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The Dangers of the Hour, 1890

Gage delivered "The Dangers of the Hour" at the founding convention of the Woman's National Liberal Union, which she formed in 1890 to ensure religious freedom and to challenge the Religious Right of her day. The speech is shown below as it was printed in 1890.

***SPEECH OF MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE at the
WOMAN'S NATIONAL LIBERAL CONVENTION***

February 24th, 1890

THE DANGERS OF THE HOUR

For one hundred and fourteen years we have seen our country gradually advancing in recognition of broader freedom, fewer restrictions upon personal liberty, and the peoples of all nations looking towards us as the great exemplar of political and religious freedom. But of late a rapidly increasing tendency has been shown towards the destruction of our civil liberties. The work has been stealthily carried on for a number of years under names and purposes which have prevented a real recognition of the design in view. So strong has this movement now become that we are confronted by the fact that our form of government is undergoing a radical change, with a well organized body greedy for power pressing to that end so that centralization instead of diffused power has overcome the aim and intent of a large body of people, a fact that can be traced to the war of the sixties and the condition of the country immediately afterwards. Personal freedom is now threatened by two foes, alike in character although differing in name, centralization and clericalism, ever the great antagonists to liberty. The control of questions which should be entirely left with the respective States is being gradually assumed by the United States. It has been said that the war proved one thing-our nationality ; it seems likely to prove much more-the destruction of local self government, which is becoming gradually lost. This general tendency towards centralizing power in the nation is a vast help to those persons who wish to incorporate certain religious dogmas in the Federal constitution. The constitution is superior to all statutory enactments and for this reason the Christian party in politics is not content that laws favoring it should be enacted by Congress alone, but aim to secure a constitutional amendment of like character. Albion Tourgee says our conservatism consists in doing nothing until it is absolutely necessary. Americans never move until the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour. The fifty-ninth minute is now upon us. [Applause.] There is an impending struggle greater in its influence upon humanity than the one fought for freedom thirty years since. The government is undergoing changes which are signs of danger. The red signal is out, if you are color blind and cannot see it the more the pity for you. An unreasoning confidence is the chronic state of the people. To them it does not seem possible there is danger to their free inheritance. They forget that liberty must ever be guarded. They forget the hereditary enslavement, the bondage of the human will to the church, and thousands bound do not heed this enslavement-to them it seems liberty. In 1889, four new States were admitted to the union, not one possessing a republican form of government as required by the Federal constitution, not one recognizing the rights of

one half their citizens to self government. The defeat of woman suffrage was remarkable because in each of these four States a battle was fought in its favor by women. The new state of Washington is especially noticeable as three times under territorial laws woman had gained and used the ballot. Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine will not soon be forgotten by the friends of woman suffrage. Forty-one years after the first convention making such demand, four new States which at that period were unknown portions of the world, their very names yet to be given, if at all on geography or atlas, noted as desert lands, but now possessing tens of thousands of inhabitants, have this year come into the union denying the first principles upon which this government purports to be founded, equality of rights and self government. We are told the country is in a dangerous condition with tens of thousands uncultured emigrants yearly pouring onto its shores ; we are told our flag is hissed by anarchists who have 25,000 drilled men at their command ; we are told the experiment of free government in towns and cities is a failure, but what danger from ignorant emigrants so great, what peril from anarchists so near, what experiment of free government such an utter failure as the admission of four new States largely populated by native-born American citizens, men and women of eastern birth, the young, the cultured, wide-awake business men and business women, under denial of the first principles of freedom?

The danger menacing our country does not lie with the foreigners, nor the Anarchists, nor in municipal mismanagement. Free institutions are jeopardized because the country is false to its principles in the case of one-half of its citizens. But back of this falsity away down to the depths of causes deep in the hidden darkness of men's minds, must we look for the source of this perennial wrong. To a person of thought this is easily found in early religious training. Men have not yet learned to regard woman as a being of equal creation with themselves ; do not yet believe that she stands on a par with them in natural rights even to the air she breathes. In order to secure victory for woman we must unfetter the minds of men from religious bondage. We have petitioned legislatures and congress, we have appeared before committees with the best arguments founded on justice, we have educated men politically, and yet the victory is not ours because the teachings of the church have stood in the way. Now our warfare must be upon another plan, now we must free men from that bondage of the will which is the most direful form of slavery, now we must show the falsity of that reed upon which men lean. In the old anti-slavery times men did not hesitate to call the American Church the bulwark of American slavery. In like manner to-day we shall proclaim the Church-American, English, Greek, Protestant, Catholic-to be the bulwark of woman's slavery. Man trained by the church from infancy that woman is secondary and inferior to him, made for him, to be obedient to him, the same idea permeating the Jewish and all Christian churches, all social, industrial and educational life, all civil and religious institutions, it is no subject of astonishment, if one gives a moment's thought, that woman's political enfranchisement is so long delayed.

