

**A SERMON DELIVERED BEFORE  
HIS EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN,  
GOVERNOR, HIS HONOR  
SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG**

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A Sermon Delivered Before His Excellency Levi Lincoln, Governor, His Honor Samuel T. Armstrong by John W. Yeomans

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**JOHN W. YEOMANS**

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A

# SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE

ANNUAL ELECTION,

JANUARY 1, 1834.

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BY JOHN W. YEOMANS,

Pastor of the Congregational Church in Pittsfield.

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**Boston:**

BUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1834.

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 2, 1834.

*Ordered*, That Messrs. MCKAY of Pittsfield, SWIFT of Nantucket, and PIERCE of Stoughton, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. JOHN W. YERAMS, and thank him in the name of the House, for the Sermon delivered by him yesterday before the Governor, the Council, and the two branches of the General Court, and to request a copy thereof for the press.      *Attest*.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk*.



## SERMON.

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SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU.

Matthew, 6: 33.

THE custom which annually convenes the Rulers and the Legislators of this Commonwealth for religious worship, derives its propriety from the supreme authority of the Christian religion. Whatever we are bound to do at all, we are bound to do religiously; and while, as individuals, we render our respective acts of worship and obedience, it becomes us, as a people, to express, by our rulers and representatives, our united reverence for the institutions of religion. We are assembled, in the name of the State, to acknowledge the supremacy of God; to recognize Him as the object of worship, the source of prosperity, and the judge of moral conduct; to appeal to His word as the foundation of our laws, and to implore His protection and aid in the use and defence of our freedom.



Religion, as it respects the supreme God, ought itself to be a supreme principle in man. It respects a Being who exercises a particular and universal providence over the world, by whom we live, and by whom our future destinies will be determined. It ought therefore to be cherished as a principle of supreme importance, and of universal application to the affairs of human life. It accords with the plainest dictates of propriety, that we assemble, on an occasion like this, to pay an act of homage to the King of Kings.

The text which I have chosen, is one which the occasion itself might recommend. It demands that precedence for religion which we here publicly concede. With this demand, it presents the assurance that a supreme regard for religion will secure the good for which we live and labor. The precept and the promise will lead us to contemplate the union of true prosperity with true religion.

We are invited to such contemplations by the voice of God. The kingdom commended to our supreme regard, is peculiarly the kingdom of God, exalted over all. Its laws overrule all other laws ; its sanctions, all other sanctions. It is that moral government which is administered in the world by the laws and sanctions of the Bible. It is called the kingdom of heaven. Heaven is its seat of power, the throne of

its King, the condensed centre of its glory. It is a spiritual kingdom ; distinguished by its spiritual attributes from all the kingdoms of the world, and rendered consistent with all that are administered in righteousness. Could one command of God be sacred above all others in his own esteem, it would be that which calls the attention of men to His moral kingdom.

We are invited to such reflections by the voice of our own interest. We might find entertainment in discussing the nature of the kingdom of God in the abstract. But our interest requires us to consider the relations of this kingdom to ourselves. The success of moral discipline depends on man's consciousness of personal concern with God. The demonstrations of abstract truth may discipline the understanding ; but a perception of the relations of the truth to our highest interest, is requisite to discipline the heart. The kingdom of God sustains a solemn relation to ourselves ; urges broad and imperious claims upon us ; and determines our everlasting destiny. It involves our highest prosperity ; not indeed the gratification of every desire, or the success of every scheme of earthly advancement ; but our success in exalting all that merits exaltation in our nature, and in acquiring all that is worth acquiring in our life.

The kingdom of God denotes the spiritual administration of God in the world ; and the righteousness of that kingdom, the character of its loyal subjects. To seek first that kingdom, is to make the cultivation of the righteousness which it inculcates, the primary object of our life. It is to cultivate true religion ; to cherish right affections towards God and man ; to form correct views of ourselves and our various relations, and to obey the precepts of the divine word.

In such a course we are assured of prosperity, *by the plain declarations of God.* The assurance is given in the text of this discourse : Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. It is given in the promises of compensation for sacrifices to religion : He that forsakes all for the gospel's sake, shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting. It is given in the Apostle's assertion, that godliness is profitable unto all things ; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It is given in the assurance, that all things work together for good, to them that love God. These are assertions of the word of God. They constitute a promise and pledge on the veracity of God, that true prosperity and true religion, shall ever be united.

But I am aware that implicit and practical faith