
**An Inquiry Into the Moral and Religious Character of the
American Government**

Government American

Title: An Inquiry Into the Moral and Religious Character of the American Government

Author: Government American

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AN

INQUIRY

INTO THE

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER

OF THE

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

"A commonwealth ought to be but as one huge christian personage, one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body."

Milton's Prose Works.

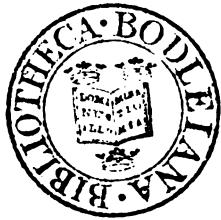
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THE writer of the following essay has aimed to do what he thought the times imperiously called for.

It has seemed to him that for some years past there has been a dangerous and growing misapprehension in the public mind as to the true constitutional relation of our political interests to those of a religious nature. He has seen with anxiety that even wise and good men, some of them his personal friends, have gradually given way to the opinion, which men of another stamp have made it their business to inculcate, that these two classes of interests ought to be kept so wide apart from each other in the conduct of our public affairs, as to have no reciprocal influence take place between them. He had thought that christianity was admirable everywhere and in all circumstances. How is it possible that political life

should form an exception? The church indeed is a thing by itself; but this is but a part of christianity; what becomes of the residue, the great principles of its moral code? Are politicians to reject these also? Have they not committed the mistake of regarding the church as equivalent to the whole system, and so rejecting the whole because the church is not to be meddled with? Can the facts of the case be otherwise accounted for?

Such at any rate has been the writer's impression, and he has derived from it the chief motive for what he has done. The reader will judge of the rest.

ERRATA.

- Page 61, line 6 from the bottom, for "sanctity" read *sanity*.
" 88, line 5 from the bottom, for "design" read *designs*.
" 102, line 11 from the top, for "goodness" read *his goodness*.
" 175, line 12 from the top, for "contests" read *contest*.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

NATIONS, like individuals, should endeavour to learn something from the ills they suffer. It is especially becoming in a free people, when visited with chastisement, to consider wherein they have provoked the rod, and as far as may be, to compensate their misfortunes by growing wiser and better under them.

We have run into many novelties both of opinion and practice. Our fathers had no conception of some of the modern notions of what are called state-rights; and I believe they would have stood amazed at the kind of suggestion now current in the country, that a government such as they have left us, so respectful of the rights of man in every form, ought yet to be administered with as little avowed deference as possible for those of the supreme being. Priestcraft is an evil of no late discovery: the danger of formal alliances between