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Religion AND THE Public Schools.

Argument of Alonzo T. Jones before the United
States Senate Committee on Education
and Labor, Feb. 22, 1889.

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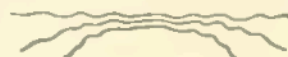
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RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.



Argument of Alonzo T. Jones before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor, Feb. 22, 1889.



The following resolution was offered in the United States Senate, May 25, 1888, by Senator Henry W. Blair, of New Hampshire. We present an exact copy:—

“50th CONGRESS, }
1st SESSION. } S. R. 86.

“Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States respecting establishments of Religion and Free Public Schools.

“Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States be, and hereby is, proposed to the States, to become valid when ratified by the Legis-

latures of three-fourths of the States, as provided in the Constitution:—

ARTICLE —.

“SECTION 1. No State shall ever make or maintain any law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

“SEC. 2. Each State in this Union shall establish and maintain a system of free public schools, adequate for the education of all the children living therein, between the ages of six and sixteen years inclusive, in the common branches of knowledge, and in virtue, morality, and the principles of the Christian religion. But no money raised by taxation imposed by law, or any money or other property or credit belonging to any municipal organization, or to any State, or to the United States, shall ever be appropriated, applied, or given to the use or purpose of any school, institution, corporation, or person, whereby instruction or training shall be given in the doctrines, tenets, belief, ceremonials, or observances peculiar to any sect, denomination, organization, or society, being or claiming to be, religious in its character, or such peculiar doctrines, tenets, belief, ceremonials, or observances be taught or inculcated in the free public schools.

“SEC. 3. To the end that each State, the United States, and all the people thereof, may have and preserve Governments republican in form and in substance, the United States shall guarantee to every State, to the people of every State and of the United States, the support and maintenance of such a system of free public schools as is herein provided.

“SEC. 4. That Congress shall enforce this article by legislation when necessary.”

February 15, 1889, there was held a hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor upon the above resolution. At that time there appeared before the committee Rev. T. P. Stevenson, of Philadelphia, corresponding secretary of the National Reform Association; Rev. James M. King, D. D., of New York, representing the American branch of the Evangelical Al-

liance; Rev. George K. Morris, D. D., of Philadelphia; Rev. W. M. Glasgow, of Baltimore; Rev. J. M. McCurdy, of Philadelphia; C. R. Blackall, M. D., of Philadelphia; and W. M. Morris, M. D., of Philadelphia—all these in favor of the resolution.

Again, on February 22, there was a hearing before the committee on the same resolution. At that time there appeared Rev. Dr. Philip Moxom, Rev. Dr. James B. Dunn, Rev. Dr. James M. Gray,—these three being a sub-committee from the Boston committee of one hundred; Rev. Dr. J. H. Beard, Rev. T. P. Stevenson, and others, all in favor of the resolution. Against it there were Rev. J. O. Corliss and Alonzo T. Jones, editor of the *American Sentinel*. The following is Mr. Jones's argument:—

Mr Chairman, there is a point or two not yet touched upon which I wish to notice in the little time that I shall have. I gather from the letter from the author of this resolution to the secretary of the National Reform Association that the intention of this proposed amendment is primarily for the benefit of the State; that the object of the teaching of religion in the public schools is not to be given with the view of fitting the children for Heaven, nor of making them Christians; but that it is rather and more particularly to fit them for this world and to make them good citizens; that it is not religion which needs the support of the State so much as it is the State which needs the support of religion. This is the view held, I know, by some of the principal members of the National Reform Association, as, for instance, President Julius H. Seelye and Judge M. B. Hagans. These have expressed it that it is only as a political factor, and its worth only according to its "political value," that the State proposes to secure and enforce the teaching of re-

ligion in the public schools; that the object of the instruction is not "the spiritual welfare of the children," but "for the benefit of the State."

