

Christian virtue, the only true basis of civil liberty.

1st Civil liberty.

2nd Its only true basis.

3rd Christian virtue.

Civil liberty is destined at some future day to be the conviction of the whole human race - An assertion like this is not the offspring of an unbounded hope, it is not the creation of an ^{unreasonable & unresponsible} ~~deluded~~ enthusiasm, but the calm, sober, assured utterance of prophetic experience. Who seeks at this time for a knowledge of the future, must come prepared to wait long & listen attentively, but he may read humbly & gratefully in the assurance that though slow it is yet sure of speed, & the response when it comes will be neither unmeaning nor ambiguous in any way. Thus some sober & enlighten'd judgment that compels the acceptance of the prophecy, forces us to limit the range of its accomplishment to a narrow compass. Experience utters its preceptions, time is at her service to fulfill them. To the narrow & distorted vision of the atheist the world may seem to have been created by nothing & for nothing, but he who does not believe his nature, refuses the convictions of a common judgment & blinds his eyes to all history must believe that even now the human race is working out a destiny.

Of that destiny, though ancient revelation has distinctly promised, it has been dimly disclosed - The day of prophets has gone, but God still speaks in the affairs of men which he governs as truly & authoritatively as when Sinai shook at the thunder of his voice. The same hand that wrote Belshazzar's pressing down, before the startled monarch's eyes, has written on the page of history, in characters still more legible & necessary in translation, the certain downfall of ^{aspiration} monarchy.

The day is ^{marked} ~~marked~~ upon some future calendar that ^{shall} ~~shall~~ be a race of freedom. How futile then the phrenzy of the petty German tyrant, who thinks perhaps to hush the clear strong voice of history, by enjoining to prison walls the man who bids the ^{entire} ~~entire~~ world listen to what she says -

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Civil liberty is destined in some future day to be the emotion of the whole human race - An assertion like this is not the offspring of an unformal hope, it is not the creation of an ^{unreasonable & unresponsible} enthusiasm, but the calm, sober, assured utterance of prophetic experience - Who seeks at this time for a knowledge of the future, must come prepared to wait long & listen attentively, but he may read firmly & quietly in the assurance that though slow it is yet sure of speed, & the response when it comes will be neither unmeaning nor ambiguous in any way - Thus some sober & enlighten'd judgment that compels the acceptance of the prophecy, forbids us to limit the range of its accomplishment to a narrow compass - Experience utters its predictions, time is on her service to fulfill them - To the narrow & distorted view of the atheist the world may seem to have been created by nothing & for nothing, but he who does not believe his nature, rejects the convictions of a canonical judgment & blinds his eyes to all history must believe that even now the human race is working out a destiny.

Of that destiny, though divine revelation has distinctly promised, it has been dimly disclosed - The day of prophets has gone, but God still speaks in the affairs of men which he governs as truly & authoritatively as when Sinai shook at the thunder of his voice - The same hand that with Belshazzar's pressing down, upon the startled monarch's eyes, has written on the page of history, in characters still more legible & necessary in translation, the certain downfall of ^{aspiration} monarchy.

The day is ^{surely} ~~undoubtedly~~ upon some future Calvarian that ^{shall} see a race of freedom - How futile then the phrenzy of the petty human tyrant, who thinks perhaps to smother the clear strong voice of history, by enjoining to prison walls the man who bids the ^{whole} world listen to what she says -

But more than & beyond all our own country stands up a living & convincing
argument, which all logic & logic cannot confute - Besides the evidence &
steady advances toward freedom that history attests, we ask but the unblinded eye
to direct to the ^{present} condition of our country. True this is but a small portion of the
world & race, but a little learn, if you, will learn the whole lump -

Again like the lesser lights of former days there is a possibility that its light
may be diminished for a season, but if it appears as it always has, some
bright & enduring it will eventually lead to the full & perfect day -

Institutions of civil freedom make the truest men -

They put government into each man's hands -

These auspices read you over - Every knee shall bow & every tongue confess
that God is Jehovah & He alone - His designs shall be accomplished
His words shall be wrought. His laws shall prevail & be accomplished

Let us take another step now & discover what is to be done, & how it is to be done;

Another feeling leads us on. We love that which blesses & comforts us & what we love we wish to be immortal. We love our country & its institutions & therefore we wish them to be as enduring as time.

Enraptured by hope & love of the strongest force & knowing that human agency must be employed, we are lead to ask within the deepest solicitation what is the work to be done? The magnitude of the object & the weakness of the means, almost counterbalance the weight of solid hope & strong love. The shattered vessel of human nature seems incapable under any circumstances to weather so long a voyage. The dark & dismal pictures of history shed gloom & despondence upon our way. The mournful wails that howl around the crumbling ruins of once proud & imperial cities, breath sad omens for the future. Everything that has originated from man has sunk in ruin or decay. The most perfect & gifted human genius has never yet given birth to an immortal offspring & no candid reasoner can ever expect it. No mortal vision of immortality ever reached beyond the sphere of its share. How could it then prepare a chart for the boundless sea beyond? In its wild course of folly the world has often crossed the path of wisdom, and as an astronomer who has been making his observations on the motions of a planet for a long series of years, can at last set down & mark out the true path orbit. So the wails from the recorded observations of history may find out its true path. The two vital truths of government have been almost entirely overlooked. The first that God is the true & sole sovereign & second that every human being is his deputy governor over himself.

