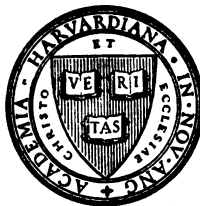


Yeomans. Sermon on the Annual election.
1834

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MRS. F. L. GAY

April 4, 1917

A

SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE

ANNUAL ELECTION,

JANUARY 1, 1834.

BY JOHN W. YEOMANS,

Pastor of the Congregational Church in Pittsfield.

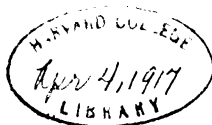
Boston:

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1834.

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Windsor Lewis tract
Mrs. F. L. Gay

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 2, 1834.

Ordered, That Messrs. McKAY of Pittsfield, SWIFT of Nantucket, and PIERCE of Stoughton, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. JOHN W. YEOMANS, and thank him in the name of the House, for the Sermon delivered by him yesterday before the Governor, the Council, and the two branches of the General Court, and to request a copy thereof for the press. **Attest.**

L. S. CUSHING, Clerk.

S E R M O N .

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL
THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU.

Matthew, 6: 33.

THE custom which annually convenes the Rulers and the Legislators of this Commonwealth for religious worship, derives its propriety from the supreme authority of the Christian religion. Whatever we are bound to do at all, we are bound to do religiously ; and while, as individuals, we render our respective acts of worship and obedience, it becomes us, as a people, to express, by our rulers and representatives, our united reverence for the institutions of religion. We are assembled, in the name of the State, to acknowledge the supremacy of God ; to recognize Him as the object of worship, the source of prosperity, and the judge of moral conduct ; to appeal to His word as the foundation of our laws, and to implore His protection and aid in the use and defence of our freedom.

Religion, as it respects the supreme God, ought itself to be a supreme principle in man. It respects a Being who exercises a particular and universal providence over the world, by whom we live, and by whom our future destinies will be determined. It ought therefore to be cherished as a principle of supreme importance, and of universal application to the affairs of human life. It accords with the plainest dictates of propriety, that we assemble, on an occasion like this, to pay an act of homage to the King of Kings.

The text which I have chosen, is one which the occasion itself might recommend. It demands that precedence for religion which we here publicly concede. With this demand, it presents the assurance that a supreme regard for religion will secure the good for which we live and labor. The precept and the promise will lead us to contemplate the union of true prosperity with true religion.

We are invited to such contemplations by the voice of God. The kingdom commended to our supreme regard, is peculiarly the kingdom of God, exalted over all. Its laws overrule all other laws ; its sanctions, all other sanctions. It is that moral government which is administered in the world by the laws and sanctions of the Bible. It is called the kingdom of heaven. Heaven is its seat of power, the throne of

its King, the condensed centre of its glory. It is a spiritual kingdom ; distinguished by its spiritual attributes from all the kingdoms of the world, and rendered consistent with all that are administered in righteousness. Could one command of God be sacred above all others in his own esteem, it would be that which calls the attention of men to His moral kingdom.

We are invited to such reflections by the voice of our own interest. We might find entertainment in discussing the nature of the kingdom of God in the abstract. But our interest requires us to consider the relations of this kingdom to ourselves. The success of moral discipline depends on man's consciousness of personal concern with God. The demonstrations of abstract truth may discipline the understanding ; but a perception of the relations of the truth to our highest interest, is requisite to discipline the heart. The kingdom of God sustains a solemn relation to ourselves ; urges broad and imperious claims upon us ; and determines our everlasting destiny. It involves our highest prosperity ; not indeed the gratification of every desire, or the success of every scheme of earthly advancement ; but our success in exalting all that merits exaltation in our nature, and in acquiring all that is worth acquiring in our life.

The kingdom of God denotes the spiritual administration of God in the world ; and the righteousness of that kingdom, the character of its loyal subjects. To seek first that kingdom, is to make the cultivation of the righteousness which it inculcates, the primary object of our life. It is to cultivate true religion ; to cherish right affections towards God and man ; to form correct views of ourselves and our various relations, and to obey the precepts of the divine word.

In such a course we are assured of prosperity, *by the plain declarations of God*. The assurance is given in the text of this discourse : Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. It is given in the promises of compensation for sacrifices to religion : He that forsakes all for the gospel's sake, shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting. It is given in the Apostle's assertion, that godliness is profitable unto all things ; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It is given in the assurance, that all things work together for good, to them that love God. These are assertions of the word of God. They constitute a promise and pledge on the veracity of God, that true prosperity and true religion, shall ever be united.