This argument appears very plausible, but it is utterly fallacious. The supreme difficulty with such a view is that it wholly robs religion of its divine sanctions and replaces them only with civil sanctions. It robs religion of its eternal purpose and makes it only a temporal expedient. From being a plan devised by divine wisdom to secure the eternal salvation of the soul, Christianity is, by this scheme, made a mere human device to effect a political purpose. And for the State to give legal and enforced sanction to the idea that the Christian religion and the belief and practice of its principles are only for temporal advantage, is for the State to put an immense premium upon hypocrisy. But there is entirely too much of this already. There is already entirely too much of the profession of religion for only what can be gained in this world by it politically, financially, and socially. Done voluntarily, as it now is, there is vastly too much of it; but for the State to sanction the evil principle, and promote the practice by adopting it as a system and inculcating it upon the minds of the very children as they grow up, would bring upon the country such a flood of corruption as it would be impossible for civil society to bear.

Let me not be misunderstood here. I do not mean to deny for an instant, but rather to assert forever, that the principles of the Christian religion received into the heart and carried out in the life will make good citizens always. But it is only because it derives its sanction from the divine source—because it is rooted in the very soul and nourished by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. This, however, the State of itself can never

secure. This at once carries us into the realm of conscience, upon the plane of the spiritual, and it can be secured only by spiritual forces, none of which have ever been committed to the State, but *to the church only*.

But right here there comes in an argument presented to me by a United States Senator in this Capitol, one who is in favor of this proposed amendment, too. He was speaking in favor of the amendment. I had said that religious instruction belongs wholly to the parents and to the church—that the State cannot give it because it has not the credentials for it. He replied in these words:

“But when the family fails and the church fails, the State *has* to do something.”

The answer to this is easy:—

(1) To the family and the church, and to these alone, the Author of the Christian religion has committed the work of teaching that religion, and if these fail, the failure is complete.

(2) The statement of the Senator implies that the State is some sort of an entity so entirely distinct from the people who compose it that the State can do for the people what they cannot do for themselves. But the State is made up only of the people who compose the State. The church likewise is made up of such of these as voluntarily choose to enter her fold. To the church is committed the Spirit of God and the ministrations of the word of God, by which only the inculcation of the Christian religion can be secured. The people then composing the State, and the families composing the people, and the propagation of religion and the credentials for it being committed only to the family and the church, by this it is again demonstrated that when the family

and the church fail to teach the Christian religion the failure is complete.

The only thing that the State can do under such circumstances is by an exertion of power, the only means at its command, to check the tide of evil for a time, but it is only checked. It is like trying to dam up any other torrent—it may be checked for a moment, only to break its bounds and become more destructive than before. The only real remedy is to begin at the fountain and purify the heart, which can be done only by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ; for it is only faith in him that can purify the heart and cause the fountain to send forth the sweet waters of everlasting righteousness instead of the bitter stream of evil. This work, however, is committed to the church and not to the State; to the church is given the credentials and the power for its accomplishment.

But the complaint which comes from the gentleman referred to, and which seems to be embodied in this proposed amendment, is that the church has failed to do the work which belongs only to her to do. No more stinging rebuke could be given to the professed church of Jesus Christ in the United States than is given in this despairing plea of the statesman, and no more humiliating confession ever could be made by the church than is unintentionally made by these clerical gentlemen from Boston and other places in their mission to this Capitol to-day to ask the State to undertake the task of teaching religion. Their mission here to-day, sir, is a confession that the professed church of Christ has failed to do that which God has appointed the church to do. It is a confession that the professed church has lost the power of God, the power of the Holy Ghost. It is a confession that she has proved unfaithful to her trust, and that now

she wants to ease herself of the responsibility and pass it over to the State. But when they shall have gotten the State to take upon itself the work of the church, what then do they intend that the church shall do? That is the next question that arises; it is an important one, too, for the State to consider, but it is easily answered. When they once get the State to carry on and support the work of the church, the next step will be to get the State to support the church, and that in idleness, as every State has ever had to do, and will ever have to do, which takes upon itself the task of teaching religion. And this is precisely the thing that the National Reform Association, whose chief secretary stands the second time to-day in this room to plead for the adoption of this resolution, proposes that the State shall do. Rev. J. M. Foster, who has been for years a "district secretary" in active service in the work of that association, declares that among the duties which the reigning Mediator requires of nations, there is this:—

"An acknowledgment and performance of the Nation's duty to guard and protect the church—by suppressing all public violations of the moral law; by maintaining a system of public schools, indoctrinating their youth in morality and virtue; by exempting church property from taxation;" and "by providing her funds out of the public treasury for carrying on her aggressive work at home and in the foreign field."—*Christian Statesman*, February 21, 1884.