In the State of Washington where suffrage for woman had in its territorial days been so long and so happily tried there were never better laid plans to bring about its defeat in the new constitution. Miss Hindman, who spoke throughout the territory in its favor, says there were three political parties in the field all as parties opposed to woman suffrage, even its old friends among men refusing to speak for it lest it should delay statehood ; the churches also refusing to take it up or advocate it on the specious ground that it was a political question, those ministers solitary and few who did favor it doing so not

because of justice nor even because the basic principles of the nation demanded it, but “that woman might vote for temperance,” or aid some plan of the church.

It has not been without bitter resistance by the clergy that woman’s property and educational rights have advanced. Woman’s anti-slavery work-her temperance work, her demand for personal rights, for political equality, for religious freedom and every step of kindred character has met with opposition from the church as a body and from the clergy as exponents of its views.

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat in an editorial of May 5, 1888, said: “There is no more striking anomaly in the history of civilization than the fact that the churches have profited in the greatest degree by the devotion of women, and yet have been among the slowest of organized institutions to concede to the sex the rights and advantages which it has managed to obtain. Most of the work done for the improvement of woman’s condition as a member of society has been accomplished, not without a certain measure of Church sympathy, but without distinct and aggressive Church support. We refer particularly to the removal of invidious legal restrictions, and the development of sentiments of justice and fairness with regard to woman’s political interests, and her relation to the philosophy of general progress.”

Many insidious steps by both Catholic and Protestant prove the church now, as of old, the enemy of freedom. In 1884, a Plenary Council, preceded by an encyclical from the Pope laying out its line of work, was held in Baltimore. The two points against which the effort of the church is now chiefly directed, are marriage and public schools. In its control of these two questions it has ever found its chief sources of power. The Pope’s encyclical declared that “civil marriage must be resented by the whole Catholic world.” The establishment of parochial schools in every parish was also commanded within two years unless excused therefrom by the bishop.

In compliance with papal demand the Plenary Council formulated decrees against marriage as a civil act, or as under civil authority ; against marriage with a Protestant, and against evening marriages. The sacramental character of the rite was solemnly affirmed, the necessity of priestly benediction and nuptial mass enforced. But well knowing the immediate promulgation of its decrees would rouse public attention to its aim, these were held in abeyance until such times as the dignitaries of the church deemed best. Not until three years later were the canons upon marriage made known on the Pacific Coast, at which time the archbishop of San Francisco, the bishops of Monterey, Los Angeles, and Grass Valley, addressed a pastoral letter to the Catholics of that region condemning civil marriage as a sin and sacrilege, illegal, and a “horrible concubinage.” Marriage with a Protestant was also forbidden, and marriage unblessed by a priest it was declared, subjected the parties to excommunication.

When the territory about my own city of Syracuse was formed into a diocese, one of the first acts of its newly appointed bishop was a prohibition against evening marriages. Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia has commanded the observance of these decrees in his diocese enjoining nuptial mass, &c. The bishop of Savannah, Ga., some time since issued an order prohibiting marriages after nightfall, and thus have these decrees been gradually brought to bear over different portions of the country.

It must be remembered that the Baltimore council was a body composed wholly of celibates governed by the chief celibate, the Pope of Rome, and that it decided upon a question of which it possessed no practical knowledge. It must also be recollected that no woman's voice was heard in this council in regard to a relation in which as wife, she takes an equal, and as mother a superior part. The judgment of these celibate men was alone to decide upon the form, obligation, validity and permanance of marriage, the church threatening penalties for their non-observance. In the decrees upon marriage of this council and the preceding encyclical, two points are especially to be borne in mind. First, that woman is the chief victim-not alone the question decided without her voice but its indissolubility pressing most heavily upon her. For it must be remembered that while the church asserts marriage to be an indissoluble sacrament, her past history shows it to have been in the power of man, of the husband, to secure that release from its bonds that has ever been denied to the wife.

The second point not to be forgotten, is that the power possessed by the church during the middle ages was largely due to the control it had secured over domestic relations, and that no more severe blow has ever been inflicted upon it than the institution of civil marriage. This fact is well known to the church and its persistent effort to again secure control of this relation is for the purpose of once more acquiring the power it has lost in those countries where civil marriage exists. Wherever established by the state it has met with determined opposition by the church. Historians agree as to the power the church acquired by its hold upon marriage. Lecky says that when religious marriages were alone recognized they were a potent instrument in securing the power of the priesthood who were able to compel men to submit to the conditions they imposed in the formation of the most important contract in life.