But I am aware that implicit and practical faith

in the word of God, is yielded by the majority of mankind with extreme reluctance. The hopes of man have this alternative : to rest on the word of God, or on the laws of nature. Faith is often tried by the *apparent* contradiction between the word of God, and the course of human affairs ; and in such trials the mind is swayed rather by the latter, than the former. We walk rather by sight than by faith. The statesman looks into futurity, not through divine promises and predictions, but through principles of human nature, which are operating before his eyes. For an indefinite future, he forebodes evil or anticipates good, as visible occurrences are adverse or auspicious. His expectations seem to rest on the presumption that he discerns all the causes that can effect their fulfilment. Yet he knows and acknowledges the mysteries which hang around the laws of nature ; the mutual conflict which attends their operation ; how often they thwart each other, and how often they mock our most deliberate hopes.

You look along the train of nature's operations for prosperity ; you confide in the uniformity of some established law, while other laws, which act unseen, with equal, perhaps superior efficiency, may reveal themselves ; first, in your disappointment, you lay hold on the chain of causes in the middle, where you grasp but a part of the complicated links—where you

feel the action of the links upon each other, and where you constantly vibrate between extremes of uncertainty. Why not rather take hold upon the hand in which the chain originates, and in which its vast circuit shall end. Admit all that you dare presume of the uniformity of nature's laws—admit all that human foresight through visible causes can discern—you must still admit that invisible causes may attend the visible, and infect, with contingency, your surest prospects. With all your foresight, you know not what a day may bring forth. You may know enough to entertain yourself with the order and harmony of the creation—enough to admire the wisdom of the Creator—enough to tempt your temerity in forgetting God, and in trusting to your own understanding—but, beyond the reach of your foresight, are “times which the Father hath kept in his own power.” It refreshes hope to perceive, in addition to a divine promise, the favorable direction of actual events to fulfil our desires; but this favorable progress of actual events alone leaves ample place for fear. The apprehension of disappointment may destroy the comfort of the hope. The laws of nature, which seem to direct the course of events, are subordinate to a higher power—a power that may vary their combinations, supersede their agency, change their nature, or terminate their existence. They

are designed, as far as their agency extends, as the medium through which our being shall derive its support; they are made essential to our life and enjoyment on earth; but were never intended to intercept our views of the Great First Cause.

It behooves man to take the word of God as the basis of his hope. By that word the world, with all its laws, was created. All the changes of the world are to be regulated by it; and heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than one jot or tittle of it shall fail. By that word man's true prosperity is joined with true religion. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

The connexion between religion and prosperity is intimated by the nature of the object which religion respects. This object is God, the Author of our being, and the source of our bliss; who made the world for himself, and directs its changes to the fulfilment of his own designs. It is reasonable to presume that man will be most sure of success in his plans, when those plans have respect to the will of God. The religion of the gospel causes the pursuits of life to converge towards Him on whom their results depend; associates them with those principles of righteousness by which the world is governed, and renders them channels through which the blessings of heaven may flow in upon us.

All analogy would contradict the doctrine that man may enjoy his highest prosperity regardless of God. He has capacities of reverence for infinite majesty—of gratitude for infinite favor—of love for infinite excellence—of rational submission to infinite authority—of admiration for the works of infinite power. These capacities are inlets of enjoyment to the soul. Their misimprovement incurs privation, and forfeits a portion—no small portion—of the happiness designed for man. Now it is essential to the full prosperity of any being, that all his powers should be productively employed. This principle applies in all its force, to man. How can the object of his creation be otherwise fully attained? How otherwise can all his capacities of enjoyment be filled?

