

The Sentinel

OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

VOL. XVIII

WASHINGTON, D. C., OCTOBER 22, 1903

NO. 42



The religious liberty of an individual is a matter of the relation between himself and God; and he alone of all human beings has it within his power. John Bunyan declared after his twelve years' imprisonment in Bedford jail that he was never so free in all his life as at times in his dungeon when communing with God and reading his Bible in a dim ray of light. No human power can invade and take away the liberty of the soul.

"By their fruits ye shall know them. He is the free man in whom the mystery of goodness manifests itself. He is the apostle of freedom who is so inspired by truth and righteousness that no bonds can hold him. By the experience of all true men who have been in bondage since the world began, it has been proved that freedom of the spirit has been won and defended by those who have exercised themselves to have a conscience devoid of offense toward God and man, who have been humble and teachable, who have wrought in love and in wisdom, who have followed the Power from on high; and who, through loving hearts and willing hands, have brought this Power to bear in all their works and ways."

The Sentinel

OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

A weekly publication devoted to the maintenance and defense of liberty of conscience, and therefore opposed to any violation or compromise of the principle of separation of church and state. Non-sectarian and non-partisan in the application of principles.

JOHN D. BRADLEY, Editor.

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We believe in the religion taught and lived by Jesus Christ.

We believe in temperance, and regard the liquor traffic as a curse to society.

We believe in supporting civil government and submitting to its authority.

We believe that human rights are sacred, and that they indissolubly inhere in the moral nature of the individual.

We deny the right of any human authority to invade and violate these inalienable rights in any individual.

Therefore we deny the right of any civil government to legislate on matters of religion and conscience.

We believe it is the right, and should be the privilege, of every individual to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, free from all dictation, interference, or control on the part of civil government or any other external authority; or not to worship at all if he so chooses.

We also believe it to be our duty, and no less the duty of all others, to oppose religious legislation and all movements tending toward the same, to the end that all the people may freely enjoy the inestimable blessing of liberty, which is theirs by virtue of the unbounded wisdom and beneficence of the Author of their being.

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with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Therefore we are told in another place that "all the law [of the relation of moral beings to one another] is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And again, that "love is the fulfilling of the law," the fulfilling of all moral law. And the fulfilling of the law, conformity to the conditions of happy and harmonious existence, is liberty, even religious liberty. "I will walk at liberty," said the Psalmist, "for I seek thy precepts." God's law is the royal law of liberty, and it is summed up in the one thing — love; that is, its requirements are all for the well-being, the best and highest interests, of all those who are asked to conform to it.

So let us not use the noble endowment of free moral agency, which God in His infinite love and wisdom has bestowed upon us, as an occasion to the flesh, as a means, an opportunity, for doing our own way and following our own mistaken and short-sighted desires, but let us by love serve God and one another, and thus attain unto what is indeed the glorious liberty of the children of God.

"Then said Jesus unto those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."



"All the truths of religion conspire to one end — spiritual liberty."

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*Religious Liberty: Its Scope and Foundation**

IN its ordinary signification the term religious liberty means a certain sort of civil, social liberty. It means liberty to do those things, those acts, which one wishes to do as acts of religion and worship, and freedom to refrain from doing those things, those acts, which one does not wish to do as acts of religion and worship. It means freedom from restraint, compulsion, or authoritative direction, especially by government, in all matters which have to do with religion and worship. It means that so long as an individual does not invade any right of others he is to be absolutely free from interference, especially from the interference of government (for in the nature of things such interference can come only through government in most instances) in obeying the dictates of his own conscience in the profession and practise of religion.

*Some months ago the editor of THE SENTINEL was asked to prepare and read at a religious meeting devoted to the consideration of the matter of religious liberty a paper on this topic. This he did; and though he had not expected to present it in THE SENTINEL, and certainly not all at one time, he has found himself obliged, in order that this number might be issued on time, to use it as "copy" for this issue, circumstances having delayed the preparation of other matter. He asks to be pardoned for presenting an article of such length in one issue, and for failure to have the paper filled instead with such matter of timeliness and variety as it should be filled with. As to the article or paper itself, he wishes to say that he makes no claim to originality in the ideas presented, and to acknowledge his indebtedness in its preparation to others who have written on the points presented.