That is the very point to which the State will be brought as surely as it ever takes it upon itself to teach religion. Therefore, if the Government of the United States wants to keep forever clear of the galling burden of a lazy, good-for-nothing church, let it keep forever clear of any attempt to teach religion.

But the statement upon which I am arguing was to the

effect that if the church fails and the family fails, something must be done. Yes, it is true, something must be done; but it must be done by the church and not by the State. The church must return to her Lord. She must be endowed afresh with power from on high. Then she can take up with vigor and with prospect of assured success her long-neglected work. Let the preachers come down from their ten-thousand-dollar pulpits, lay aside their gold rings, and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit and love of the Divine Master. Let them go to the common people, to the poor, to the outcast, the neglected and the forsaken. If to these they go in a spirit and with the mission of the Saviour, they will be heard gladly, as was he. There is no need to complain of the wickedness of the people. This Nation is not as wicked yet as was the Roman world in the day when Christ sent forth his little band of disciples. Yet as wicked as the world then was, these few men went forth armed only with the word of God and the power of his Holy Spirit, to contend against all the wickedness of the wide world; and by their abiding faith, their unabating earnestness, and their deathless zeal, they spread abroad the honors of that name to the remotest bounds of the then known world, and brought to the knowledge of the salvation of Christ multitudes of perishing men. If that little company then could do so much and so well for the then known world, what could not this great host now do for the United States if they would but work in the same way and by the same means. Yes, gentlemen, something must be done; but it must be done by the church; for it never can be done by the State.

Gentlemen, it is perfectly safe to say that no more important question has ever come before your committee than is this one which is before you to-day. It is a

question which is approaching a crisis in more than one of the States; and it is exceedingly important that the National Constitution and laws and Government be kept on the side of right, and that the constitutions, laws, and governments of the States shall be lifted to the level of the National. Because of its great importance both as a State and National question, I beg permission of the committee to be allowed to present as a part of my argument, a portion of the argument of the Hon. Stanley Matthews, now Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, upon this very question, in the case of *Minor et al. vs. Cincinnati School Board et al.* I ask further to present this because it would be impossible for me to make an argument as good, and I seriously doubt whether anybody can ever make a better. After referring to the resolution of the Cincinnati School Board which forbade the reading of the Bible at the opening exercises of the city schools, Mr. Matthews said:—

“I do say that the reading of the Holy Bible in the manner repealed by this resolution is the teaching of a dogma in religion, held by only a portion of the religious community, objected to by a large part of the others, and that it is in a just, true, and sober sense,—as to all who either reject it, in whole or in part, as a divinely inspired and infallible book, and as to all others, who admitting that to be its character, nevertheless deny that it can properly be understood without the interpreting aid of external authority, as to unbelievers, Jews, and Roman Catholics,—a merely sectarian book. Now, if your honors please, the community is divided, you may say, in a general way, as a matter of fact, of which your honors can take judicial notice, and to which your honors' notice is addressed specially by the answer in this case, into at least three main divisions of religious belief, throwing

out of view all those who have merely a negative position, sometimes called nullifidians—believers in nothing, if you choose, except what they see, and hear, and feel. But I propose to confine myself now only to that division of the community as to their positive religious belief; and I will include under one name all Protestant Christians, including every variety of faith, every sect and denomination, from those who take a merely humanitarian view of the person and the work of our divine Saviour up to those who believe that he was the incarnate God, and embracing every possible shade and variation of religious belief. * * * * *

“Here are all these varieties of belief. The gentlemen say, What is conscience? It may be a very small matter in their estimation, applied to other people a very small matter, not to be taken notice of; and one gentleman quotes the legal maxim ‘*Deminimis non curat lex*,’ in reference to the supposed conscience of an infidel.