On what principle does freedom contribute to the happiness of man? Not merely by furnishing ampler luxury for appetite, better education, kinder or more numerous friends. Though these might all be actual concomitants of freedom, yet bestow them without measure on the slave—give him every thing but liberty,—and you leave him still in privation;—and for a glorious reason: he was made to be free, and bondage galls his constitution; and although his mental darkness hide his chains, and his callous arm grow insensible to them, and his collapsed spirit

heave no sigh for liberty, yet who denies him the capacity for the enjoyment of freedom? or who will hence deny that liberty is part of life? So man was made to be religious. He has a soul of vast capacities for the enjoyment of devotion; sensitive in every fibre to the touch of God. He may eat and drink with spiritual delight—enrich his social enjoyments with spiritual conversation—beguile his cares, and pains, and death itself, with spiritual meditations. How, without religion, can such a being truly prosper? And although his irreligion be such a death in trespasses and sins that he feels not his soul's privations, and hungers not nor thirsts after righteousness, yet who can hence infer that religion is not needful for man? What is irreligious prosperity, but embellished adversity? The want of religion produces a deficiency in every part of life. Although in itself one thing, it is to constitute a part—the better part—of every thing. What innocent enjoyment of human life is not capable of exaltation, by union with religion? All these pleasures are, in the spirit of our text, to be added to religion; and without religion you have its intended appendages only, and separate from that which can give them real value. The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.

Religion draws men towards God, the glorious

centre of the moral system, and retains them within the influence of His attractions and light. It furnishes motives to virtue, which will act on the mind through all the changes of his being, and keep him ever sensible of the presence of God. It is only the light of the countenance of God that man can truly flourish. His enjoyments, wherever else he may attempt to rear them, will grow like plants in the shade, with bulk, perhaps excessive, but frail, tasteless, and fruitless.

The connexion of religion with the pursuits of life indicates its union with true prosperity. Christianity is not a form, nor a collection of forms; but a spiritual principle, to be embodied in all the forms of human action. It is not to exist as a separate thing; but to be in the moral world the soul of all things. The lawful pursuits of life are not only consistent with it, but indispensable to its existence and operations in the world. Through them it acts. Disconnected from them our religion has no substance. It becomes a piety, without a morality—life, without action—a form of godliness, without the power. Our prayers, our study of the scriptures, our Sabbath worship, our religious meditations, are rather our spiritual sustenance than our religious duties. Through them our spiritual system acquires the strength which it is to employ in the duties of our earthly relations.

We may safely adopt the inspired definition of pure and undefiled religion: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Religion forms the character, by combining with the lawful occupations of the world. Its power, so far as it depends on man, is exerted through their agency. Religious emotions alone are of small account in the kingdom of God; their sincerity, while they remain alone, is more than suspicious. The first and highest proof of their purity, is their affinity for the duties of life.

In the proper employments of life, a pure heart finds refreshment and support. All things were made for Christ. All, therefore, may conduce to the advancement of his spiritual work. The world, with all its furniture, and all its employments, if properly used, may contribute to the health and vigor of the human soul, sustain, and regulate, and enrich the religious emotions, and furnish topics for religious meditation. The forms of business, the discoveries of science, and the processes of art, are fruitful of analogies to illustrate moral truth; and the mind of true devotion, finds rich instruction in the labor of the hands.

And will not religion facilitate those pursuits which may contribute in return so largely to its own pros-

perity? The Author of Christianity has decreed its universal propagation; and every year increases proof that the gospel is to be wafted abroad on the gale of the world's prosperity. It shall fly with the wings of a prosperous commerce—glide along the lines of internal improvement—establish itself in the thickets of thriving industry, and shine forth from the magnificent seats of political power. Intimations, not obscure, abound in the Bible, that they who will use the world in the service of religion, shall have the world to use. To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have more in abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

It is the *proper tendency* of Christianity to secure the highest prosperity of man. The state of prosperity, is the state of unperverted nature. It is a celebrated argument of Paley, for the benevolence of God, that evil is never, as we can perceive, the object of contrivance. This truth has brilliant illustration here. There are no intended causes of adversity. The ills of our present state, result from the abuse, derangement, or excessive action of principles which, in their proper application, are essential to life. An extract from the staff of life, is made fuel for intemperance. The severest pains of the body, proceed from the derangement of organs most necessary to

our health and comfort. The hurricane is the motion of the same air that constitutes the breath of animal life.

We expect not exemption in this life from all inconveniences; but we expect that those which we suffer will, by their connexion with religion, be rendered beneficial. On account of the fallen condition of mankind, the dispensations of heaven, must, in this world, be remedial. We call that good, which is but relatively so. It is good, because better than that for which it is substituted. Absolute evil may often be relative good. We prove the utility of religion to the interests of man, if we show that it turns to good account those evils which it does not avert.