And it means also that no religious belief or practise can ever in itself be considered an invasion of the rights of others, however diverse such belief or practise may be from their own; and that no religious belief or practise can ever of itself afford the slightest ground for the invasion in any degree of even the least of the rights that belong to any human being. The authority of government can be exerted only in behalf of some right which it recognizes and undertakes to protect, and though government may recognize and undertake to protect what we term religious liberty, it can know no invasion of that liberty until there is an invasion of what we term civil liberty — until there is a denial, or threatened denial, of some civil, social right.

We hear it commonly said that civil liberty and religious liberty go hand in hand, that one cannot endure if the other is denied, and especially that civil liberty cannot continue if religious liberty is denied. This is most certainly true; and why is it true? It is true because, so far as civil government can have to do with the matter, so far as the thing comes within the sphere of civil government, the two are essentially the same thing. Religious liberty, in the sense in which it is commonly and almost universally understood, and in the only sense in which it can be guaranteed and maintained by civil

government, is civil, social liberty. If one will think the matter over carefully he will see that there cannot be, and that there never has been, any religious persecution (so-called) by government, or for that matter by any authority whatever, that was anything more nor less, whatever may have been its inspiration or object, than an invasion and denial of those fundamental and inalienable human rights, divine of course in their origin, to which the founders of the American Republic referred in the phrase, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Though a most important one, religious liberty in its ordinary sense is but one phase of these inalienable human rights. Though it is not commonly so regarded, especially by those whose attention has been centered upon that phase of human rights which has to do with religious liberty, and who have felt their liberty endangered and invaded only at that point, it seems to me that the right of the individual to freedom from injustice and oppression is as sacred in any other direction as it is in the matter of religious profession and practise, and that the ground of protest against injustice and oppression in one direction cannot be essentially different from the ground of protest against injustice and oppression in any other direction.

I emphasize this point because there is a proneness with some ardent friends of religious liberty to make a distinction here that it seems to me does not exist, and to take a position that it seems to me is fatal to the whole contention for religious liberty in the ordinary sense. It is held in effect that while it is highly proper to oppose and protest against any encroachment upon what is termed religious liberty, that it may not be proper at all to make any opposition and protest against encroachments upon what is termed civil

liberty. It is thought that a Christian has a latitude for opposition to an invasion of what is termed his religious liberty that he does not have at all for opposition to an invasion of his liberty in other directions. This idea is, in brief: Hold tenaciously to your religious liberty, never admit the right of any authority to invade it; but yield up your liberty in other directions whenever called upon to do so.

It is not strange that such an idea should obtain, and I do not say that it is altogether wrong. While religious liberty in its ordinary sense is in fact civil, social liberty, it is a civil, social liberty of which human beings are exceedingly tenacious, and necessarily so, for tyranny and oppression at this point run counter to the deepest instincts and principles of the human heart. The nature of man is such that he instinctively revolts at the idea of controlling the mind and conscience by force, by means of outward pains and penalties. He feels that his relation to God is above all human authority, that that worship which is not free and voluntary is destitute of virtue and unacceptable to God, that no power or authority can of right interpose itself between the soul and the object of its worship. And therefore that interference with his liberty and freedom, that *civil* tyranny, which assumes, though it is powerless to change or alter the thing in reality, that his relation to God is not above human authority, that worship may be compelled and coerced, and that there may be interposition between the soul and the object of its worship, is especially repulsive and abhorrent to him.

But since there is no difference between the right of public assemblage when it is exercised by the most devout of religious people for the purpose of worshiping and praising God, and when

it is exercised by the most obdurate of unbelievers for the purpose, perhaps, of blaspheming God; since there is no difference between that social, civil liberty by which a man is free to be the most earnest and devoted of Christians and another is equally free to be the most earnest and positive of atheists, it cannot be that there is that distinction between religious liberty in its ordinary sense and liberty in other directions that is assumed in the idea to which I have called attention. So far as it relates to the sphere in which civil government operates that idea assumes something and rests upon something that does not exist. I do not undertake to define the latitude that a Christian has to "stand up for his rights," to say to what extent he can consistently do so; but I do say that if he yields them at one point he cannot consistently refuse to yield them at another, and if he refuses to yield them at one point he cannot consistently yield them at another. He cannot say, I will take joyfully and without protest the spoiling of my goods, the trampling upon my rights, the denial of my liberty, if it be done without reference to religion, but if religion is in any way involved in it, then I appeal unto Caesar. If unprotesting submission to injustice is proper in the one case, so is it in the other; and if appeal unto Caesar is proper in the one case, so is it in the other. If it were otherwise, then some of our doctrines concerning religious liberty would need radical revision, for it would be true after all that religion is entitled to the special favor and protection of government. The idea to which I have called attention logically leads to the position, if it is not in fact itself that position, that an individual has a special right, a right that is entitled to the special protection of government, to do an act that is

connected with religion and worship that he does not have to do an act that is not connected with religion and worship; that, for instance, there is a special, higher and more sacred right to assemble for worship than to assemble for some other purpose. But this is only to get back to the old ideas and doctrines that are the enemies of religious liberty, and from which it has delivered us.

