

reached the sublime height the Bible confers upon men. While the church and state are as distinct as east from west, yet the stability of the state depends on the purity of the church. The purpose of the church is not to insure political blessings, yet the government cannot afford to dispense with her salutary influence. As men are governed more by principle and less by force, they will need more and more the teaching of Christ to guide them. Hence we draw the conclusion that now and in years to come the government will need more and more the blessed teaching of the church of Christ.

2 Again, it is claimed that we have so many charitable institutions where the lame and the halt and the blind are cared for, that we no longer need the church in this work. There are our "lodges", our "orders," our "fraternities" and innumerable societies where the needy are provided for. As much of the church's work was to aid these distressed ones, and they are now cared for outside the church, hence we no longer need the church. We are most happy to admit that much want is avoided and suffering relieved by the ministrations of these "lodges," "orders," and "fraternities." But in these orders you will find many devout Christians; the church has a large share in these charities. Whence did these institutions arise? Are they older than the Book that teaches "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?" But suppose we should grant all these enemies to the church claim for these charitable institutions, would it leave the church without work? By no means. But unfortunately for the superior claims made for these orders they begin at the wrong end of humanity. They black-ball those they do not desire, while the church of Christ never refuses to take a man because he is a pauper or a vile sinner. The church takes hold of those whom lodges refuse to admit.

This one fact is sufficient to show that those who urge such objections against the continuance of the church of Christ have totally misconceived her chief aim. While feeding the poor, visiting the sick and clothing the naked, is a glorious work to be done by the church, yet, this is not her chief work. No sane man would think of honoring George Washington as the model husband, while doubtless he was a good husband, yet there were then and are now many his equal in this particular; we honor him as the "Father of his country." This is his peculiar distinction. But to feed the poor and clothe the naked is not the peculiar work of the church. Because she cares for the destitute is not the reason we reverence her.

3. A third reason adduced for not needing the church is that now we have such a moral system that a man can attain the same moral excellency outside that he can inside the church; and as morality is the highest virtue developed by the church we have no reason to perpetuate the church at such an immense cost.

That the facilities in developing our moral natures are superior to those enjoyed by the ancients, none will deny; that men can and do attain eminence in morals outside the church we readily grant; but that the moral excellency of such are superior, or equal to those within the church we deny. In the ancient moralists many delight, but their teaching was far above their practice. Where Seneca's moral teaching reach the sublimest heights his practice descends to the lowest licentiousness.

The teachings of our noblest moralists of the day are far superior to their lives. This cannot be truly said of Christ. As the tallest Alpine peak towers above the ant hill in the valley so does Christ's moral teachings tower above the moral teachings of men. Christ did not teach one thing and practise another. His life was a complete exemplification of His loftiest principles.

The moralist outside the church has stolen the moral teaching of Christ and parades it as an earthly product. He also refuses to acknowledge the reflex influence of Christianity upon himself. If the church of Christ should suddenly become inoperative, we would witness a rapid decline in morality. Morality alone will never purify a state, neither will morality alone keep a moral state moral.

Suppose that we should admit that a man can live as moral outside the church as he can inside, would that demonstrate that we no longer need the church of the Lord Jesus Christ? No sir. For the chief purpose of the church is not to teach a code of morals. No one can be a Christian true and loyal without being moral, yet every moralist is not a Christian. Ethics will save no one unless he is absolutely free from all sin. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." A jewel that has never been lost cannot be found, a man that has never sinned needs no Saviour, hence a perfect morality renders void the cross of Christ. "For if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought." But a man that has sinned once cannot by any number of good deeds atone for one misdeed. Yet, "there is none righteous, no not one"; "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." He who clings to morality for salvation clings to inexorable condemnation. If the moralist would but open the eyes of his mind, he would see that this ethical law was "bringing them into captivity under the law of sin" and he would cry "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the bondage of this death?"

