

It is not surprising, Mr. President, that, having worked for the secular government so zealously, to the neglect of their own appointed work of propagating the gospel, the ecclesiastics should now begin to claim of the civil government a helping hand, and resolve, as assemblies and conferences have done, that the people shall make their civil constitution propagate an orthodox gospel, by amending it so as not only to recognise a God—a truth of natural religion, which civil governments properly enough acknowledge—but also the revealed doctrine of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, the inspiration of the scriptures, and their authority as the foundation of civil government.

It would insult your intelligence as a statesman, recently ordained Doctor of Laws at Princeton, to suppose any argument needful to your perceiving that the foregoing church action involves directly or indirectly the assumption that it is competent to the church to take cognizance of, and determine, the civil, political and military issues that divide the political parties of the country. From the foundation of the government, as you well know, a political party, and that, generally, the dominant party, have construed the constitution as a bond between sovereign States; but these politico-ecclesiastical utterances and acts, expressly or by implication, adjudge the constitution to bind the people into one consolidated State. This dominant political party have always held the allegiance of the citizen to be due primarily to his State and through the State to the general government; but these ecclesiastical jurists declare it is due directly to the general government—some of them, that it "is due, *senior God, only to the present administration.*" The dominant political party—at least a large section of it—have held that a Union of the States cannot be coerced, nor is such coercion consistent with the solemn covenants of the constitution, but these political ecclesiastics, one and all, declare this coercion to be a duty of the highest and most solemn obligation to God. The dominant political party have, in time past, steadfastly maintained that ours is a *white men's* constitution, regarding the negro as both a person and a property, but not a citizen; so, in fact, did all political parties for forty years; and so late as 1828 a Northern administration forced Great Britain, after a resistance of fourteen years, to pay a million and a quarter dollars indemnity for three thousand slaves taken in the war of 1812, on the ground that the slaves were "*private property*;" but these political ecclesiastics one and all declare the recognition of any such right of property in negro labor a sin against God, calling for His righteous judgment. Not to weary you with specifications I add, finally, that a large, though not the dominant party, at the recent election, by over a million and three quarters against less than two and a quarter millions of votes—representing some ten millions against twelve millions of the population—condemned the prominent measures of

your administration; its negro emancipation policy, its confiscation policy, its extermination policy, its financial policy, its arbitrary arrests and imprisonments, its consolidation of irresponsible power in the central government; but these political ecclesiastics, speaking in the name of Christ, have solemnly endorsed your measures and enjoined the support of them as a religious duty, and those most explicitly which your opponents denounce as the bloodiest, cruelest and insanest of them all.

Now, it matters not to the argument what is my opinion or yours touching those measures, nor have I, again, Mr. President, had anything to say of them, but I left them to the judgment of citizens as such and to their leaders, civil, political and military. I have simply concluded, first, on the highest doctrinal grounds that the church had no function touching such questions, and violated fundamentally, her great charter in meddling with them. And secondly, on the grounds of the highest Christian expediency, that the church sinned enormously in thus driving away from her ordinances and influence into infidelity and Popery ten millions of the people to whom she has been commissioned to preach the gospel, and the gospel only.

While, on these two grounds, resisting generally any league of the church with any civil administration as fatal to the truth and dangerous both to the civil and religious liberty of men, I am obliged in candor to say that, over and above all this, I have felt and uttered a special repugnance on the score of the just influence of the church and the credit of religion among the people, at home and abroad, against any such league of the churches with your administration. Here again it matters not to the argument what my opinions or yours are of that matter. I simply refer to opinions very widely prevailing in the world and the injury to religion in such state of opinion. Neither do I mean any offence in the reference, nor desire to enter into the question how far "military necessity," diplomatic necessity, or political necessity may justify any administration in transcending the great laws of ethics and the convictions of conscience. But I must remind you that, however mankind may bear with, and apologise for, violations of ethical laws by secular governments under military, diplomatic or other necessity, they always condemn and despise any endorsement of, or apologies for, such violations by the church of Christ.

As to the application of this fact in the present case, you cannot be ignorant that a large body of the people, at home and abroad, charge, whether justly or unjustly I do not say, that your administration has been signalized, in the first place, by a remarkable contempt for the great ethical laws of truth. That coming into power in the midst of public confusion and political disorganization, you thought it expedient to employ the strategy of concealment