So when friends of religious liberty lay such great stress and emphasis upon that phase of human rights which has to do with religion and worship, and at the same time insist that human rights in other directions shall be looked at in an entirely different way and counted as of small consequence and value, they are, at least it seems so to me, but undermining the very thing they wish to uphold, for religious liberty in its ordinary sense is but civil, social liberty, and if civil, social liberty is to be surrendered in some directions without protest, then what is termed religious liberty must likewise be surrendered without protest. A person has no right, and certainly not a champion of religious liberty, to expect that its religious character shall give to any act, to any right, a special standing before the law.

And so it is not strange that the demand for religious liberty, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, for greater liberty of worship than had hitherto been enjoyed, which came with and followed the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, was the beginning of that movement for greater social and political liberty which has been the great distinguishing feature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is not strange that the assertion of the right of freedom of worship — the right to be free from the interference of government in the profession and practise

of religion — loosened the bands of political despotism, derolished the pretensions of civil rulers that had gone unquestioned for centuries, awoke the people of the nations to some realization of the dignity and worth of man as man, and at last made the ancient and hoary doctrine of the divine right of kings the jest of mankind.

And it is not strange that from the seeds planted and watered by those whose love of, and determination to have, freedom to worship God as they chose caused them to flee from the tyranny of the Old World to the wilds of the New — I say it is not strange that from the seeds of liberty of conscience, of independence of thought (even though in their ignorance it was for some of them but liberty and independence for themselves), planted and watered by such people—the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Quakers, the Baptists, the Huguenots, yes, and even some Catholics — there developed in due time the freest nation politically that the world had ever seen; a nation which founded a government not on the old, false, despotic *theory* of the sovereignty of government and the subjection of the people, but on the self-evident truth of the subjection of government and the sovereignty of the people; a nation which made the welfare of the individual its great object and held aloft the rights of man *as man* as the supreme concern of government. And it is not strange that the nation which repudiated the almost hallowed maxims and traditions of political despotism, which proclaimed instead of the power and pomp of the *institutions* which man has set up, the dignity and rights of man, of the *individual*, of the being that God has made — I say it is not strange that the nation which recognized and respected the human rights of human beings as no nation had ever done be-

fore, laid as the chief cornerstone of its political edifice, established as the supreme right of citizenship, freedom of worship — religious liberty.

Most Complete Exemplification in the United States

It is in the United States that the religious liberty I have described has had its most complete exemplification. It was here that at last the true idea as to the relation between church and state was grasped in its fulness. It was here that it was at last seen that the true remedy for the terrible scourge of persecution was to exclude religion entirely from the cognizance of government, to confine civil government strictly to the sphere of civil things. And the founders of the American Republic had the courage of their convictions in this respect. As far as lay in their power they established an entire and eternal separation of church and state, religion and government, in the United States. And so thoroughly true is it that in doing so they broke with the hitherto unbroken practise of the ages, that the doctrine of the separation of church and state is known as the "American idea," and is looked upon by the world as America's great contribution to the treasury of civilization. And so true is it that this doctrine has had its most complete exemplification in the United States that in the Old World to-day there is but one country in which the separation of church and state in the American sense obtains; and that country does not govern itself, and very likely would not have such separation if it did. It is said that since 1869, when the Church of England was disestablished in the country and certain endowments to other religious bodies were discontinued, there has been an entire separation of church and state in Ireland. While the constitution of Swit-

zerland contains a guarantee of religious liberty almost as broad and ample as any to be found in America, the establishment of convents and religious orders is prohibited, Jesuits are excluded from the country, and each canton has an established church in which the civil magistrate controls.

