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COURT AND CHRISTIANITY.

I learn by a late issue of your paper that a reverend gentleman of this city has publicly declared that the courts have decided that "this is a Christian nation." This is such a remarkable statement from a professed Christian minister, that I cannot but express a few thoughts relative to the truth and propriety of such decision if ever made.

The question arises—by virtue of what law could such a judgment be rendered? Courts are supposed to act by authority of and to decide all cases and questions in conformity with law. The actions of courts without law would be extremely ridiculous if not positively absurd.

The Constitution of our country forbids the making of any law "respecting an establishment of religion." Am I to suppose that the Constitution has been wantonly violated; that courts are acting upon unconstitutional provisions? This would be so if the reverend gentleman's statement be correct. Certainly such a condition of things could not add much to the Christian character of the country nor to the reputation of its judiciary.

The fact that neither the judicial nor law-making departments of the country can have anything to do with religion in their official capacity, is perhaps somewhat suggestive of the condition of the country as to its Christianity—a country in which it can have no encouragement from the source indicated. So far as the courts are concerned, infidelity or atheism is just as good, and has the same rights and liberties as Christianity. Why the rev. gentleman should appeal to such a source for defense of the nation's purity is somewhat inexplicable.

Christianity, I freely admit, should be the pride and boast of this great nation; but we must search for and find it elsewhere than in its courts.

The few Christians that are in the land recognize Christ as the Author of their faith; that the doctrines and principles He taught concerning Christianity, and the practice of these principles, are necessary to constitute a true Christian and make men followers of the Christ. This admitted, we find ourselves under the necessity of turning to the Bible and to the ministers of the day to find evidence of our nation's Christianity. We rely upon the Bible as evidence of Christ's life and teachings, and by examining

closely we may be able to arrive at just conclusions in reference to our country's claims.

Christ's mission to earth was heralded with the cry of "Peace on earth, good will to man." This was the nature and character of the Gospel taught during His ministry. He strove to reconcile the children of men to God, by their doing His will; and to establish peace and fellowship among men, by bringing them all to a unity of that faith and doctrine which He taught. There was but one faith, one Gospel, and one baptism, to which all must submit, to be recognized by Him as His disciples, obedience to which secured to all the same spirit.

Having the same faith and possessing the same spirit, made men one, even as He and the Father were one. "Except ye are one ye are not mine," is Christ's declaration to his followers. No matter what sect or occupation they came from, His most earnest prayer for them was that they might become one. Without this oneness in faith and spirit there is no positive, practical evidence of Christianity.

To believe that Christ died among men and is the Personage He claimed to be, does not alone make men Christians. Men without any religion, and even devils, believe this much as well as the professed Christian ministers who have lived both in his day and in our day. Both history and tradition have stamped a belief in Christ's life upon the minds of both saint and sinner; but it is no evidence today of a holy life for a man to say he believes in Christ. A life conformable in all things to the doctrine and principles He taught can alone be evidence of love for Him. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; if a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him." So spake Jesus.

That portion of the world called Christian is today, as in Christ's day, divided and subdivided into a multitude of faiths and organizations, all at variance with each other; so much so that many will not commune with another sect or society than their own.

A similar state of things existed in the time of Christ when men were zealous in keeping the law, but He recognized none of them as His in their divided and discordant condition. They were opposed to the oneness and spirit of the Gospel which He taught,

and which His followers were required to cherish one towards another.

From the history of the past, and the union required of men in Christ's day, our nation presents a most unchristianlike appearance; and the many sects that are crying "Lo here, and lo there is Christ," are so many evidences that they are indeed anti-Christ in spirit, as well as in the practical development of Christian life.

If Christ were to come again to earth in our day, He would find ample cause to say to the sects, as of yore, "Except ye are one ye are not mine."

Leaving these and many other like scriptural evidences which might be given in support of this cardinal doctrine of Christ, that love, unity, fellowship and perfect communion must characterize the lives of men to make them acceptable to Him, brief reference must be made to the clergy of our day who claim to be ministers of Christ to the people.

They are the class of men who persist in maintaining this constant strife and division, multiplying sect upon sect, society upon society, both recognizing and cultivating the prevailing discordant faiths that constitute our notions of Christianity.

This was a prominent feature of encouragement held out to the few converts made at the late revival meetings held in this city. They could name their own minister, and chose the society with which they would be connected; thus simply consigning converts to a condition of recognized disagreement in church standing and fellowship.

As a class of men, it is pitiable to know they are not what they should be. We do not always find them representing in their lives the life of their Master—the meek and lowly Jesus. Too many of them are educated as other professionals are—for the mere purpose of obtaining a good living by their services. The ministerial circle has not power to claim its ranks from the infamy and criminal disgrace which so frequently appear in the public journals, and which serve to make Christianity a hiss and a byword with the observing mass of the people. There are too many among them who are as willing to send people to hell as to heaven, should they happen to disagree with them as to the way and mode of getting there.

It is a notorious fact that many of the Christian ministers are foremost and unrelenting in their persecution