Draper also declares the secret of much of the influence of the church in the middle ages lay in the control she has so skillfully gained over domestic life. The authority of the church over marriage has always been especially prejudicial to woman; it is from teachings of the church, that in the family, power over the wife is given to the husband. It is the church and not the state, to which the teaching of woman's inferiority is due ; it is the church which primally commanded the obedience of woman to man. It is the church which stamps with religious authority the political and domestic degradation of woman. It is the church which has placed itself in opposition to all efforts looking towards her enfranchisement and it has done this under professed divine authority, and wherever we find laws of the state bearing with greater hardship upon woman than upon man, we shall ever find them due to the teachings of the church.

But while I have first referred to the encyclical of the Pope and the action of the plenary council, upon this question of marriage, Catholics are scarcely more greedy for power over this relation than are Protestants. The church has ever been a barrier to advancing civilization; when it was the strongest at the time spoken of, when it possessed the greatest control over marriage, civilization was at the lowest.

The Protestant pulpit is only less dangerous than the Catholic to the liberties of the people in that its organized strength is less. The old mediaeval control of the family under and through marriage is now as fully the aim of the Protestant church as of the Catholic. The General Episcopal convention has not convened of late years without canvassing the question of marriage and divorce. In 1886 a most

stringent Canon upon this relation was proposed and although it failed of adoption, a similar effort was made at the recent triennial convention in New York the fall of 1889.

The Rev. George Z. Gray, dean of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Mass., is author of a book in which he asserts, referring to scripture as authority, that marriage is not a contract between equals, but an appropriation of the woman by the man, the wife becoming merged in him and owing him obedience, the right of divorce lying alone with the husband, the wife not an independent being possessing independent rights, but a veritable slave of the husband. Not alone the Episcopalians, but Congregationalists, Presbyterians and other sects oppose marriage as a civil contract declaring it a rite to be solemnized by the church alone, and using influence upon legislative bodies to have it legally declared a rite pertaining to the church alone. In 1888 a committee from the Presbyterian synod of New York, waited upon the legislature of that state for the purpose of influencing changes in the celebration of this rite, requesting the publication of banns, etc., and a bill to this effect passed both houses but fortunately met with a veto from the governor.

The clergy of Derby, England, have recently decided not to accept a marriage fee, in the hope of thus securing control of marriage by the church, and expect their example to be followed by their brethren throughout England. These are dangerous signs of the times as to the effort of the church to obtain increased power over the laity. It is also an attack of the church upon the state. The courts of this country have decided that marriage is a civil contract. As such a clergyman is no more fitted to take part in it than he would be to take acknowledgement of a deed, or part in the legalization of any other contract. In fact a marriage performed by a clergyman of any denomination should be regarded as invalid in the light of civil law.

It is an infringement of individual rights, that either state or church should possess absolute control over this important relation, -one that enters the inmost life of the individual persons contracting it. The parties themselves as chiefly interested, should hold power over its forms. When consummated it might be placed upon record for their own safety as is done in case of other contracts.

The Grand Jury of the General Sessions, New York City, 1887, in addition to its presentment in regard to court accommodations also advanced opinions that marriage should be taken from magistrates and the laws so amended as to require all marriages to be performed by a "duly authenticated and licensed minister," mayor or Judge of court record.

While still recognizing the right of the higher state officials to perform marriages, the dangerous suggestion of the Grand Jury calls to memory a canon of the Baltimore council which directed Catholics to use constant influence upon legislation in line with church plans. The other important subject against which the powers of the Catholic church has ever been arrayed, and whose touch we are beginning to feel in this country, is that of secular schools. As an ecclesiastical body the church is opposed to general education and to systems of public instruction in any part of the world. In Belgium, in 1879, when the state established communal schools under its own control the opposition of the clerical party was strenuous and bitter. The sacrament was refused to those whose children or grandchildren attended public schools; masters of state schools were excommunicated and communion refused to the children

in attendance. The sacrament of extreme unction was also refused to parents whose children were in the state communal schools.

A curious division of penalty upon parents whose children were in these schools is notable as showing the opinion of the church as to where her chief power in ignorance lies-with women. The parents of girls attending state schools were excommunicated, but not those of boys.