The establishment and maintenance of religious freedom in America, the putting into practise of the doctrine of separation of church and state, has developed and caused to become fixed and established as principles of governmental policy several distinct points, and these several points of distinction make up the American idea of religious liberty or separation of church and state. These points, as they are given by Mr. Sanford H. Cobb in a recently published work on "The Rise of Religious Liberty in America," are these:

1. The civil power has no authority in, or over, the individual or the church, touching matters of faith, worship, order, discipline, or polity.

2. The church has no power in the state to direct its policy or action, otherwise than its influence may be felt in the persuasion of the public mind towards the principles it teaches.

3. The state cannot appropriate public moneys to the church, or for the propagation of religion, or any particular form of religion.

4. The church cannot look to the state for any support of its worship or institutions, otherwise than, like all other corporations, it may appeal, and must submit, to legislation and judicial decisions in matters of pecuniary trust and foundations, the ground of which legislation and decisions is not at all religious, but strictly civil.

5. The civil power cannot exercise any preference among the various churches or sects, but must hold all as having equal rights under the law, and as equally entitled to whatever protection under the law circumstances may furnish need for.

6. The civil power may not make any distinction among citizens on account

of religion, unless the following thereof is dangerous to society. Neither the right to vote nor to hold office is to be invalidated because of opinions on the matter of religion. Nor, again, is a citizen's right to bear witness, or to inherit property, to be called into question for reasons of religion.

Of course the term "church" as used here, and as used anywhere in the broad sense that it is in the phrase "church and state," does not mean a particular religious body, but is a general term in which is included the whole religious phase of society. There are some Americans, many of them unfortunately, so simple as to think, if we are to judge by the attitude they manifest frequently in some things, that the doctrine of separation of church and state means the separation of the state from any particular church, that no particular church is to receive special favor from the state, but that it is all right for the state to give special aid to religion if in doing so it gives equal aid to all the churches and discriminates against none. The person who entertains this idea has scarcely any conception whatever of the true doctrine of the separation of church and state. The separation of church and state as it was established and as it was intended to exist in the United States means the separation of religion and the state, that the civil authority is to have nothing to do with matters of faith and worship, regardless of whether they be "non-sectarian" and "inter-denominational" or not. The term church is used as it is in the phrase "church and state" because it is in organizations known as churches that the religious life of society expresses itself, even as it is in the state that the political life of society expresses itself. And unless religion is manifested in some organized form it cannot very well be united with the state, unless, as was the case with

the ancient pagan nations, of which Rome was a conspicuous example, the political and religious life of the nation be expressed in one and the same social organization — the state.

Some Relics of the Old System of Things Remain

But while it is true that religious liberty has been realized in America as nowhere else, and the true principle has been recognized and established in the supreme law of the nation and has virtually become the common law throughout the land, some relics of the old church-and-state system of things are still to be found even to-day after a century and a quarter of religious liberty and the "new order of things." It can hardly be said that a citizen's right to bear witness is not called in question for reasons of religion when a condition of his testifying in a court of justice is that he must lay his hand on a book that is regarded as *the* book of religion and solemnly take an oath which has reference to the sanctions of religion and the penalties which are to be received in some other state than this, and which God and not man is to visit. It can hardly be said that the state does not appropriate public moneys for the propagation of religion when teachers of religion — chaplains — are maintained in the army and navy and are employed to pray in the places of legislation at public expense, or when the educational and semi-charitable institutions of religious bodies are given grants from public treasuries, or when the missionary-educational work of religious bodies receives support from the public treasury, as was the case for a term of years not long ago when the national government gave annual grants of money to most of the leading religious bodies of the country for their missionary-educational work among the Indians. And the custom,

which seems to be more scrupulously adhered to now than formerly, on the part of the chief executive officer of the nation and of each State of appointing a day for thanksgiving each year and of officially directing or recommending that the people assemble in their respective places of worship and there worship God, seems hardly consistent with the idea that the civil power is limited to civil things and has no authority in matters of faith and worship.