Imagine the happiness of a community where every member enjoys the blessedness of pure religion—where every one delights in the character and government of God, and cherishes universal benevolence towards his fellow men—where envy, covetousness, ambition, sensuality, are unknown—where each member of the community, with a conscientious regard for the law of God, and a generous devotion to the common welfare, becomes a happy contributor from his own prosperity to the prosperity of the world. Let the skepticism that deprecates the progress of Christianity point at one of its principles

that would, in universal prevalence, be unpropitious to the interests of the human race.

The gospel indicates *by its precepts*, its tendency to promote the prosperity of man. The very sources of adversity it prohibits by the most awful sanctions. Let these precepts, with their sanctions and the Spirit who attends them, do their perfect work upon the heart, and their effects cannot be mistaken. As incitements to a life of virtue, what can surpass the rewards and penalties proclaimed in the Bible? Observe their effects in cases where, after other sanctions have fruitlessly spent their force, the religion of the gospel has presented a radical reformation of the character. Observe other cases where all sanctions are forgotten in the Godlike sensibility to the pleasures of virtue. With such a power do the precepts of Christianity work in man the preparation to secure and enjoy prosperity. Every motive that can affect a moral being—even a being of perfect virtue,—is comprehended in the Christian religion. By the letter and the spirit of its precepts, it requires men to be perfect; and through every stage of their progress towards perfection, and after they reach it, will these motives press them. So long as imperfection remains upon the character, the gospel applies to it the instruments and the motives to reformation. It resists that practical atheism which excludes God

from all the thoughts ; breaks up that oblivion of moral obligation which gives the rein to depravity, and renders man to every good work reprobate ; and prevents the sacrifice of human interests on the altar of a ruling propensity to evil.

We here present Christianity in its sphere of action on individual minds ; its only appropriate sphere. Here its work must begin and end. It regards men in neither the abstract nor the aggregate. It demands the personal attention of each member of the human family. In this high and solemn character, it addresses man as an apostate from God, and lost to purity and happiness ; and proceeds to the work of reformation and redemption. It speaks not as giving rules to a world that walketh in righteousness, but as prescribing restoratives to a world that lieth in wickedness ; beginning with the call to repentance, from God manifest in the flesh, in the person of an atoning Saviour, and pronouncing all morality disconnected from repentance for sin, and faith in that Saviour, incompetent to the salvation of the soul.

With the word of God before us, and in view of the nature of the object which religion respects, its relation to the pursuits of life, and its legitimate tendency, we assert the inviolable union of religion with man's highest prosperity. Seek what you may that will conduce to your real and ultimate good,

you have here the surest process of attainment. Seek first the righteousness of the kingdom of God, and there shall be added unto you, all things which can increase the sum of your enjoyment,—all, which can adapt the world to your convenience and improvement, enlarge your capacities for happiness, exalt your character, and purify your heart.

The occasion invites us to consider the relation of the Christian religion to communities in their collective capacity, and their application of religion to systems of education and government.

Education is included in the process of man's formation. The act of creation produces only the elements of the human constitution ; these are to be wrought by education into their proper forms, and fitted for their sphere in life. The highest endowments of nature, without education, have never raised a man above the savage state. I wage no controversy here with the advocates of the greatest diversity of natural endowments among mankind ; but the assertion will not be deemed extravagant, that education does more than creation in forming the character ; by moulding the thoughts and the feelings agreeably to the will of the presiding spirit of the system.

Among a people who seek first the righteousness of the kingdom of God, Christianity will have constant access to the hearts of the young. She will

stand at every avenue to the mind, directing each article of knowledge to the seat of the moral affections. The powers of thought and of emotion, will be viewed in their true relations as made for each other, and having exact mutual adaptation. The susceptibilities of the heart correspond minutely with those of the understanding. The heart may receive an impression from every impulse that moves an intellectual power.

It is a false and perilous presumption, that the understanding can, for purposes of cultivation, be dissected from the heart. Their union is not mere juxtaposition, but a mutual and essential combination. They pervade each other, and the same system of discipline must act upon both. I here allude to an error which is not imaginary, nor merely theoretical. It is one that has a real and practical existence. Observe the indications of its insidious prevalence in the custom which sends many of our youth to one place for the attainment of knowledge, and to another for instruction in religion ; in an extensive disrelish for a scientific theology which diffuses science and religion through each other ; in the dislike of many friends of religion, for exercises which task the reasoning powers upon religious truth ; in the frequent efforts to impress the heart, without the action of the intellect ; and in the indifference of multitudes

to the moral discipline of their children, during their course of education. Correct education takes the moral and intellectual faculties together; each, as indispensable to the other's freest operation and highest improvement. The purest and strongest devotion must discern its object through the intellectual eye, and the understanding can reach its highest improvement only under the direction of a devout and holy heart. We hail then, as Christians, the progress of general education. It expands those minds on which we pour the light of moral truth; enlarges the capacity for light; prepares the mind to receive it in its natural radiations from the Infinite Orb; and saves from the necessity of collecting the rays into a blazing focus, upon ignorance, which feels only when it burns.

