

**A SERMON DELIVERED BEFORE HIS
EXCELLENCY: LEVI LINCOLN, ESQ.,
GOVERNOR, HIS HONOR
THOMAS L. WINTHROP, LIEUTENANT
GOVERNOR, MAY 30, 1827, BEING THE
DAY OF GENERAL ELECTION**

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A Sermon Delivered Before His Excellency: Levi Lincoln, Esq., Governor, His Honor Thomas L. Winthrop, lieutenant governor, May 30, 1827, being the day of General Election by Moses Stuart

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MOSES STUART

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1897
SERMON FILED

A

SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN Esq. .

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR THOMAS L. WINTHROP

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HON. COUNCIL, THE SENATE, AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

MAY 30, 1897.....BEING THE DAY OF

General Election.

BY MOSES STUART

Associate Professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological
Seminary at Andover.

BOSTON:

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Sept 14, 1928

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN SENATE, MAY 31, 1927.

Ordered, That Messrs. PARKER, PHILLIPS and BARSTOW, be a Committee to wait on the REV. MOSES STUART, and present him the thanks of the Senate, for his Sermon, delivered yesterday, before the Executive of the Commonwealth, and both Branches of the Legislature; and to request a copy for publication.

Attest,

PAUL WILLARD, Clerk

SERMON.

2 COR. III. 17. WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY.

The appellation of LORD is often given to the Saviour by Paul. Independently of the cases in which the apostle calls him the LORD JESUS, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the simple appellation of LORD is more frequently employed by him, than any other designation of the Messiah. There can be no reasonable doubt, that by LORD, in our text, is meant the LORD JESUS ; so that the passage would convey the same idea which it now does, if it should be translated, "Where the spirit of Christ is, there is liberty."

The phrase *spirit of Christ*, as employed in our text, means either that spirit which Christ bestows on his true disciples and followers, or that which real Christians possess and exercise. Whether we understand it in the former, or the latter sense, will make no

material difference in the meaning of the passage. The spirit which Christ gives, is a Christian spirit ; or, in other words, it is a spirit which makes his followers like to himself. On the other hand, the expression *spirit of Christ*, is not unfrequently employed by the sacred writers to designate the simple idea of a *Christian spirit*, viz. that temper of mind which the disciples of Jesus possess and exercise.

It amounts, then, to the same thing in substance, whether we say that *spirit of Christ*, in our text means the *spirit which he bestows*, or that *which Christians possess* ; for it is one and the same. The only difference is, that when we employ the phrase *spirit of Christ*, to designate the *spirit which he imparts*, we make a special reference in our mind to him as the author of the gift ; but when we use the same phrase merely to designate the *spirit which Christians possess*, we consider it simply as belonging to Christians and as being exercised by them, without any special reference to the source from which it comes.

The meaning of our text, then, appears to be, that
 WHERE A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT EXISTS OR REIGNS, THERE
 WILL LIBERTY OR FREEDOM BE.

The original design of the apostle, when he uttered this, was not to express a sentiment merely political or civil. Still, something of this nature is included in the expression. He had just been speaking,

at some length, of the imperfect light and liberty of such Hebrews as remained attached to the ancient Mosaic institutions, with all their ritual prescriptions. In our text he avers; that where a Christian spirit prevails, there men are freed from Jewish ignorance and bondage. Nor was their liberty merely freedom from ceremonial prescriptions. As the performance of the Levitical rites was intimately connected, in a great variety of ways, with the civil and social state of the Hebrews; so freedom from these rites would necessarily affect many of their civil and social relations.

I have dwelt thus long upon the explanation of the text, in order to show that I am not making a fanciful or perverted application of it, when I apply it to the present day, and aver, that WHERE A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT PREVAILS, THERE WILL BE TRUE FREEDOM OR LIBERTY.

All civilians who hear me, will accede to the propriety and certainty of the maxim, that wherever the reason for any particular law exists, there the law itself ought to be considered as in force. It is equally true, that wherever there exists a good reason for the application of any principle contained in the law of God, there the application of it ought to be made. I hope to shew, that there is as much reason to maintain that a Christian spirit will free men, at the pres-

ent time, from bondage and oppression, either of a civil or ecclesiastical nature, as there was to maintain, in the time of Paul, that the same spirit would free the Jews from the burdensome part of the Mosaic institutions.

In pursuing the subject thus introduced, it is my design to inquire.

I. WHAT TRUE LIBERTY IS ; and

II. I shall endeavour to show, that A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT WILL PROMOTE AND SECURE IT.

I. What is true liberty ?

It is not a right to do, in all respects, as every one may wish. I take for granted the principle, that men are designed by their Creator to live in a social state, and under civil regulations. In this respect we may well say, *The powers that be, are ordained of God.* If this point be conceded, it follows that no one can have a right to do those things which will endanger the existence, the safety, or the well-being of the civil and social state. The right to commit murder, to rob, and steal ; the right to plunder, defraud, oppress, assault, slander, or in any way to injure, one another, is utterly precluded by a state of true liberty ; and this, for the reason that such a right would necessarily prevent the enjoyment of any blessings which liberty proffers. A liberty to do

wrong, to injure others, would, while men are as they now are and as they always have been, be fatal to all the interests and happiness, which it is the design of the civil and social state to promote and to secure.

I need not dwell on a *negative* view of my subject, which is so obvious and generally understood. But when we come to a *positive* view of what true liberty implies, there is more room for diversity of opinion, in regard to some of the minute particulars. It will not be expected, on an occasion like the present, that I should descend to a discussion of such particulars. Let me merely pass in brief review some of the more important principles, in respect to which all, or nearly all, of us shall be agreed.

A true state of freedom implies PROTECTION AND SECURITY WITH REGARD TO LIFE, PERSONAL LIBERTY, AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE; IT ALSO SECURES THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY.

1. It provides for the safety of our lives.

This it does, in all cases where they are not forfeited by crime. And in every case where we may be accused of having committed a crime, true liberty makes provision that we shall be tried in an impartial manner. Our lives are never to be put in jeopardy, unless the safety of the State demands of us to expose them on the field of battle; or, unless we have