But there remains, unfortunately, a still more serious relic of that old system of things which it was supposed that America had shaken off entirely, and which she certainly had in principle. Would you believe me when I tell you that on the statute books of every State in this nation, with one, and possibly two, exceptions, there is a law, a penal statute, which is absolutely opposed to and utterly irreconcilable with the idea that the church cannot look to the state for any support of its worship or institutions, and that the civil power has no authority in or over the individual or the church in matters of faith, worship, order, discipline, etc.; a statute which could never have been enacted and which cannot exist except upon the assumption that the church *can* look to the state for support for its worship and institutions, and that the civil power *does* have authority in matters of faith and worship and church polity and discipline? And would you believe me when I tell you that here and there throughout the United States, unfortunately and with ill omen far more so in the last two decades than ever before in the history of the country, the civil rights of individuals are frequently invaded, their property is confiscated in the shape of fines, and sometimes they are imprisoned, and even in some instances have been placed

in the chain-gang, not because they interfere with any right of their fellow-citizens, not because they threaten the public peace or in any way endanger the welfare of the state or of society, but because they do not observe and do not yield a certain religious deference and respect to a religious observance, to an institution of the church, to an institution which had its origin in religion and which has no meaning and no existence except as an institution of religion and of the church, but which long ago, in the church-and-state systems of Europe, became entrenched in the civil law? And would you believe me that twice within the last ten years the national government itself, contrary to all its previous course, has enacted very similar legislation and has given its sanction to the whole principle of such legislation? I refer to the legislation by which the observance of the "Lord's Day" (so-called) is enforced by the state by the prohibition-as crimes and misdemeanors "common labor," "worldly employments," amusements, sports, etc., on "the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday." It can hardly be said that in any American State which has a Sunday law, and, as I have said, nearly every one of them have such laws, the civil power exercises no preference among the various churches or sects, but holds all as having equal rights under the law and as equally entitled to the protection of the law. Such legislation plainly discriminates in favor of the religious class that observes Sunday and against all those religious people who observe any other day and all those people who do not feel that they are under obligation to observe any day. It would not affect the matter a particle if there were but one non-Sunday observer in the State, and if every other person in the State

belonged to the religious class that observed Sunday as a religious institution. Such legislation would still be an unwarrantable exercise of preference for a religious class and discrimination against the single dissenter.

Religious Liberty in Truth—Its Source and Foundation

So much for religious liberty in its ordinary sense. But religious liberty is infinitely more than what I have described, and it has a foundation infinitely greater than man's aversion for tyranny and his love of liberty; for behind the ineradicable love of freedom, behind the spirit which can never accept tyranny and oppression as its lot, is something which I can only very imperfectly suggest, and which I am unworthy to speak of at all. It is something that leads into an ocean of thought that is fathomless to the greatest of intellects.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

There's a wideness in His mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice
That is more than liberty."

The source and foundation of religious liberty, as of everything that is good, and true, and joy-inspiring and ennobling, is the great kindness, mercy, and love of our God — is God Himself, for "God is love;" His nature, His law, is love; and, as it seems to me, religious liberty in its last analysis is the service, the life, of love — the glad, the free, the uncoerced conformity of the creature to the will and purpose of the great Creator of all.

Religious liberty is liberty in that highest of all spheres — the sphere of moral and spiritual relations, the sphere in which man and all created intelligences have relations with their Maker

and with their fellow-beings as children of God. This is the sphere of God's government, the sphere in which an infinitely higher law than force governs — even the law of love — yes, the law of *love*, not that fatal counterfeit self-love, self-asserting love, that has brought into the universe that utterly foreign, unnatural and abnormal thing: force, compulsion, coercion.

But though coercion has come, and in this world seems indispensable in order to maintain a tolerable degree of order and justice, it is destitute of moral force, it is utterly powerless to inspire and uplift the soul. It may repress crime, but it cannot produce righteousness. Love remains, and can never cease to be, the law of the moral sphere. And that means that the beings God has created have perfect freedom of choice in serving Him. They are free to worship their Creator or not to worship Him; to love Him or not to love Him; to yield obedience to His will or not to yield; to fulfil His purpose concerning them or not to fulfil it. And this is religious liberty; but not religious liberty in its deepest and truest sense. It is the religious liberty that is absolutely essential in order that a deeper and truer religious liberty may be attained and enjoyed.

In the nature of things the law of religious liberty, of freedom of choice, preceded the creation of intelligent beings, and must have attended and been coincident with the very purpose of their creation itself. The very constitution of the mind shows that He who made it made it to be free; that He made it so that they who would bring it into bondage could succeed only in destroying it. "Freedom of thought is the only kind of thought there is; not to be free to think is to be unable to think." The mind cannot be *commanded* to think this or to think that,

to believe this or to believe that. It will think only what it will think, and will believe only what it will believe. If there is any power in the universe that can deprive the mind of its power of choice, it is that power of choice itself, which may do so by long perversion of this divine gift. Self-direction is the divine prerogative of every intelligence.