The stronghold of the church has ever been the ignorance and degradation of women. Its control over woman in the two questions of marriage and education have given it keys of power more potent than those of Peter. With her uneducated, without civil or political rights, the church is sure of its authority ; but once arouse woman to a disbelief in church teachings regarding her having brought sin into the world; once open to her all avenues of education, so that her teaching of the young in her charge will be of a broader, more scientific character than in the past and the doom of the church is sealed.

Persecution of like character as that of Belgium has taken place in Prussia and other countries where state schools exist. Even here within the past twenty-four hours the threat of excommunication by a Catholic bishop, against the parents of children not attending parochial schools, has appeared in your city papers. Instances of like character have come under my own observation in the city of Syracuse.

In order to maintain its authority over mankind it is necessary that the church should control human thought ; freedom of the will has ever been its most dangerous foe. The theory of the superiority of the church over the state, the doctrine that teaching is a function of the church and not of the state presents itself in many forms, and during the present session of congress, has been the ground of the bitter opposition to efforts for the establishment of a common school system for the education of all Indian children. It was the church that in the interests of Catholicism by the priesthood opposed the confirmation by congress of General Morgan and Dr. Dorchester. But let it not be thought that the Protestant clergy are less desirous of priestly control over education. While their efforts have not been as apparent to the general public, they no less exist, both in this country and abroad. Frances Lord, an English literary woman and reformer, at one time member of the London School Board, says of England: "The Church still clings tenaciously to its authority over the teachers of the youth of both sexes. The head-masters of our great public schools, like Eton and Rugby, for instance, must be clergymen of the Church of England. Unless a candidate for such a post has taken orders, he has no chance of being accepted. No woman will be made head mistress of a girl's High School, if she be not a trinitarian."

She declares those great universities controlled by the church stand as bulwarks against the advance of new ideas, even though they are deeply tainted with infidelity.

The school established by Harriet Martineau at Cheddar, among an ignorant, vicious, neglected population was ultimately broken up by the priesthood, although it was accomplishing an inconceivable amount of good. The Catholic clergy of France in a similar way destroyed the schools of Madam Pepé-Carpentier, who was in reality the originator of the kindergarten system. When the statute providing for the admission of women to Oxford was passed in England a few years since, the Dean of Norwich characterized it as "an attempt to defeat Divine Providence and the Holy Scriptures." It is no less the Protestant than the Catholic clergy that show themselves opposed to woman's education, the church,

whether Catholic or Protestant, possessing the same contemptuous opinion of woman, the same fear of the results to follow her education, the same teaching that through her, sin and death were brought into the world.

In our own country most of the colleges and universities are presided over by clergymen ; Harvard, Yale, Princeton, all closing their doors against the admission of girls. Even Vassar, a university for women alone has a clergyman at its head.

Dr. M'Glynn asserts that the Roman church threatens the republic, especially referring to the efforts of its clergy against the common school system "things happening which but a generation ago would have stirred the country to a white heat of anger." But the efforts of the Protestant clergy are no less dangerous. It is the Protestant priesthood now inciting the bills before Congress to make religious teaching obligatory in common schools. Cardinal Gibbons thinks religious and secular education should not be divorced, but no less does Protestant Rev. Dr. Hill, in the Forum, also warmly vindicate the right of the state to compel religious teaching in the public schools. Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, a short time before his death published an article to which the press referred at time of its publication as very similar to those presented by the Roman Catholic clergy. Dr. Hodge declared Catholics had maintained a sounder and more consistent position as to education than Protestants had had the courage to assume. Bishop Littlejohn characterized Dr. Hodge's paper as an expression of the views entertained by many thoughtful men-"a deep and serious dissatisfaction with the drift of the public schools." Prof. Seeley, a foremost representative of New England Congregationalism, has expressed like opinions, while other Protestant bodies are showing increasing opposition to a form of purely secular education. And yet the history of the world shows that wherever ecclesiastical schools have been tried,-wherever the church has secured influence above that of the state, the standard of education has been universally lowered.

Governor Thomas, of Utah, only last fall speaking of the public schools of that territory under control of the Mormon Church, says they in no respect compare with the schools of Washington, Montana, or the Dakotas but are practically worthless. The experience of centuries past and present prove the danger of allowing a church of any name, the control of secular education. This not alone because of the lowered grade of instruction, but also because of the greatly increased power of the church over human thought and human will gained by this means. In the light of past experience all bills, legislative or congressional, looking towards compulsory religious education of whatsoever character, should be most persistently and energetically opposed.