“But this will not do. We may call the eccentricities of conscience vagaries, if we please; but in matters of religious concern we have no right to disregard or despise them, no matter how trivial and absurd we may conceive them to be. In the days of the early Christian martyrs, the Roman lictors and soldiers despised and ridiculed the fanaticism that refused the trifling conformity of a pinch of incense upon the altar erected to the Cæsar that arrogated to himself the title and honor of ‘Divine,’ or of a heathen statue. History is filled with the record of bloody sacrifices which holy men who feared God rather than men have not withheld, on account of what seemed to cruel persecutors but trifling observances and concessions. * * * * *

“Conscience, if your honors please, is a tender thing, and tenderly to be regarded; and in the same propor-

tion in which a man treasures his own moral integrity, sets up the light of conscience within him as the glory of God shining in him to discover to him the truth, so ought he to regard the conscience of every other man, and apply the cardinal maxim of Christian life and practice, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'

"Now, here is the Christian community. Then there are a large number of the citizens of this community who are not Christians at all, and yet are devout religionists. They are the descendants of the men who crucified Christ; and yet, as old Sir Thomas Browne says, we ought not to bear malice against them for that, for how often since have we, who profess his name, crucified him, too!

"Quousque patiere, bone Jesu!
 Judæi te semel, ego scepius crucifixi;
 Illi in Asia, ego in Britannica,
 Gallia, Germania;
 Bone Jesu, miserere mei, et Judæorum.

"But here they are in this community, devout worshippers of the only living and true God, according to their conscientious convictions; and I will say, if your honors please, in all respects capable of performing every duty of the civil State, and equally entitled to, not toleration—I hate that word, there is no such thing known in this country as toleration—but civil and religious equality, equality because it is right, and a right. Then there is another sect of religionists. * * They are the Roman Catholics. I know the Protestant prejudices against the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Roman Catholic system of faith, and the Roman Catholic Church. I know, too, from a reading of that history, a part of which has been reproduced in argument upon this occasion, that the Roman Catholic Church has too well deserved that bitter memory at the hands of those whom it persecuted. But

it is not to be denied that the victims of persecution, with singular inconsistency, have not always omitted the opportunity, when power was in their hands, to inflict upon their oppressors the same measure of persecution, as if the wrong consisted not in the principle, but only in the person.

“Now, if your honors please, I try to stand impartial and neutral in this argument between these three sets of men. I am bound to look upon them all as citizens, all as entitled to every right, to every privilege that I claim for myself; and further, if your honors please, I do in my heart entertain the charity of believing that they are just as honest and just as sincere in their religious convictions as I am. I will say further, that from the study which I have made, as time and opportunity have been given me, of the doctrinal basis of the Roman Catholic faith, I am bound to say that it is not an ignorant superstition, but a scheme of well-constructed logic, which he is a bold man who says he can easily answer. Give them one proposition, concede to them one single premise, and the whole of their faith follows most legitimately and logically, and that is the fundamental doctrine, the doctrine of what the church is, what it was intended to be, by whom it was founded, by whom it has been perpetuated, being the casket which contains to-day, shining as brightly as before the ages, the ever-living, actually present body of God, teaching and training men for life here and life hereafter.

* * * * *

“Now, if your honors please, that is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church; that is the doctrine that is believed in by the Roman Catholic people; believed in sincerely, conscientiously, under the irresponsibilities, as they understand them, to answer at the bar of Almighty God, in the day of Judgment, according to the light

which they have received, in their own reason and their own conscience; for you must bear in mind that the process by which a Roman Catholic attains his faith is the same by which your honors do. We seem to make a difference, in that respect, as if the Roman Catholic believed in his church in some other way, by some other organs than those which a Protestant uses when he comes to his convictions. Why, if your honors please, there is no compulsion about it; it is a voluntary matter; they believe or not, as they choose; there is no external power which forces them to believe. They believe because they are taught; they believe because they are so educated; they believe because they have been trained up to it; just as we believe in the Protestant form of religion, because our fathers and our grandfathers and our grandfather's fathers were Protestants. They think they have sufficient reason for their belief; it may be an insufficient reason, but that don't make any difference to you and me; it is their reason, and that is enough. Now, they have—at any rate so far as the impersonal spirit of jurisprudence is concerned, so far as the presiding genius of the civil law is affected with jurisdiction; so far as, your honors, the embodiment of that artificial reason which consists in the collective wisdom of the State can take any notice—civil rights and religious rights, equal to yours and mine. Here are these three great divisions of men and of opinions and of religious faith and worship, all standing before you to-day upon a platform of absolute and perfect equality.