No system of education that excludes the direct and constant agency of religious truth, can effect a complete discipline of the human mind. Let us not overlook the fact, that knowledge alone does not purify the heart. I call it a fact, because the scriptures ascribe the renovation of the heart to the spirit of God; because ignorance, though a nurse of depravity, is never reputed the parent of it; because men of the most extensive intelligence, are often regardless of true religion. The profoundest learning of the world, has, at times, been arrayed against Chris-

tianity. Deprive science of all allusions to God, and to the fallen condition of man, and what power can it exert over a mind of natural degeneracy and alienation from God. From such means, to expect a moral reformation, were to look for an effect without a cause.

Nor would we overlook the difficulty of reformation in a mind that has gone through its course of irreligious discipline. Let the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots. The motives of religion are often resisted by the unarmed depravity of childhood; much more will they be resisted by that depravity which is clad in the armor of perverted science, and defended by elaborate argument and the pride of learning.

The connexion between religion and education, must be coextensive with education itself. Religion is to be incorporated with the powers of thought and feeling,—it is to become one of the properties of the soul, and, like the amiable temper, or the tender sensibility, it must impart, of its own nature, to every principle and every act. The system of education, therefore, which accords with the spirit of my text, will begin, continue, and end with religion. Every step in its progress will increase religious knowledge and promote religious feeling. The spirit of Christianity will be diffused through the whole field of

intellectual exercise ; pervade all the intercourse between the teacher and the taught ; speak in every word of counsel or reproof, of censure or of commendation. Every movement of the understanding will be employed to awaken a purifying action in the heart. A sincere and tender regard for religion will be deemed requisite to fit an instructor for his office ; and at every point the growing mind will be guarded against the temptations and the corruptions of vice.

Who could foretell the effects of a thorough combination of science with religion, through the process of education ? With such a plan the Holy Spirit may be expected to co-operate. It would be teaching religion diligently to our children ; obeying a divine command, which is made the condition of a divine and gracious promise. It would be training up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—in the way they should go ; and we have strong ground of hope that when they are old, they will not depart from it. We exceed not the truth when we say that education may give universal prevalence to true religion. There is no principle in the administration of God, incompatible with the uniform success of a correct system of religious education. The Spirit who renews the heart, attends upon those means of his own appointment. And our assurance is strengthened by the nature of the case. Taking

possession of the mind in its early susceptibilities, pre-occupying positions which would otherwise become the holds of depravity, and throwing upon all things the light of the sun of righteousness, religion would fill the world with its glory; the term would again, as in ancient days, become synonymous with knowledge. Christianity would shine forth from her throne in every heart, and her splendours would be reflected by a brilliant world of prosperity and joy.

An unquestionable obligation devolves upon the friends of education in relation to the kingdom of God. In all our systems of instruction, religion claims its place. We are bound to present the Creator in the midst of his works before our children; to make him the object of all those emotions which his works excite; and avail ourselves of our children's veneration for glorious majesty in training humble gratitude for redeeming love.

On the relation of Christianity to civil government, the principles of this discourse will lead us, by a brief process, to an obvious conclusion.

Christianity performs its work upon the heart. It reforms the exterior of life by reforming the moral affections. Having achieved the inward revolution, it submits the remainder of the process to the entire control of circumstances. It gives no directions in relation to the outward forms of life. It demands

only in general terms a proper correspondence of the outward deportment with the purity within. A sense of general propriety is presumed to accompany the pure heart ; and to that, the exterior of life is submitted for its regulation. The gospel prescribes directly, not even the forms of its own ordinances. From such a religion we expect no directions relating to forms of civil government.

