing,*" nor "*stealing,*" nor "*committing adultery,*" nor "*bearing false witness!*" Alas, alas, every specific precept of this Divine Law answers, in the headlong course of Young America, about the purpose of a hedge in a steeple-chase, to show with how high and daring a leap the horseman may go over it! Our national Christianity is a strongly distilled compound of the Mosaic and Levitical. Moses shivering the divine tables, and Aaron at work on the calf! And on the whole the divine law in the midst of us fares worse than did God's holy ark, when the Philistines brought it on its way from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

Oh, I sicken—my heart breaks over the whole subject. We bring our tribute to Cæsar, but what bring we to God? And, my brethren, believe me, it is full time, and on this day of national recognition of Jehovah's Being and Presidency, it is fitting time to count carefully the cost of such disloyalty to Jehovah. In ceasing to be nationally religious, we have ceased as well to be nationally philosophic. The relations of divine government to republican institutions have not been studied well by our legislators, as involving the principles of a higher statesmanship than is busy with the expedients of a present necessity. The man who thinks it safe for us to withhold our national tribute from Jehovah, has not studied well either the past history of moral causes or the present signs of the times. I can not enter on the argument—I but tell you in a word—that the great machinery of Divine Providence, while leaving ample room in its economy for the widest play of human

free agency, has yet always wrought out its great purposes of *casting down every high thing that exalteth itself against God*.

Practical and political atheism has been the worm at the root of all national glory. Look at Babylon in her grandeur! Who came forth against her as the Angel of Desolation? A conqueror with his bannered armies? No, a *poor Prophet of God*? Look at *Jerusalem* in the magnificence of her glory! Who uttered the "woe!" "woe!" that made her a scorn and a hissing? Cæsar on his throne? Nay, a *poor Nazarine on Mt. Olivet*! So has it been ever. And are we more omnipotent, that we can play harmless with God's thunderbolts? May not *our* house too be left unto us desolate? May not the satyr dance and the wild beasts howl in *our* glorious palaces?

Oh! thou Eagle, hear the word of the Lord! Oh! thou Eagle! "*Thy terribleness and the pride of thy heart have deceived thee: thou that dwellest in the cleft of the rock, and holdest the height of the hill, and sayest in thy heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord God Almighty?*"

Oh! thou Eagle! From the death-dust of every nation that hath gone down to the grave—from the sepulchres of Nineveh and Tyre, and Egypt and Edom, rise shadows for the plumes of thy wing, if thine eye look not full on the Great Sun of Righteousness!

We are met in times, never so solemn, never so momentous with magnificent and awful issues! If there be truth in the signs of the times, then is the Seventh Trumpet already on the angel's lip—and the last of God's vials lifted up over the nations—and already are there lightnings and thunderings, and great voices, and a sound as of the great hail falling from heaven! and as of the rush of every

island and mountain fleeing from the face of an angry God!

The year we are now ending has been a year full of the power of the right arm of Omnipotence. Under other nations is already awake and amove the great earthquake; and upon us, amid all our amazing mercies, there have fallen the seemings of a frown from the face of the Great Father. Ours have been a parched and blighted soil; the wide desolation of pestilence; the awful calamities of a devouring ocean; the dark judgments consequent upon gigantic frauds and dishonesty, deranging and paralyzing our whole commercial machinery; the grinding of our Golden God into powder, and the strewing it upon the water, till the whole land to-day is sick as Old Israel in the compelled drinking of its bitterness.

And what mean all these things, I say, but the shivering plume of the Seventh Angel, as he lifts the last trump and pours forth the last vial? Sure I am, at least, my brethren, that it is time to gather ourselves solemnly to our reckoning with Jehovah! Not to think less of Cæsar, but to think more of Jehovah,—to take tithe if we will of all herbs, but to regard meanwhile the Love of God and the great things of Judgment—to turn from the mere tithing of mint, and rue, and anise and cummin, unto that world-wide and glorious ministry for our race and our God, unto which God has called us, and for which he has equipped us—to hearken to the voice that for a down-trodden humanity and a groaning creation is summoning us as with a great trumpet, to be doing our peculiar work on this broad theatre of our National Life—in the Spectatorship of the Universe. *To be rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's!*

Oh! my Country! hear the voice of thy God! Oh! thou *Eagle!*—thou of the flashing eye!—thou of the strong

pinion!—hark to the sweep of the mighty winds, as they lash the great seas and rock the deep forests! Oh! thou Eagle! it is God's summons from the slumberous eyrie to the broad empyrean! The night is passing; the day dawns; open that eye; fling abroad that pinion, and away from the dream in the heath-bells, soaring up to the sun!

THE END.