* * * * *

“But it is asked by some, who by asking it betray their want of comprehension of the real question: Have Protestants no rights? Cannot the majority of the community insist upon their consciences? Must the rights of mi-

norities alone be consulted? Are we to be ruled by Catholics, or Jews, or infidels?

“The answer is obvious and easy. Protestants have no rights, as such, which do not at the same time and to the same extent belong to Catholics, as such, to Jews and infidels too. Protestants have a civil right to enjoy their own belief, to worship in their own way, to read the Bible and to teach it as a part of their religion, but they have no right in this respect to any preference from the State, or any of its institutions. They have no right to insist upon Protestant practices at the public expense, or in public buildings, or to turn public schools into seminaries for the dissemination of Protestant ideas. They can claim nothing on the score of conscience, which they cannot concede equally to all others. It is not a question of majorities or minorities, for *if the conscience of the majority is to be the standard, then there is no such thing as right of conscience at all.* It is against the predominance and power of majorities, that the rights of conscience are protected, and have need to be.

“If it be said that the Protestant conscience requires that the Bible be read by and to Protestant children, and it is a denial of a right of conscience to forbid it, waiving at present the obvious and conclusive answer that no such right of conscience can require that the State shall provide out of the common taxes for its gratification, it is enough to say, that Catholics then, too, have the same right to have their children taught religion according to their views—not out of the Douay Bible,—if they do not consider that sufficient, but by catechism and in the celebration of the mass, if they choose to insist—that Jews have the same right to have their religion taught in the common schools, not from the English version of the Old Testament, but according to the practice of their

synagogues:—and infidels have the same right to have their children taught deism, or pantheism, or positivism.

* * * * *

“ But if your honors please let me say, for I conceive it to be a privilege to say it, that I believe that this book, which I hold in my hands, is a sacred book in the highest sense of the term. I believe that it is the word of the living God, as essential to our spiritual nourishment and life as the bread that we eat, and the water that we drink to quench our thirst is, for our bodies. It records the history of the most marvelous appearance that ever occurred in human history—the advent in Judea of the man Christ Jesus, the promised Messiah of old, whom Moses wrote about, and of whom Moses was a feeble type; whom Joshua predicted when he led the hosts to take possession of the happy land and prefigured; whom all the prophets foretold, and the psalmist sung, and the people sighed for, throughout all the weary ages of their captivity and bondage; who appeared in the light and brightness of the heathen civilization of the Augustan age; who spake as never man spake; who healed the diseases of the people; who opened their eyes; who caused the dumb to speak, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and preached the gospel to the poor; who was persecuted because he was the living representative of divine and absolute truth, and who was lifted up upon the cross charged with blasphemy untruly, but slain upon the baser charge of treason to the Roman Cæsar, while in the very act of declaring that his ‘ kingdom was not of this world; ’ lifted up, to be sure, by the hands of men, * * * but in pursuance of a covenant that he had made in eternity with his Father that it should come thus to pass, because without the shedding of blood there was to be no remission of sin; lifted up in order that he might draw all men unto himself, that who-

soever looked upon him might be healed of the poison of original sin and live. 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!' That, if your honors please, is my *credo*. If I am asked how I prove it, I enter into no disputation or doubtful argument. I simply say that his divinity shone into my heart and proved itself by its self-evidence. * * * I would not give up, I would not abate a jot or a tittle of my belief in that Book, and in the God that it reveals, and the salvation that it offers, for all that this world can give. And yet, if your honors please, in the spirit of my Divine Master, I do not want to compel any man. If he cannot believe—oh! it is his misfortune, not less than his fault, and not to be visited upon him as a penalty by any human judgment. It is not to be the ground of exclusion from civil rights; it is not to bar him from any privilege. It is even, if your honors please, to protect him from the finger of scorn being pointed and slowly moved at him as if he were out of the pale of divine charity. Oh, no; it was to the lost that the Saviour came, to seek them as well as to save them; and I know no other way, I know no better way, to recommend the truth of that Book to those who cannot receive it, but to live like him whose teaching is to be just, to be good, to be kind, to be charitable, to receive them all into the arms of my human sympathy, and to say to them, 'Sacred as I believe that truth to be, just so sacred is your right to judge it.'

