

**THE RELATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE
REPUBLIC. A SERMON DELIVERED BEFORE
HIS EXCELLENCY MARCUS MORTON,
GOVERNOR, HIS HONOR HENRY H.
CHILDS, AT THE ANNUAL ELECTION, ON
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1844**

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The relation of the individual to the republic. A sermon delivered before His Excellency Marcus Morton, governor, His Honor Henry H. Childs, at the annual election, on Wednesday, January 3, 1844 by E. H. Chapin

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E. H. CHAPIN

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The Relation of the Individual to the Republic.

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY MARCUS MORTON,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR HENRY H. CHILDS,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

AT

THE ANNUAL ELECTION,

ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1844.

BY E. H. CHAPIN,

Pastor of the Universalist Church in Charlestown.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JAN. 4, 1844.

ORDERED, That Messrs. FROTHINGHAM, of *Charleston*,
GIBBENS, of *Boston*, and
LATHROP, of *Hastley*,

be a Committee to present the thanks of the House to the Rev. EDWIN H. CHAPIN, for the Discourse delivered by him, yesterday, before the Government of the Commonwealth, and to request a copy thereof for publication: and

ORDERED, That the same Committee cause the usual number of copies of such Discourse to be printed.

CHARLES W. STOREY, Jr., *Clerk*.

SERMON.

I Corinthians, xii. 26.

AND WHETHER ONE MEMBER SUFFER, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR ONE MEMBER BE HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT.

I TRUST that our assembling here to-day is not a mere form; but that devoutly recognizing the reason for which our fathers instituted this service, we cherish not only their custom but their sentiment. Next to the abolition of all religious ordinances, there is nothing so ominous as a hollow and weary observance of them. Nay, this is even worse than violent irreligion, for that is too unnatural to last long, and its terrible earnestness will produce reaction. Rather no observance than a heartless one! If we feel that there is no efficacy in it, then for us it has no propriety.

But I will believe that you sympathize with this occasion. Under a deep sense of that individual responsibility which clings to us in every department

of action, you have come up to this sacred place, worn by the footsteps of many generations, and hallowed by the prayers of those who have long since mouldered into dust, to invoke the wisdom that alone can guide through the perilous mazes of public life, and, in these calmer moments, to ponder some truth that may control the zeal of political excitement.

I alluded, just now, to the sense of individual responsibility that presses upon us in all our conduct. *The importance of the individual in the republic, and the mutual obligations which rest upon him and upon the State*, form the essential ideas of the discourse to which I now invite your attention. The words of the text were applied by the apostle Paul to the christian church; but they are applicable to every Commonwealth, and should be written in letters of light upon all its institutions. They suggest the oneness and the common weal of the body politic, and yet maintain, for each of its members, a distinct and prominent individualism. They give a peculiar significance to the grand truth, that the aggregate which forms the State is made up of UNITS, each containing a moral force, each comprising the law of duty, the light of reason, and the power of will. They declare the relation of all to each, of each to all.

There is a tendency in our day to move in masses,

to rely upon numerical strength, to triumph by associated action. But there is danger, lest in the consideration of concrete results we forget those single sources from which they issue. There is danger, lest we neglect to ask what is the ultimate object of this combination,—does it render back to each individual that additional good which is to be expected from it? And these are considerations for the republic. It is not a separate interest. It has no distinct life of itself. Its pulses throb in the streets, the marts, the homes of the land,—wherever there is moral personality,—wherever there is human responsibility,—wherever there is a man. When private virtue is hazarded upon the perilous cast of expediency,—when the transactions between you and me are vile, when the foundations of principle have rotted away in the individual heart, then the pillars of the republic, however apparent their stability, are infected with decay at the very centre. But if each spirit is informed by truth and loyal to conscience, then the Commonwealth has unfailing resources, from which, through all external defeats, through all internal reverses, it imbibes perpetuity and power.

But the indissoluble connection between the republic and the individual, presents itself in a two-fold aspect. Not only is every man solemnly obli-