The point of contact between a free government and religion, is in the heart of the citizen. The government is only an instrument by which the people act upon themselves. The power proceeds from the people, and in its action returns to them again. The constituents of the government are the constituents of the state ; and the religion that pertains to them in one capacity, pertains to them in the other. If the people are true to themselves, the religious character of the government will always correspond with that of the people. But it will never go beyond the popular standard. The stream can never rise higher, or be purer than its source. And this unvarying level of religious character will ever maintain a quiescent equilibrium of moral force between the government and the people. Nothing permanent can be done by the government which the people of themselves are unwilling to do.

Civil government has no power to reform the

heart. Its influence is superficial. Its rewards induce, or its penalties suppress the outward act, but change not the inward intent. And the array of civil power in support of religion, may embarrass her own energies, and obscure those motives on which she relies for her success. Clothed with ecclesiastical authority, the ruler of state proclaims rewards and penalties which will be disregarded in direct proportion as they are needed ; and as the people turn their eyes towards the source of spiritual power, the government becomes an opaque intercipient of their vision. A free government then, can have no more religion than the people give it ; the people will yield to no power but such as they themselves have created ; the government cannot reform the hearts of the people, and all its authority is interposed between the people and God. From all this, the conclusion is unavoidable, that civil government in a land of freedom, can do little for religion.

But from the chair of state, and from the hall of legislation, great power may be exerted in behalf of religion,—the power of a religious example ; the same in kind with that which acts in the walks of private life. In kind, it is the same ; but not in degree. A city that is set on a hill, cannot be hid. Light from high stations shines afar ; and the light of a religious example exerts a degree of power over

each mind, proportioned to the number on which it shines. Great responsibility, therefore, rests on the place of civil power ; responsibility, not of the government, but of the men.

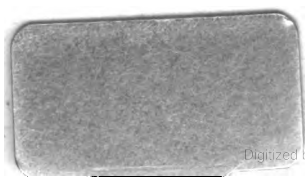
A free people, seeking first the righteousness of the kingdom of God, will create, not a governmental religion, but a religious government. They will form a government which they can employ at their pleasure, to do whatever cannot be otherwise done better for the spiritual benefit of the world. It cannot now be known to what extent in a future and a purer age, the civil and religious interests of men may be practically blended ; nor to what extent the civil organization may be found convenient, in conducting the religious operations of the world. But it will hold invariably true, that the people, and not the government, will be the master.

As far as right moral affections in rulers and people will affect the form of civil government, so far will that form be modified by the Christian religion. The genius of Christianity is incompatible with oppression. It indirectly revolutionizes the imperfect governments of the world, and while dictating no form of government, commending none, condemning none, reduces all into conformity with right and freedom. It is true, indeed, that the political tendencies of Christianity are often said to be republi-

can ; and not perhaps improperly. If it favor republicanism to exterminate the doctrine of the divine right of kings,—to teach mankind their natural dignity and natural rights,—to inspire them with love of freedom, and hatred of oppression,—to disseminate that knowledge, and inculcate that virtue which prepare a people to assert and defend their rights, then is Christianity pre-eminently a republican religion. And then, too, let republicans glory in such a proof of their political orthodoxy. Christianity is to be the religion of the world ; and if republicanism best comports with Christianity, that, also, shall be universal. A perfect human government must be such an one as Christianity tends to produce. On this principle, we rest the hope, that if we cherish as a people, the religion of the gospel, our form of government under some modification compatible with its identity, will prosper to the end of time ; that it will live to see the kingdoms of the world conformed to its image, and to merge itself with them into the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

To His Excellency the Governor, and his associates in executive authority, and to the Honorable Legislature of this Commonwealth, I am happy to commend the subject of this discourse. It falls to my lot to take leave of one who now, in pursuance of his own choice, retires from the chair of state. He

carries with him the gratifying testimonials of his official fidelity, which have accumulated in nine successive expressions of the people's confidence and esteem. May he be followed in those stations of influence and honor which may yet await him, by those rich and abundant blessings which have been implored upon him as our Honored Magistrate. To His Honor the Lieutenant Governor, and the Honorable Council, we tender cordial congratulations in view of the continued prosperity of our beloved Commonwealth, and of the prospect that in connexion with the kingdom of God, which is established among us, the blessings of a free government may be perpetuated to our latest posterity. To the Legislature now convened to transact the business of the year, what subject will admit of more earnest commendation, than the one which has now been presented? Governed by the laws of that kingdom which has been here commended to your regard, thousands will pray for the blessing of God upon your deliberations, and look to your prudent and righteous enactments, if not for the support of our religious prosperity, at least for the indications of the power of religion in the state.



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