'Now, what can the law do—the civil law—in the presence of eternity and of these eternal truths, and of these distinctions and differences, and human weaknesses and disabilities? Can the law rudely step in and say, because a majority of people profess faith in that, that therefore you shall be daily confronted with what you do not and cannot receive? For—and that is the gist of the thing—

the reading of the Holy Scriptures as the appropriate commencement of the morning daily exercises of the public school is the teaching of the religious dogma that they are the inspired word of God; and if it was not so held by the Protestant members of the community, there would be no such lawsuit here to-day as there is. If it were the writings of Epictetus, or Seneca, or of Pliny, or moral philosophy, or anything of human composition and origin only, that taught the purest and the highest morality, nobody would be found to pay the expense of filing this bill to compel its daily reading. It is because that exercise is intended, and valued only as it is intended to teach the Christian doctrine as to the scheme of salvation offered by Christ, and the Protestant doctrine, that the book without note or comment is the infallible rule of faith and practice.

* * * * *

“And if your honors please, whatever does belong to a man, that he has by virtue of being a man in society and not under government, he had it before government was. It was his. That is the meaning of it. He does not hold it by any subinfeudation; he holds it by direct homage and allegiance to the owner and the Lord of all. Moreover, whatever was his, just that same belonged to everybody else. On the natural plane, at least, God has not any favorites. Whatever in point of right he gave to you he gave to me; and inasmuch as you and I might dispute, we agreed upon a common arbiter, and that is government that settles the boundary between your right and mine. It makes no difference how small a right it is. If it is only a little piece of a right, our law says an action for damages shall lie for its breach, because the law presumes damage from the denial even of that right. If it is only so small a matter

as the conscience of a Jew or an infidel, it is his, and cannot be taken away.

“My friends on the other side said they were asking light on this question, as to what, and how absolute and universal are the rights of conscience. I hold in my hand a book written by Isaac Taylor, one of the most thorough masters of English style.

“He says:—

“‘The rights of man, as man, must be understood in a sense that can admit of no single exception; for to allege an exception is the same thing as to deny the principle. We reject, therefore, with scorn, any profession of respect to the principle which, in fact, comes to us clogged and contradicted by a petition for an exception.’

“He says again:—

“‘We have just now said, in relation to the rights of man, that they are universal and *unexceptionable*; or, if not so, then they are none at all. To profess the principle and then to plead for an exception—let the plea be what it may—is to deny the principle, and it is to utter a treason against humanity. The same is true, and it is true with an emphasis, in relation to those rights which are at once the surest guaranty of every other, and the most precious of all, namely, the rights of conscience. We say *rights*; for although they are *one*, they yet include what must be carefully specified in detail, as a caution against all contradictions and against any infringement.’

“And again he says:—

“‘The rights of conscience not understood, or if they be misunderstood by a government,—then the civilization of such a people is—a glittering barbarism; it is nothing better.’

“If religion be here, under our Constitution the care of the State, to a certain extent as claimed, and that religion means the religion of the Bible—a broad Christianity—so that the State is bound by its fundamental law to provide education-in that religion as a necessary part of the in-

struction to be given in the public schools, then it cannot permit exceptions to be made, even upon the plea of conscience, for the exception destroys in this case, not proves the rule,—and the State may, yea, if the argument be sound, must, by the term of its Constitution, step in between father and child, and educate the child in opposition to its father's faith. And to justify this interference, we are told that parents neglect their duty, and that a child has rights of conscience as against its father!

"I protest against this doctrine. Its application would be a monstrous tyranny. Its idea is pagan, not Christian. * * *

"Let me not be misunderstood. I believe in religion, in its priceless, inestimable importance and value, both 'for the life that now is, and for that which is to come'—for this world and eternity.

