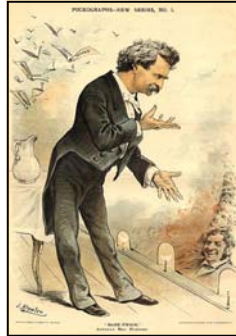




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Mark Twain On The Duty Of Christians To Vote

The following essay was written by Mark Twain in 1905 apparently as a satire on Christians. Twain was hostile to Christianity for most of his life but these words ring true—even if he meant them to bring harm to Christians. God can use even a skeptic like Mark Twain for His eternal purposes.



It will be conceded that every man's first duty is to God; it will also be conceded, and with strong emphasis, that a Christian's first duty is to God. It then follows, as a matter of course, that it is his duty to carry his Christian code of morals to the polls and vote them. Whenever he shall do that, he will not find himself voting for an unclean man, a dishonest man. Whenever a Christian votes, he votes against God or for Him, and he knows this quite well. God is an issue in every election; He is a candidate in the person of every clean nominee on every ticket; His purity and His approval are there, to be voted for or voted against, and no fealty to party can absolve His servant from his higher and more exacting fealty to Him; He takes precedence of party, duty to Him is above every claim of party.

If Christians should vote their duty to God at the polls, they would carry every election, and do it with ease. They would elect every clean candidate in the United States, and defeat every soiled one. Their prodigious power would be quickly realized and recognized, and afterward there would be no unclean candidates upon any ticket, and graft would cease.

No church organization can be found in the country that would elect men of foul character to be its shepherd, its treasurer, and superintendent of its Sunday-school. It would be revolted at the idea; it would consider such an election an insult to God. Yet every Christian congregation in the country elects foul men to public office, while quite aware that this also is an open and deliberate insult to God, who can not approve and does not approve the placing of the liberties and the well-being of His children in the hands of infamous men. It is the Christian congregations that are responsible for the filling of our public offices with criminals, for the reason that they could prevent it if they chose to do it. They could prevent it without organizing a league, without framing a platform, without making any speeches or passing any resolutions -- in a word, without concert of any kind.

They could accomplish it by each individual resolving to vote for God at the polls -- that is to say, vote for the candidate whom God would approve. Can a man imagine such a thing as God being a Republican or a Democrat, and voting for a criminal or a blackguard merely because party loyalty required it? Then can we imagine that a man can improve upon God's attitude in this matter, and by help of professional politicians invent a better policy? God has no politics but cleanliness and honesty, and it is good enough for men. ... If the Christians of America could be persuaded to vote God and a clean ticket, it would bring about a moral revolution that would be incalculably beneficent. It would save the country -- a country whose Christians have betrayed it and are destroying it.

— Mark Twain, *Colliers Magazine*, September 2, 1905.

TAKE ACTION: Make sure you have registered to vote for this year's election. Encourage others to register to vote as well—and vote for individuals who support traditional values and are willing to defend the family. To get more details about the political process and how to register to vote, access TVC's web site: <http://www.traditional-values.org>. **Twain quote is taken from: www.hannibal.net.**

Order a copy of TVC's free pamphlet, "What Churches Can And Cannot Do," during a political campaign from: TVC, 100 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, CA 92805; 714-520-0300; email: twcwashdc@traditionalvalues.org.