In November last a Catholic Congress in honor of the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in this country assembled in Baltimore. Priests of every degree, cardinal, monseigneurs, arch-bishops, bishops, with hundreds of the laity took part. The whole tenor of this congress was an affirmation of the superiority of the church over the state. Among the notable points of its platform was one declaring that as the state made no provision for teaching religion, Catholics must continue to support their own schools, colleges, universities already established, and multiply and perfect others so that a Catholic education might be brought within the reach of every Catholic child in the United States. That resolution points to the first danger,-that the state must teach religion.

The second notable point was shown in the tendency towards a prohibition of free thought and free action on questions of labor, and what is known in Russia as "The will of the People." It condemned nihilism, the one bright ray in that land of torture, Russia. Macaulay said of the French toilers what may be said of those of many another country, be that country Russia, England or the United States: "In their wretchedness and despair there they sat waiting any leader that might bid them follow." "How far from that condition now are myriads of our working men to-day, aye, and working women, too?" queries that old anti-slavery apostle, Parker Pillsbury.

The most brilliant leaders of the commune were women; and was it not just, -woman, the part of the humanity most debased by church and by state-woman, upon whom the heaviest weight of all oppression falls?

"We hear," remarks the Rev. Dr. Channing, "of the horrors of the Revolution; but in this, as in other things, we recollect the effect, without thinking of the guiltier cause. The Revolution was, indeed, a scene of horror; but when I look back on the reigns which preceded it, and which made Paris almost one great play and gambling-house, and when I see altar and throne desecrated by a licentiousness unsurpassed in any former age, I look on scenes as shocking to the calm and searching eye of reason and virtue as the 10th of August and the massacre of September. Bloodshed is indeed a terrible spectacle, but there are other things almost as fearful as blood.

"There are crimes which do not make us shout and turn pale like the guillotine, but deadlier in their workings. God forbid that I should say a word to weaken the thrill of horror with which we contemplate the outrages of the French Revolution! But when I hear that Revolution quoted to frighten us from Reform, to show us the danger of lifting up the depressed and ignorant mass, I must ask whence it came? and the answer is, from the want of culture among the mass of the people, and from a corruption of the great, too deep to be purged away except by destruction. Even the Atheism and Infidelity of France were due chiefly to a licentious priesthood and a licentious court. It was Religion, so called, that dug her own grave." ("Works," vol. vi., 175, 176.)

A third notable recommendation of the Catholic platform was union of work with non-Catholics, i.e., Protestants, in order to bring about certain restrictive laws. It reads thus: "There are many christian issues in which Catholics could come together with non-Catholics and shape civil legislation for the public weal. * We should seek alliance with non-Catholics for proper Sunday observance."

A paper read during the congress upon 'Sunday Observance' by Mark B. Tullio, of Cleveland, declared "what we should seek is an en rapport with the Protestant christians who desire to keep the Sunday holy."

Cardinal Gibbons published a book as a contribution to the centennial anniversary, in which he also discusses this point of work in unison with Protestants. "So far from despising or rejecting their support," he says, "I would gladly hold out to them the right hand of fellowship so long as they unite with us in striking the common foe."

Thus the Catholic Church places itself in line with the National Reform Association, the American Sabbath Union, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and with those bills already before Congress which are conspiring against the freedom of the people at large. As politics is said to make strange bed-fellows, so does conspiracy against freedom unite strange forces.

A fourth notable suggestion of the platform was one looking to the formation of an exclusively Catholic associated press agency.

To those who realize the formidable power of the Associated Press,- its capability of creating public opinion,-its ability to report or suppress the truth-to color or to distort as it pleases-this recommendation was one of the most dangerous in the platform.

Fifth : Divorces were declared to be the plague-spot on our civilization-a discredit to the government, a degradation of the female sex and a standing menace to the sanctity of the marriage bond. It should be noted that this was the only time that woman or her especial interests were mentioned during the congress. It should also be noted that it was under the offensive term of 'female,' a word solely applicable to the animal functions which the church regards as woman's single reason of existence. The subject of divorce thus far has been entirely under control of man, whether in church or state. It is now time that woman should be consulted, and her opinion obtained as to the "sanctity" of a relation that brings sufficient cause for her to seek divorce. Not alone the rights of woman as wife and mother but the rights of children demand a home where, if there is cause for divorce, either through cruelty, drunkenness, incompatibility of temper or breaking of marriage vows, it can be obtained. Believing that the wife is not the servant of the husband, but possesses equality of natural rights with him in the marriage relation, we look upon that portion of the Catholic platform as a renewed menace to the growing legal independence of women, and as such we call especial attention to this point.