Let us see, as best we can, why this is the case. We can conceive of a time when there were no created intelligences, from the very fact that they were created. Perhaps we know little of God's purpose in filling the universe with intelligences. We read in the Scriptures of the eternal purpose which He hath purposed in Himself and in Christ Jesus our Lord, and which from times eternal hath been hid in Himself. We know that this purpose is in Christ, but the riches of Christ are unsearchable, and "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" — that is, the things to enjoy which he brought intelligent beings into existence. But we do know, and perhaps we know little of what that means, that God created these beings for His glory. We know that these beings were to be in their sphere and to the full capacity of their natures a reproduction of their Creator Himself, and that it was designed that they should find in Him that which evoked their supreme reverence and adoration and satisfied the deepest yearnings of their natures. They were made to love God, to worship Him, to observe the law which is the reflection of His character, to conform their characters to His, to be in perfect harmony with Him and all the beings He has made.

I cannot do better here than to quote the words of another, as indicating the

spring of God's purpose in creating intelligences: "Let us go back to the time when there was no created thing; back to the eternal counsels of the Father and the Son. The existence of God is not a self-satisfied existence. His love is not self-love. His joy is not fulfilled in wrapping Himself within Himself, and sitting solitary and self-centered. His love is satisfied only in flowing out to those who will receive and enjoy it to the full. His joy is fulfilled only in carrying to an infinite universe full of blessed intelligencies the fulness of eternal joy. Standing then, in thought, with Him before there was a single intelligent creature created, He desires that the universe shall be full of joyful intelligences enjoying His love to the full."

This brings to our minds the spring which caused the creation of intelligences, and it seems to me that we have here a most wonderful and inspiring glimpse of the character of our God. His joy is in giving happiness to others; His nature is such that He cannot dwell alone; He must have beings to enjoy His love and to return love to Him.

Now in order for this purpose of love, this purpose of infinite beneficence, to be carried out, these beings had to be made free moral agents. We know something of the nature of love. We know it cannot be manufactured; it cannot be forced. It must be free, voluntary. In order for these beings to be capable of loving their Creator, they had to be free *not* to love Him. In order for them to be capable of rendering service worthy of themselves and Him who was the author of their being, they had to be free *not* to serve Him. In order for them to truly worship, they had to be free *not* to worship if they chose; for unless one is free *not* to worship, he cannot be free to worship. In order for these beings to be

of joy to Him who had made them, in order for them to be capable of being to Him that which could satisfy Him in creating them, they had to be free moral agents. Without the power and freedom of choice they would have been but machines, not free intelligences that could be of blessing to themselves and one another and of honor, praise, and glory to Him who had given them existence.

I say they *had* to be free moral agents. I do not mean that God *had* to make them such. I mean that since it was God who was making them, since it was *He* whose children they were to be, they could not be made other than free moral agents. The character of our Heavenly Father is such that when He came to make beings whom He would have to rejoice in Him and His works, to share His joy and to be His children, He could not make them otherwise than free to choose to serve Him or not to serve Him. To have made them otherwise would have frustrated the very purpose of their creation; for then they could not have grasped in any degree nor have returned to Him in any degree the love which was the very spring of His purpose in giving them existence.

And thus, because of His love, because of His character, because of what He is, because He is God, our Heavenly Father has made His children free moral agents, has endowed them with the power of choice. To quote again the words of another: "He has *made* them free to choose, and has *left* them perfectly free to choose. He made them free to think *as* they choose. God is the author of intelligence, of freedom of choice, and of freedom of thought. And He will forever respect that of which He is the author. He will never invade to a hair's breadth the freedom of angel or man to choose for himself,

nor to think as he chooses. He has made all intelligences free to choose, and to think as they chose and therefore free to sin *if* they choose. And God is infinitely more honored in making intelligences thus, than He could possibly be in making them so that they could not think nor choose, so that they would not be intelligent, but mere machines."

And thus God can never employ force in securing the obedience of His creatures. He depends upon His character to hold their allegiance. Only by love is love awakened. He has given to every intelligent creature power to understand his requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His laws, and the sacredness and immutability of His claims. He will have, He can accept, only that homage which springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. The allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction in their own minds of His justice and benevolence; upon the conviction that the sovereignty of God involves fulness of blessing to all created beings, that in the existence of God's government is bound up the welfare of the universe and all its inhabitants.