"I believe in the religious education of children; in their careful training, from infancy to youth and manhood, by precept and example, in true and practical piety, in the fear of God, and to love their fellow-men; that they should be taught to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. I believe as firmly as a man can that they should be most watchfully and sedulously instructed, day by day, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, not merely in the learning of abstract morals, but in the duties of a religious life, based upon the motives, sanctions, instructions, examples, and inspirations that can only be found in the gospel of God our Saviour, and the scheme of redemption for a lost and sinful race as revealed in the person and work of the God-man, Christ Jesus, and held forth in the instructions, and services, and means of grace, and living oracles, committed to the keeping of the church of the living God, as his kingdom on the earth.

"But what I do say, and say most earnestly and with vehement protest, is, that with this branch of education the State, the civil power—through its law-making, judicial, and executive administration; through its politics and its parties; through its secular agents and officers; through its board of education and school teachers—has, rightfully, and can have, nothing whatever to do. '*Procul, procul este profani!*' Let no unholy hands be laid upon the sacred ark.

* * * * *

"If the State is to furnish education in religion, in what, I ask, shall it consist? Who shall judge and determine what is true and what false in all that claims to be religion, or even Christianity—who shall pronounce with authority of law what is to be taught as embraced within what have been styled the fundamental or elementary truths of religion—who shall declare the amount, and kind, and degree of the knowledge to be imparted?

"These are important questions, seriously propounded and deserving of respectful answer. The gentlemen on the other side, say they limit the religious instruction demanded to what they call a 'broad Christianity.' I have already once or twice adverted to the term. I do not know that I understand it. If I do, it is a 'broad' humbug. The Christian religion is not a vain and unmeaning generality. It is a definite and positive thing. It means something or it means nothing. In my view it is a supernatural scheme of redemption—a revelation from God of his gracious purpose and plan of salvation, to a race, 'dead in trespasses and sins,' through the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ, who, being God from eternity, became incarnate and by his death upon the cross became a sacrifice for sin, made expiation for it, and having risen from the grave ascended into

Heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of the Father to make intercession for his people. The whole character and value of it as a religion consists altogether in being, as it claims to be, a supernatural plan of salvation from sin, otherwise irremediable. Strike out from the Bible the parts which disclose, reveal, and teach that scheme, and the rest is insignificant. And any instruction or education in religion which does not specifically teach the facts which constitute that scheme, and which cannot be stated even, except as conveying dogma, is no instruction in the Christian religion whatever—it is simply instruction in philosophy and ethics, or practical morals.

“Now, I deny the authority and the ability of civil government to decide upon questions of religious truth.

* * * * *

“Now, if your honors please, the truth of religion is a matter of spiritual discernment. As the apostle Paul has said: ‘But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ It is a matter of spiritual discernment, and I ask the question in all sobriety where, in the constitution and organization of any civil commonwealth on the earth, from the beginning to the present day, there has ever been found a body of civil legislators capable of deciding for anybody but itself what is the truth in religion.

“There is an old lesson on this subject. I find that in the trial of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of John, that the chief priests accused him before Pilate of blasphemy, saying: ‘We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.’ When Pilate had arraigned him, he said to him, ‘Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?’

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.' Then when the Jews found that Pilate would not take jurisdiction of the case on the charge of blasphemy, on the ground that he had made himself the Son of God, and so had violated the law of the Jewish theocracy, they charged him with treason, on the ground that he was claiming to set himself up against Cæsar as king, and when they found out that Pilate sought to release him, the Jews cried out: 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.'

"In this colloquy between Pilate and our Lord on this point, as to his kingship, and the nature of his kingdom, Pilate said unto him: 'Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate said unto him, What is truth?' *Then was the head of the civil State unable to comprehend*, because unable, spiritually, to see the truth, as it is in Jesus—the truth of religion.

"Let the civil authorities now as well as then, beware, when called upon by popular clamor, whether of Pharisees or priests, to pronounce upon religious truth, lest, in their necessary ignorance to discern it, they do not crucify the Lord of glory afresh! And let his disciples beware, lest, in tossing the Bible and its precious truths into the arena of political controversy, they violate that injunction and warning—'Give not that which is holy unto

the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.'