Sixth : The key-note of the whole Congress, its last public statement in line with its general tendency towards declaring the church to be superior to the state, lay in that portion of the platform which demanded that the temporal power of the Pope should be guaranteed ; which declared that the absolute freedom of the Holy See was indispensable to the peace of the church and the welfare of mankind and which asserted that this freedom should be scrupulously maintained by all secular governments.

Charles J. Bonaparte discussed this portion of the platform in a speech, "The Independence of the Holy See," suggesting that the more important provisions of the "law of guarantees" might be enforced in a treaty between all the great powers and thus obtain an international sanction. He counselled Catholics not to be passive, declaring that a real solution of the question must be the universal conviction among good men of all countries, that to violate it would be to wrong mankind. "Whether a captive or an exile, the Pope can never be a subject."

Thus the whole drift of this congress was shown to be the supremacy of the church and the restoration to the Pope of the power held by him in the middle ages when he excommunicated kings, released subjects from their national allegiance, held the priesthood of every country as above the control of civil law, and for the grossest crimes subject only to ecclesiastical rule : -a system which really destroyed the

national form of every government, making them but dependencies upon the papal power. The same view was continued in a speech by the Right Rev. R. Gilmour, bishop of Cleveland, at the dedication of the Catholic University in Washington, immediately following the congress. He declared it to be a political and social heresy which assumes and asserts that the state is all temporal and religion all spiritual. He declared that no state can or should exist which does not recognize God as the supreme authority, that Catholics were willing to accept state schools as such on condition that the child should be taught religion and the laws of morality.

Early this year, some two months after the centenary, the Pope issued another encyclical, the most important since his accession to the throne of the Pontiff. Its chief points were the declaration of the supremacy of the church over the state; its order of resistance to the state if things prejudicial to the church, or hostile to the duties imposed by religion, or the authority of Jesus Christ in the person of the supreme pontiff are commanded. Directions were given to make politics serve the interests of Catholicism ; that men who promised to merit well of Catholicism should be supported for office, the encyclical closing with an admonition not to criticize the actions of a superior, even when they appear to merit just censure.

No more thoroughly retrogressive middle-age document has appeared from papacy during the present century, none more antagonistic to the republican ideas of the equality of man with man, the equal right of each human being to self-government in all things.

The great danger of the papacy lies in that it places itself above all civil power; the real meaning of the word 'papacy,' is religion in place of civil power, and it is not confined in signification to the church of Rome. The papacy exists in the Greek Church of Russia, in the Anglican Church of England and it is making an attempt to fasten itself upon this country through the efforts of "the Christian party in politics" to introduce an acknowledgement of the Christian religion and the bible as the source of all governmental power in the United States. It is not the Pope of Rome alone who places himself above all civil power in the demand made by himself and his followers that he shall be acknowledged the source of civil and political power, but the various Protestant sects of this country are working to a similar end—that the form of religion known as Protestant shall be recognized in the Constitution as the source of all power, instead as now, the people.

The modern democratic-republican idea is the right of every individual to his own or her own judgment upon all matters. The centralized-clerical idea is that no person has a right to his or her own judgment upon either religious or political questions. In all that most deeply concerns the individual he or she is to bow to the church, embodied in the priesthood. The laity, unless acting under specific direction of the priesthood, are not recognized as possessing right to thought or the exercise of judgment.

But while in this country there is "less friction between Catholics and Protestants than elsewhere in the world," it is because here religious liberty is based upon civil liberty, and while, as shown by the Catholic Centenary, this body is better and more fully organized for aggressive work than ever before, it is necessary for us to examine the condition of Protestantism. In the statements with reference to Catholic intent doubtless all before me will agree. We have been taught to watch Catholic action, while blindly

looking upon Protestants as to be fully trusted. Because of this blind faith in the purity of Protestant motives—a belief in their entire devotion to liberty—the present danger from Protestant effort towards the destruction of secular liberty in the United States, is much beyond that of Catholicism. The same spirit animates each body—the effort of each is the same—a union of the church and the state, with the church as controlling power. But Catholicism has not proceeded as far, has not taken as decided steps to bring this condition about, as Protestantism has.

Church aggression is the foremost danger of the day, and in saying church aggression I do not refer specifically to the Catholics, but more emphatically to the Protestants. The Church as a Church of whatever name is based on the one central idea, supreme control over the thought, will and action of mankind.

The National Reform Association is a body of Protestants, members of many different denominations, which declares that a written constitution ought to contain explicit evidence of the Christian character and purpose of the nation which frames it. The silence of the constitution of the United States in regard to Christianity, causes this body to seek an amendment which shall incorporate in it a statement of such belief. As the preamble is everywhere recognized as the most important part of a constitution, stating the source of its authority and the objects for which it is framed, it is this part of the Constitution that “The Christian Party in Politics” has selected for its attack. As it now stands the preamble reads thus :

“We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.”