Thus religious liberty has its origin and foundation in the very heart and character of God himself. It is a principle that exists in His very nature, that springs from His infinite love. And so the purpose of religious liberty preceded the creation of intelligent beings; and in creating such beings God had to take the risk of their choosing not to serve Him, not to love Him. And that risk involved the plan of salvation; and so that wonderful plan, of which we study so much and know so little as yet, was devised even before the first creature was made. And so for the sake of religious liberty, for this great principle of freedom of

choice, God made provision, in the counsels of eternity with His Son, that in case any of the beings to be created should fail to respond in love and obedience to the beneficence of His character as it was to be seen in all His works, that He would make the greatest display of His love that it were possible; He would exhaust the utmost resources of Heaven itself in the supreme effort to reawaken love, to win back those who had misapprehended His character and fallen into the bondage of sin. He would yield His Son to become one with those who had fallen, to die in their behalf, in order that those who had rebelled against Him might have a second freedom to choose joy and life; and in order that the universe might know indeed that His character was love, and that by love alone He would hold the allegiance of His creatures.

And we know that it became necessary for this plan to be carried out; for the purpose of infinite love which God had purposed in His Son in eternity to be especially manifested to sinful beings. And in all that has been done in the carrying out of this plan we can and should see the great truth of religious liberty. Whether it be God's dealings with patriarchs and prophets, the tabernacle and its services, or whatever it may have been that has had connection with the plan of salvation, it was all for the purpose of revealing and manifesting the character of God to those who had wandered from Him, in order that they might, of their own free choice, return to His service of love.

And thus when we come to the Bible we do not find this great truth of religious liberty stated so much in set words, but rather we find it as a great principle underlying all of which the Bible teaches us. But there are many

passages, even in the Old Testament, which directly apply to and enunciate this principle. But it was when Christ came in the fulness of time to reveal the love and character of God to men, and to utter things which had "been kept secret from the foundation of the world," that this great truth was made most plain; and it is back to the "voice in Judea, breaking day for the greatest epoch in the life of humanity," that men look for the origin of the truth of religious liberty in the world.

When He came the world was dark through misapprehension of God; it had reached the height of spiritual blindness and the depth of moral degradation. Religion indeed overspread the earth, but, from the greatest blessing, it had through corruption and alienation from the spirit and principles of heaven, become the curse of mankind. Force in religion had become the almost unquestioned practise, and the union of church and state, of religion and civil government, was well-nigh universal. In that world and at that time came the voice in Judea, proclaiming a pure, spiritual, and universal religion — a religion which by its very nature upheld and vindicated the freedom of the conscience of the individual. Then was the line drawn between the things of Caesar and the things of God; then was it made known to men that the kingdom of heaven is not of the kingdoms of the earth; that the law of the kingdom of heaven is love and not force. "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever shall be great among you, let him be your minister; and whoso-

ever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." "And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

These are the particular words of Jesus to which we turn for the truth of religious liberty; for the proof that human equality and the freedom of the conscience of the individual are cardinal principles of Christianity, and that force cannot serve the ends of the kingdom of heaven. But it seems to me that in all Christ's life, in all His teachings, in all His words, this truth is taught. It seems to me that the Sermon on the Mount is one grand lesson in religious liberty. There the soul and conscience of the individual was and is addressed; religion was shown to be a thing of the conscience and life, a relation between the soul and the Author of righteousness; and the way to what is indeed religious liberty was made plain. How vain, how futile, how repulsive in the light of that grand discourse is the idea of attempting to employ force in behalf of religion, of attempting to produce righteousness by outward pressure and constraint.

I say that in the Sermon on the Mount the way to what is indeed religious liberty is made plain. And with

that I must say that I have as yet scarcely touched upon what is indeed and in truth religious liberty; and I can only suggest it now. In the last analysis religious liberty is not simply freedom of choice, but it is freedom of choice and then choice of the right, choice to continue to be free to choose. It is not simply freedom to choose to serve God or not to serve Him, but it is freedom to choose, and then to choose to serve Him and to serve Him. In its highest sense religious liberty is inward, spiritual freedom; and this freedom is possessed only by him who is in harmony with the Author of his being, with the Author of all liberty.