When the vital truths of government & their vitality, ~~separated~~ on their harmonious union, the first when perverted becomes ecclesiastical tyranny, the second when alone often assumes the licentious & destructive form of licentiousness.

Such is the assurance of the prophetic past & present. Hence we
get a hope to lighten the step of adversity & ease the burden of labour.
This is a security view from without. Let us now step within & find out
why our hope is good & what it is good for. We are always to bear in
mind that prophecy is no labourer & hope alone is powerless as vanity.
Ends are attained only by means & if our desire would accomplish
the ends we must employ the means -

The essence of civil liberty is self government. This law divides the
race into slaves & freemen - & as this principle is recognized on into
in a government, it is a free country or a despotism - Logic never found
on easier subject - Whoever believes in such a thing as man & has a true
idea of the essentials of manhood is logically a supporter of free institutions.
Every sincere despot is an atheist & a believer in manhood or a devilish knave.

Will any one deny that the mind makes the man & that the man of
no mind is no man. And what evidence have we of the existence
of mind but in witnessing its use. Anything that takes away the
use of a man's mind, takes away his manhood. This then is the work
of despotism, come in what dress or name it may, engaged in
pious blarney warfare with Jehovah, attempting to know what he has
designed should be done. Who will conquer in the contest? 7

Again who does not believe the human race is advancing & if so
whether must it be tending, but toward mental freedom & civil freedom.
Here then is foundation broad, deep & sure for all our hope. Here then is the
reason that makes enthusiasm reasonable - -

The essence of civil liberty is self government. This line divides the race into slaves & freemen & as this principle is recognized or not in a government it is free or despotic. There are two great & vital principles in human government which so far in the history of this world have been almost entirely disregarded.

The first is that there is one only God, who has made the universe & all ~~that~~ ^{in it} ~~it~~ contains & has given it & all that it contains unchangeable laws, which ^{always &} apply every where to everything, wherever be the agent & whatever the result.

The second is that every human being is God's deputy governor over himself. Thus from the first was the government of our race ^{dispossession} arranged. So says revelation distinctly & all human history rightly interpreted is a commentary upon it, illustrating its truth by ^{innumerable} ~~various~~ examples.

Remove God from the world & you strip the pulchre that distributes its life & motion.

Take from man his self government & you unman him. (~~manhood is~~ ~~manhood~~ ~~but man are few~~) If man makes the man, it is the use of it that shows its existence, & for what plain use was it assigned or than for self management. All those who will not assent & acknowledge this primary principle of human nature, ought to resign all pretensions to manhood — manhood is numerous but men are few.

Every one who believes in such a thing as man & has a true idea of the essentials of manhood, is logically & necessarily a supporter of free institutions & every sincere ~~and~~ supporter of despotism, must be an atheist & a disbeliever in manhood.

As there are but two ^{genuine} original depositions of power, the first in God & the second in man, who has it by free gift for the rightful dispenser. So there can be but two legitimate courses of government. & any & all governments that as we acknowledge these & base themselves on them must fall sooner or later from the nature of things, for government without power is nothing, & no power but that which is legitimate can ultimately prevail.

This then, is the first requisite of a government that can entertain a reasonable hope of continuance - free institutions do, in principle at least, acknowledge their sources of power. This acknowledgment may be in some respects wrong, ^{though it is in principle & in substance} & experience have their work to perform, but one may be sure that one is building on the solid ground of eternity for a basis - But the basis though the first essential is not the principal part of the edifice - it only offers a secure resting place, the superstructure must stand by strength of its own - Human Government is an edifice. It has a basis & superstructure.

We have seen that any form of government that ultimately prevails with human race must acknowledge manhood. It must then acknowledge man as man that is it must acknowledge him as a free moral agent, both his freedom & his moral agency must be acknowledged.

While freedom therefore furnishes the eternal basis, moral agency must be the material of which to rear a superstructure equally enduring.

Moral agency from the fact of its freedom, may be rightly or wrongly used.

When a moral agent pursues moral ends by moral means then he fills the sphere & accomplishes his end, otherwise he abuses his station & loses the confidence of his trust - Now we are assured by authentic & authoritative revelation, amply sustained by the clear voice of prophetic experience, that no other form of manhood will finally prevail on this earth, but that which is rightly used. No government can ultimately succeed, which does not acknowledge manhood. No manhood can succeed which does not acknowledge God. Here again we feel ourselves anchored to a rock of ages, where we may move in safety & bide defiance to the storms of stormy - any Government that ventures on the sea of existence with other Christ despisers may prosper, for it will surely meet with wrecks.

The importance of the principle of self-government, under another name, has always been acknowledged, by every philosophy of history & human nature, whose wisdom & judgment have been in all respects.

Even those who have been ignorant of its true nature, have always confessed to the vital necessity of virtue, to form a durable basis of government - and what is virtue but self-government -