As amended, after “We the people of the United States,” it would read: “recognizing Almighty God as the source of all power and authority in civil government, our Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler of nations, and the Bible as the standard to decide all moral issues in political life, in order to form a Christian government, etc.”

At a convention of the National Reform Association, 1888, Rev. W. J. Coleman, Professor of Political Science in Geneva College, Pennsylvania, spoke upon “The proposed Christian Amendment.” As has many times been done at woman suffrage conventions, he critically defined the constitution as

First. “The constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.”

Second. “The constitution is the only authoritative expression of the will of the people of the United States.”

Third. “The constitution is the exclusive basis of statute law, both in the national government and in the States.”

Fourth. “The constitution is a statement of the principles by which the people have chosen to be governed.”

These statements of the reverend gentleman will be admitted, and it is because a constitution is superior to all statutory enactments that the wary and jesuitical National Reform Association, and the entire "Christian Party in Politics," are not content with the enactment of laws by Congress in their interest, but demand a constitutional amendment, so that their plans may enter the very basis of statute laws. Moreover with the wisdom of the serpent it makes the preamble its point of attack, well knowing that in law, the preamble is held as the explanatory part-the dictionary I may say of the whole constitution.

Chief Justice Jay regarded the preamble of the Constitution of the United States as an authoritative guide to a correct interpretation of that instrument (2 Dallas 419). Coke says (Lit. 796), "The preamble of a statute is a good means to find out the meaning of the statute, and is, as it were, a key to the understanding thereof."

Judge Story in commentaries on the constitution (vol. 1, book 3, chap. 6) says, "The importance of examining the preamble for the purpose of expounding the language of a statute has always been felt and universally conceded in all judicial proceedings."

Under this array of authority as to the importance of the preamble, we easily discover the reason that the National Reform Association desires 'to amend' the preamble of the constitution of the United States. Once that is changed to read as it desires, this association will possess the power to interpret the whole instrument in unison with that change. As legal authorities maintain that the constitution was not established by the United States in their sovereign capacity, but by 'the people' of the United States, in attacking the preamble, 'the Christian Party in Politics' works as astutely as any Jesuitical body on earth. Subtilty, finesse, intrigue could go no further than the effort to change the preamble to the constitution.

At a convention of the Reformed Presbyterians in Newburgh, New York, 1887, the synod after discussion of "National Reform" and the question of acknowledgement of God in the constitution, adopted this resolution:

"Resolved, That we will endeavor to teach more forcibly the duty of our nation to God and the Bible view of civil government, and will make our testimony more emphatic against the infidelity of the civil government, and will maintain our position of political dissent in refusing the election franchise to put into office men who are bound by their official oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and we will become responsible for suffrage only when they become responsible to Christ by their official oath."

At the convention of this sect in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 1888, resolutions were adopted disowning the nation as long as it refused to acknowledge Christ as its king and the synod was directed to see that members of the congregation did not identify themselves with the nation by any act implying allegiance.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union is firmly united with the National Reform Association ; it is a component part of that body ; its chief officers are officers of that association ; its work is the same, as the speeches of its president and the resolutions of its conventions fully show. It not only endorses the

aim and ends of that association, but that body depends more fully upon the work of the W.C.T.U. for ultimate success than it does upon its own specific efforts. As far back as 1886 the leaders of the W.C.T.U. were enrolled among the Vice-Presidents of the National Reform Association. At its annual convention, 1888, Dr. McAllister declared that "movement bound to succeed through the influence of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union," while district secretary Gault said, that "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Prohibition Party had become so entirely National Reform organizations, that the regular National Reform organizers had ceased to organize local National Reform clubs as such, but worked through those bodies to spread its ideas."

When the purposes of the National Reform Association are accomplished the consent of the governed for men will stand where it does among women to-day-nowhere.

The first national convention of the American Sabbath Union was held in Washington, December, 1888. Just previous to this convention the state of Illinois held a convention of similar purport at which time two statements were especially emphasized.

1. That Christians do not keep Sunday as they ought.
2. That other people do not go to church as they ought.

Members of the Christian Party have not hesitated to declare that attendance upon church should be made compulsory. But as long as the sun shines the wind blows, flowers blossom and all nature performs its usual functions on that day, man should be as free as nature. Sunshine and storm are out of such people's reach or they too would doubtless be held responsible. To be fully consistent the 'Christian Party' should place animals and insects on trial as was done in Christian lands only a few hundred years since. The light of advancing civilization has not yet touched the majority of Christians; the Christian party in politics is the fifteenth century living in the nineteenth-its members are the heathen of the world whom civilization has not yet touched.