So we have the noble endowment of freedom of choice in order that integrity and righteousness of character may be developed; in order that we may be free indeed; but, if we choose, we may make of this very thing, glorious as it is, the means of terrible, and even hopeless bondage. God has done all that He can, but He has to leave it to us to determine whether we shall have freedom or bondage. This was the thought in the mind of the poet Whittier when he wrote these lines:

“ Though God be good and free be
heaven,

No force divine can love compel;
And, though the song of sins forgiven
May sound through lowest hell,

The sweet persuasion of His voice
Respects thy sanctity of will.

He giveth day: thou hast thy choice
To walk in darkness still.

No word of doom may shut thee out,
No wind of wrath may downward
whirl,

No swords of fire keep watch about
The open gates of pearl;

A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth a sweeter hymn,
May shine and sound forever on,
And thou be deaf and dim.

Forever round the Mercy-seat

The guiding lights of Love do burn;
But what if, habit-bound, thy feet
Shall lack the *will* to turn?

What if thine eye refuse to see,

Thine ear of Heaven's free welcome
fail,

And thou a *willing* captive be,
Thyself thy own dark jail? ”

Obedience to God the Way of Life

In conclusion I wish to emphasize, or rather I can again only imperfectly suggest, something as to the real nature of the service of God, of obedience to His law. We say that God's laws are not arbitrary requirements; but do we enter into the depth of the meaning of that? God's laws are not merely the wise, good, beneficent requirements of a great, beneficent being. They are the *way of life*, the conditions of existence; not arbitrarily imposed conditions, but conditions which exist in the very nature of things, conditions that are as unalterable and unchangeable as God Himself, for they spring from God as He is. And so we read: “ The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the *way of life*. ” “ He that layeth hold upon them *findeth life*; he that forgetteth them *wrongeth his own soul*; all they that hate them *love death*. ” “ Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is *thy life*. ” When God asks us to obey His laws He asks us to come into harmony with our real selves, to conform to the conditions of our existence, *to live and not die*. “ Why will ye die? ” is His appeal to the sinner. He says He has “ no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way *and live*. ”

If life can become something else than life, then may the conditions of life be changed; if joy, if love, if harmony, if liberty may become something

else than what they are, then may the conditions by which joy, love, harmony, and liberty exist and have always existed, be altered. That is to say, if God can become other than God, then may the laws of God be altered. But so long as life remains life, and joy, and love, and harmony, and liberty remain joy, love, harmony and liberty—so long as God remains God—so long will the welfare and happiness of every creature and the harmony of the universe depend upon conformity to the conditions of life, of joy, of love, of harmony, of liberty; depend upon obedience—and I fear we sometimes get a wrong impression from that word—depend upon obedience to the laws of God, the laws of Him who is the Author of life, of joy, of love, of harmony, of liberty.

Perhaps God's creatures would never have known that He had laws, or that they were subject to laws, had not some of them gotten off the course of life, become alienated from the life of God. "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly" and unholy. Paul says, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Is it not equally true that no creature would ever have known that there was a law against coveting had not lust developed in some creatures impelling them to covet? The Ten Commandments, which are to us the law of God, were "added because of transgressions." Going out of the path, the way, of life causes the conditions of life to be expressed concretely, to be formulated into commandments, causes guide-posts, as it were, to be set up, so that the wrong course may be seen; and thus the departure becomes transgression.

And we can see that God's law for His created intelligences, the law of the

moral sphere, the sphere in which the great principle of religious liberty applies, exists in the very nature of things, exists by virtue of the very relation of God's creatures to Himself and to one another. "When the first intelligence was created, he owed to God as the Author of his being, his existence, all that he was or could be, his heart, soul, might, mind, and strength; and it devolved upon him to render to his Creator the tribute of all this, to love God with all his being. And when the second being and all other intelligences were made, each of them owed to their Creator the same tribute; but in addition each intelligence now owed another duty, for another relationship had come, the relation of one created intelligence owing all to God and having nothing self-derived to another and other created intelligences owing all to God and having nothing self-derived. All were equal before God, with no ground of preference the one above another, but each and all having the same rights, standing the same, and therefore each under the same obligation and duty to regard every other one as highly as himself, and to care for another's welfare equally with his own."

And thus, in the very relation that had to exist between God and not only the first but every created intelligence, and in the very relation that had to exist between all created intelligences when others became the companions of the first, we have the first and second commandments, the two great commandments in which we know from the words of Christ to the lawyer all moral law is comprehended: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God

(Concluded on second page of this number.)

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