* * * * *

"It is said there are hundreds and thousands of children in this goodly, this Christian city, that have no chance or opportunity for being educated in what my friends on the other side call 'the elementary truths of Christianity,' not even in a knowledge of that 'broad Christianity,' unless it can be given to them by a perusal every morning, by the teacher, of a few verses out of the Bible in the common schools. I say, if it be so, it is a lamentable confession of great lack and neglect of duty, not on the part of the State, but on the part of the church, meaning by that the invisible body of true believers who are, as they believe, to create the kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

"It is said they are in the by-ways, lanes, and alleys. And can they not be reached there? Cannot the church send out its ministers, or are they too busy, day after day, in their studies, preparing to dole out dogmatic theology Sunday after Sunday, to the tired ears of their wearied congregations? Cannot they send out their Sunday-school teachers? Cannot they send out their missionaries? Why, the command of the Saviour was to go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways and hedges, and bring all in, bring them in to the feast which he had prepared—this feast of fat things, of goodly things. Must we say that the church has grown idle and lazy, and can only hobble on its crutches, and therefore that our school directors must set themselves up as teachers of religious truth? No! Let the church cease to depend upon any adventitious or external aids. Let it rely solely upon the omnipotent strength

of the Spirit of the Lord that is in it. Let it say to the state, Hands off; it is our business, it is our duty, it is our privilege to educate the children in religion and the true knowledge of godliness. Don't let them starve on the husks of a broad Christianity. Let us give them that which is definite, and distinct, and pointed—the everlasting and saving truths of God's immortal gospel.

“Don't teach them, ‘Be virtuous and you shall be happy,’ but ‘believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ Now, I say, and I say it with all due humility, as one not called upon to instruct, but, nevertheless, to say what is in me—let the church say: Here is our field; it is white to the harvest; here is our duty; here is our mission; here is our work, to evangelize, to save the lost and perishing crowd.

“Let her rise up in the full measure and majesty of her innate spiritual strength—let her gird her loins for the mighty task—let her address herself with all earnestness and heroic zeal to the great but self-rewarding labors of Christian love—let her prove herself by her works of self-denying charity, to be the true church as Jesus proved himself to the disciples of John to be the true Messiah, when he told them, ‘Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’ Let her organize all her forces for a more determined and closer, hand-to-hand, struggle with sin and evil, of every form, and the misery and wretchedness, of which they are the cause. Let her ministers and missionaries not only proclaim from their pulpits ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ,’ but descending among the hungry multitudes, distribute to them the precious bread of life. Let them declare to the rich, and

the educated, their duties, their responsibilities, and their privileges, and lead them in person to the places where their work is to be done, and stimulate them by their example to do it. Let them inspire by their enthusiasm, and fire with their zeal, the indifferent and the slothful. Let them, by setting forth the beauty of holiness and the purity of 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' which is able to make us wise unto salvation, send the healthful and invigorating influences of our holy religion through every social relation, and glorify the business and the pleasures of our daily and secular life, by consecrating them to the glory of our Father who is in Heaven. Let them turn these streams of the pure water of life, welling up in the hearts of their followers, into the dark and pestilential receptacles, where ignorance, poverty, misery, and sin are gathered, and breed disorder and death. Then the great and the good, the noble and the wise, in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, in one grand array will meet and wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and shall wrestle not in vain, for they shall be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; clad in the whole armor of God, their loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith they shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Then shall be hastened the promised time of the

coming of our King, when there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness—the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, the tabernacle of God with men, where he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

“But let them remember that to advance this glorious consummation the church must throw away the sword of civil authority which some of her too eager and impetuous sons would put into her hands; that the kingdom of her Lord is not of this world; that she must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s; that she must not permit any unholy dalliance with the solicitations of worldly power or advantage, but keep herself unspotted from the world; that her dominion is over the minds and hearts of men, and her victory achieved with spiritual weapons alone, by appeals to their reason, to their conscience, to the highest and best in their ruined nature, to be restored by the power, not of human laws, but of the Spirit of God. and that in proportion as she becomes conscious of her origin and destiny, of the divine life she bears in her bosom, hid with Christ in God, and grows into the recognition of her mission and place in the work and history of the world and of eternity, she will dissolve all ties that bind her to secular influences and the natural sphere of human interests and actions, and establish herself firmly upon the seat of her spiritual throne, whence shall silently but most potently issue streams of truth and goodness, wisdom and love, faith and charity, into all the channels of human thought and activity, to restore upon earth the paradise of God.”

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