

Usurpation Practiced by Our President.

The Independent, in defending the president's references to Jesus Christ in his 1896 Thanksgiving proclamation, says:

"Our president and governors are authorized by law to set apart certain days as seasons of thanksgiving and fasting. All that the law provides is the bare announcement of the time. * * * If the president or governor says anything further [than is provided for by law] it is not a legal act."

Now, it is not true that the president of the United States is authorized by law to appoint days of thanksgiving and fasting. Where it is done, it is done without law, without constitutional authority. The right to issue religious proclamations is not a right which the states have delegated to the general government; and all powers not so delegated by the constitution are reserved by the states. The framers of the constitution took especial pains to exclude the word of God from that document in order that it should be entirely secular. The president has not the least legal right or authority to issue a religious proclamation. Yet The Independent says that he is authorized by law to do this. Where is the law? Where is the law which authorizes him to make the "bare announcement" even?

According to The Independent, if the president does more than the law provides "it is not a legal act." Well, the law does not provide for the issuing of a Thanksgiving proclamation by the president. That, then, is not a legal act, and for the president to do officially that which is not legal is to commit a grave offence.

The Independent takes the ground that the president's expressions recognizing Jesus Christ as the savior was merely an expression of his own "personal faith," his "little sermon" addressed to the American people, but unofficial in its character. This is nonsense. One part of the proclamation is not more official than another. The entire document was issued by the president in his capacity of president of the United States. It is so signed and topped at the seal of the United States.

As the American Sentinel says: "Other presidents gave national recognition to religion in general. President Cleveland has given national recognition to the Christian religion in exclusion of all other religions. It is only a question of time when the next step will be taken, and a president will give national recognition to some particular sect, and that the Catholic sect, in exclusion of all others."

If a Protestant president may in official documents invoke Jesus Christ as its mediator, a Catholic

president may, a few years hence, in such documents, invoke Mary as a mediatrix. Understanding this fully, Catholic priests, and Catholic papers have viewed the proclamation very favorably, defending it even against the criticisms of the Jewish rabbis and others who have pointed out the president's act of usurpation.

President Cleveland, it would seem, is in full sympathy with the National Reform association in its purpose to commit the government of the United States to the recognition and support of the Christian religion. **B. F. UNDERWOOD.**

Where faith commences, science ends. Faith has its origin in the poetic imagination; knowledge, on the other hand, originates in the reasoning intelligence of man.—Haeckel.

Man is not to be condemned for thinking differently from others. He is rather to be condemned for not thinking at all.—L. K. Washburn.

A Card.

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