

The Voice of Warning to Christians by John Mitchell Mason, 1800
Excerpts from the pamphlet printed and sold by G. F. Hopkins, New York.

That religion has, in fact, nothing to do with the politics of many who profess it, is a melancholy truth. But that it has, of right, no concern with political transactions, is quite a new discovery. If such opinions, however, prevail, there is no longer any mystery in the character of those whose conduct, in political matters, violates every precept, and slanders every principle, of the religion of Christ. But what is politics? Is it not the science and the exercise of civil rights and civil duties? And what is religion? Is it not an obligation to the service of God, founded on his authority, and extending to all our relations personal and social? Yet religion has nothing to do with politics! Where did you learn this maxim? The Bible is full of directions for your behaviour as citizens. It is plain, pointed, awful in its injunctions on rulers and ruled as such: yet religion has nothing to do with politics. You are commanded “in all your ways to acknowledge him.” In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let your requests be made known unto God,” “And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Yet religion has nothing to do with politics! Most astonishing! And is there any part of your conduct in which you are or wish to be, without law to God, and not under the law of Christ? Can you persuade yourselves that political men and measures are to undergo no review in the judgment to come? That all the passion and violence, the fraud and falsehood, and corruption which pervade the systems of party, and burst out like a flood at the public elections, are to be blotted from the catalogue of unchristian deeds, because they are politics? Or that a minister of the gospel may see his people, in their political career, bid defiance to their God in breaking through every moral restraint, and keep a guiltless silence because religion has nothing to do with politics? I forbear to press the argument farther; observing only, that many of our difficulties and sins may be traced to this pernicious notion. Yes, if our religion had had more to do with our politics; if, in the pride of our citizenship, we had not forgotten our Christianity: if we had prayed more and wrangled less about the affairs of our country, it would have been infinitely better for us at this day.

The civil magistrate is God’s officer. He is the minister of God, saith Paul, to thee for good. Consequently his first and highest obligation, is to cherish in his mind, and express in his conduct, his sense of obedience to the Governor of the Universe. He that ruleth over men must be just ruling in the

fear of God (Psalm 15:4). The scriptures have left you this and similar declarations, to direct you in the choice of your magistrates. And you are bound, upon your allegiance to the God of the scriptures, to look out for such men as answer to the description; and if, unhappily, they are not to be had, for such as come nearest to it. The good man, he who shall “dwell in God’s holy hill,” is one “in whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord (2 Samuel 23:3). But can you pretend to regard this principle, when you desire to raise an infidel to the most important post in your country? Do you call this honoring them that fear God? Nay, it is honoring them who do not fear God: that is, according to the scriptural contrast, honoring a vile person, whom, as Christians, you ought to condemn. And have you the smallest expectation that one who despises the word and worship of God; who has openly taught the harmlessness of rebellion against his government and being, by teaching that atheism is no injury to society, will nevertheless, rule in his fear? Will it show any reverence or love to your Father in heaven, to put a distinguishing mark of your confidence upon his sworn foe? Or will it be an affront to his majesty?

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” (Psalm 9:17). And who forget him, if not a nation which, tho’ called by his name, nevertheless caresses, honors, rewards his enemies? Woe, then, to those governments which are wielded by infidels, when he arises to judgment; and woe to those who have contributed to establish them! To whatever influence they owe their determinations and their measures, it is not to the “spirit of understanding and of the fear of the Lord.” Do I speak these things as a man, or saith not the scripture the same also?

Arise O Lord, and let not man prevail! (Psalm 9:19)