

**A DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL
ELECTION, JANUARY 4, 1832: BEFORE HIS
EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN, GOVERNOR, HIS
HONOR THOMAS L. WINTHROP, LIEUTENANT
GOVERNOR, THE HONORABLE COUNCIL, AND
THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS**

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A Discourse Delivered at the Annual Election, January 4, 1832: Before His Excellency Levi Lincoln, governor, his honor Thomas L. Winthrop, lieutenant governor, the honorable council, and the legislature of Massachusetts by Paul Dean

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BY PAUL DEAN.

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1831.

DISCOURSE.

"THE POWERS THAT BE, ARE ORDAINED OF GOD."

Rom. 13th Chapter, part of the 1st Verse.

As an Ambassador of God, St. Paul not only sought to bring his fellow men to the obedience of the Gospel, but he also endeavored to induce them to a cheerful submission to order and civil government. These duties he urged, by motives of expediency and of religious obligation, on the grounds, that both religion and government were the ordinances of God, designed for the promotion of virtue and happiness; having appropriate spheres of operation and influence, and the highest claims upon Christians for their faithful observance; the one as the special guardian of their temporal and secular interests, and the other of their spiritual and everlasting felicity. This view of the subject adds a high and holy sanction to the authority of civil

government, and justly entitles Christianity to the respect and love of the human race.

To express this respect, and gratefully to recognize Divine Providence in the conduct and destiny of all human affairs and governments, we are now, after the example of pious ancestors, assembled in this consecrated temple to present thank-offerings for his abundant mercies to our land, and devoutly to seek his aid for the rulers and his blessing for the people of the Commonwealth.

The commencement of a new political year, when its duties, responsibilities, and untried vicissitudes, lie before us, seems to be a time marked by nature and set apart by devotion, to pause a moment from the cares of office and the conflict of party and worldly feelings, and give ourselves to serious reflection. Let us, therefore, my friends, avail ourselves of this favorable season to inquire into the connection which should be preserved between religion and government, and to consider the advantages of popular governments and the dangers to which they are exposed.

Revealed Religion has engaged the best feelings and the noblest exertions of the most distinguished benefactors of the world, in ancient and modern times. Holy men have spoken as they were moved by the Divine Spirit, and performed works

which none others could accomplish, in confirmation of its truth and the benignity of its character. And in after times it has numbered among its devoted friends the immortal names of a Newton, a Boyle, a Locke, a Hale, an Addison, a Milton and a Washington, with a host of others, who have shed a lustre on the ages and countries that gave them birth. Nor has civil government been less remarkable for the eminent talents devoted to its investigation, and the exalted patriotism employed in its service. Among the most celebrated of ancient legislators were Moses, of the Hebrews; Trismegistus, of the Egyptians; Pythagoras, of the Grecians; and Solon, of the Athenians and Romans; and in modern times the most illustrious conquerors, philosophers, christians, and philanthropists, have given their united aid to the support of civil government. Notwithstanding these masters of science, these ornaments of the schools have so fully established the authority and utility of religion and government; yet the subject of their connection has been left greatly perplexed, and occasioned much division of opinion. Although it has been generally admitted, that there should be a political union of Church and State, yet it has not been agreed, whether the State should govern the Church, or the Church rule the State.

Artful and ambitious men, perceiving that religion and government were the two mighty engines by which the world is moved, have sought, by uniting their potent influence to exert the most powerful sway, at once, over the minds and the bodies of their fellow men. Most of the governments of the East, and of modern Europe, have made religion the mere handmaid of the state, assumed the prerogative of defining its doctrines, dictating its forms, and regulating its administrations—have constituted the Chief Magistrate the “Head of the Church,” the “Defender of the Faith,” and the “Viceroy of the Majesty of Heaven ;” and thus employed its benign influence over the consciences, hopes, and fears of men, for the glory of their thrones, the splendor of their courts, the wealth of their families, and the enforcement of arbitrary laws. By this unballowed prostitution of its power, this most degrading employment of its influence, the holy, peaceful, and Heaven-descended Religion of the Son of God has been made to minister at the altars of pride, ambition, and oppression ; and to sanction, by her perverted and approving voice, the most unholy and desolating wars, and the most cruel and bloody persecutions.

The papal power, although it approved of the union, reversed the order, placing the church at the

head, and making the state subservient to her will. Hence the popes, when at the zenith of their power and worldly glory, claimed to be "the supreme legislators of the church universal," "arbiters of the fate of kingdoms and empires," and the "supreme rulers of the kings and princes of the earth." Under this order of things the noblest patriotism, the most sacred claims of justice, the glory of the state, and the liberty of man, were sacrificed at the shrine of pontifical supremacy and ecclesiastical domination; and thus government, designed for the protection of liberty and equal rights, was made the instrument of the most degrading and oppressive despotism that ever scourged human society. This assumption of the church, this perversion of ecclesiastical power, this fruitful source of moral and political evils has led some unreflecting politicians to discard the proper and legitimate influence of religion upon the civil and moral interests of community. But if this conclusion be just, it follows that Christians are absolved from all allegiance to civil government; for that also has been perverted by ambitious tyrants; doctrines which if adopted, would cause the tide of civilization to roll back upon the ages of barbarism; and instead of the beautiful temple of civil and religious liberty, we

should behold the appalling spectacle of infidelity and anarchy reigning in sullen majesty over its prostrated ruins.

Though there is no point in moral or political science the truth of which is more thoroughly established than that there should be no such union between civil and religious polity as that which has been described, and no such alliance between the rulers of the church and the state, as would endanger the liberty of the people; yet experience has made it equally certain, that for society to be long prosperous, free, and happy, there must be laws and religion, each respected by the people, and each contributing its respective quota to the public welfare. Thus connected, religion and government will prove to be mutual checks upon each other, and mutual guardians of enlightened freedom.

For the purpose of illustrating more fully the nature and character of this connection, we may consider the origin, end, and sphere of each.

Christianity claims a divine origin; to be founded on an immediate revelation from Heaven, and to flow from the love of God to man. This claim is sustained by miracles of benevolence, the accomplishment of predictions, a complete self consistency, and a system of means and operations perfectly adapted to effect designs which, from their great-