Ethics is not the highest principle the church inculcates. Ethics in reference to salvation from sin is as silent as an empty tomb. Ethics leaves a man where it finds him—"sold under sin." The church of the Lord Jesus Christ teaches salvation from sin through the shed blood of our crucified and risen Saviour. It teaches "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" that "without faith it is impossible to be pleasing unto Him"; that "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish;" that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" that, "why tarriest thou, arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name;" that, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" that through patience and well doing "shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Therefore if the government should ever reach a state of perfection so complete as not to need the influence of the church, if the world should ever become so philanthropic as to care for all the destitute, if our moral institutions should ever become so perfect that the man of the world was as moral as the humblest Christian, even then the church would have its peculiar and eternal work to perform. That work is to "seek and to save the lost." So long as there is one sinner in this world with one unforgiven sin, or one person liable to sin, so long will the church have work to do.

Christ came not as legislator, alms-giver, moral philosopher; but as a Saviour of sinners. This is the peculiar mission of the Church of Christ. Let not this fundamental work be obscured by the accidental labors of Christian philanthropy. Let preacher and private member draw marked distinctions between morality and Christianity. The cross of Christ is remedial, ethics legalistic. As the pebbles that fringe old ocean's rim are powerless to stay the gigantic sweep of the fierce Atlantic tides, so are human expedients utterly powerless to save a soul from sin.

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### PARTY vs. RELIGION.

Religion is love to God and man. In the language of its author, it is loving God with all the heart, soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself. James tells us that "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, has very plainly and forcibly stated the true principles of religion. "That we must be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another. Distributing to the necessity of the saints, and to bless them which persecute us, to be of the same mind one towards another, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men." He tells us in Phil. ii. 3, that "we must esteem others better than ourselves," and not to look on our own things, but every man also on the things of others.

These facts, with many others of like import in the Bible, are very plain and practical and are not at all mystified or darkened by theological fog. They will not admit of any more than the one interpretation, i. e., that religion is the love of others, to see others' good; to bless and help and promote their interest, even at the sacrifice of our own interest if need be. We see this so clearly exemplified in the consecrated life of our Saviour, who was the true exponent of religion, that we are left without any possible chance of a mistake as to the nature and spirit of religion. This self-sacrifice, this love that seeks "not her own," and this desire to bless even those who may despise us, are the brightest stars in manhood's crown; without these our religion is like a man without a soul. In these, the only true principles of manhood, we find the foundation and cap-stone of all institutions and governments of any worth. Upon this foundation—the love of man to God and to his brother man—is established the government that will eventually encircle the world and subdue the spirit that now invades the governments of this world.

Opposed to this, the religion of Christ, is the spirit of the world or the party spirit. It is as evident as the shining sun, to those whose mind is not wholly impaired by party prejudice, that the spirit and principle of party are diametrically opposed to religion. The party spirit seeks to build up its own interest by the overthrow of some opposing party, while religion honors and builds up its own subjects by the harmony and building up of others. The former seeks to injure its opposers, while the latter seeks to bless them. In the one case it is hatred unearthing the faults of others, while in the other it is love covering a multitude of faults. The one is his brother's hater, the other is his brother's keeper. We can see enough with half an eye to convince us that it is utterly impossible for a partisan to be a Christian. The theological as well as the political partisan is so blinded by his party spirit that he can see no good in any other party; principle, however true, has no weight with him. He will support and adhere to his party regardless of principle, and will very often sacrifice the best of men and the most sacred of principles.

The Pharisee was so wedded to his party that he was blind to the brightest light that ever shone on earth. The Saviour plainly told them they could take down a camel out of their own party dish without seeing it, but strain their eyes out at a gnat in some one else's dish.

We must not suppose that when we are clinging to the shibboleths of party that we are necessarily adhering to principle, because party and principle are not interchangeable terms. There are many who are devoted partisans who know little or nothing about principles. We find it now as it was in the days of our Saviour, those who were strict partisans and so

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