This National Sunday Union, which is another branch of the Christian party in politics, was first suggested by Dr. H.F. Crafts in 1887. In May, 1888, he addressed a memorial to the Methodist General Conference assembled in New York,-that same General Conference, that in emulation of the world's anti-slavery conference in London, 1840, and the world's temperance convention in New York, 1854, refused to receive regularly appointed woman delegates. The Methodist Conference of 1888, having denied to women the right of representation on the ground that laymen did not include women, entered "cordially" into the plan of a National Sabbath Union. The general assembly of the Presbyterian church north, the Presbyterian church south, the United Presbyterian church, the Baptist Union, the Congregationalists, the Methodist Protestant church and fifteen others entered heartily into this plan of organization. In addition the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the National Reform Association, the various State and National Sunday Schools, the Knights of Labor, the body of Locomotive Engineers and the 9,000,000 of the Catholic church, priestly and lay, men, women, children and the babe in arms, are all counted as sustaining this union.

As Catholics and Protestants are united in this Sunday observance demand it has been pertinently asked which kind of Sunday keeping is expected? All the Catholic priesthood require is morning attendance

upon mass ; this is especially true in Europe, after which observance the day is spent as one of holiday enjoyment. Bull-fights in Catholic Spain, the opera in music-loving Italy, dances in merry France, drives, sails, drinks everywhere.

Is this to be the style, or are we to return to Puritan custom,

“Hanging of his cat on Monday
For killing of a mouse on Sunday,”

and no one allowed to drive or walk for pleasure, or for rest. Which Sunday is it to be?

The purpose of this Sunday observance as directly stated by Dr. Crafts himself is not that people should enjoy the day as one of rest from usual labor, it is not for the benefit of man, but in order to commemorate the work of creation. The grounds for its demand are purely religious.

Every law of this character is dangerous because of the fact that law and right soon grow to be synonymous in the minds of men. Hon. Sheldon Amos, former Professor of Jurisprudence in Oxford University, speaking in regard to certain evil legislation in England, said: “Whatever law recognizes and provides for is regarded as morally right, comes to be so regarded by the hereditary instincts of the human mind.”

It has been clearly proven that the enforcement of rest at any time, is the enforcement of idleness, and not only tends to the destruction of self-reliance but to the increase of crime. In some branches of business enforced Sunday rest means overwork the remaining six days, or as Chauncey Depew says of railroading “somebody must work harder during the rest of the week than has hitherto been the case.”

While France, Mexico, Brazil and other countries are getting rid of clericalism and centralized power, it is one of the mysteries of the age that the United States seems striving to incorporate these two systems in her form of government. This tendency strikes every observant person, as does also its pretext, ‘protection of the people.’ This theory of ‘protection’ has been the assumption through past ages, governing every attempt for the destruction of liberty. There are now before congress several bills and amendments of this dangerous ‘protective’ character. Forty-four amendments to the constitution were introduced during the fiftieth congress, ranging from the control of marriage and divorce to a six years term for the Presidency.

The chief danger of the present situation lies in the fact that the majority of the people do not see that there is danger. One friend wrote, “To me it does not mean that so alarming a state of things exists, to me it is daybreak everywhere.”

Yes, it is daybreak everywhere; we see its radiance in Europe, in South America, in Africa. Peaceful revolutions are rapidly taking place on two hemispheres, yet just as a dark cloud shadows some parts of the earth even at break of day, heralding a coming storm, so while it is breaking day in many countries, yet over our own beloved land the fell shadow sweeps, – over it falls the pall of a coming storm. Amid so much liberty, people fail to see the gradual encroachments of organized power either in the church or in the state. But so sure am I of the coming storm that I cannot believe it will pass over us without the

possible shedding of blood. The struggle will be fierce and bitter; a man's enemies will be of his own household, for this storm will not be, as some surmise, a warfare between Catholic and Protestant ; it will be a battle of the liberal element against the church and its dogmas of whatever name or nature. After a time liberty will triumph, and then and not until then shall we see a true Republic upon this soil. As the battle for political liberty began here so will that for full religious liberty end here. The conflict we were sure had gone by will again arise; the decisive battle has yet to be fought. It seems to me when that hour has passed there will be no more church forever, for science and the spirit of free thought will have destroyed its very foundations.