

November 15, 1928

I am wondering this morning if we realize what a great privilege it is to be an American citizen. In the last of this lesson that I have read to you this morning, I am not taking the religious aspect of it at all tho I could do that but I am taking the political aspect of it. It is a great privilege to live in a country where one can worship Jehovah according to the dictates of his own conscience.

This Roman government was supreme over the Jews as it was over all its provinces but it allowed the various people to carry on a part of the government in its own way. It was in drawing on your imagination a little bit like our federal government having the supreme authority but leaving a number of matters in the hands of the states and then other little matters in the hands of the counties. Our laws are founded on the Roman laws and on the Bible laws. In this country one of the fundamental laws is that a person shall have the privilege of worshipping any god he chooses and in any way he chooses provided it falls within the laws of decency and does not interfere with the lives of other folks. That means that we have a number of religious sects and orders in our country and they are protected by the federal government.

We have recently gone thru a political campaign which unfortunately brought in a religious element and a great majority of the people in the two parties regretted that fact. An American is free to worship as he wishes in this country and just as Lysias, the chief captain, did not let the people take the life of this man Paul just so the federal government in our country assures to every individual the right to worship Jehovah just as he pleases. Each citizen is given the right to vote for whom they wish.

Of course, there are people who get angry with their friends because they believe something different from what they do. You cannot legislate morality, you cannot legislate religion. You cannot make mankind more broadminded by legislation and taking the nation as a whole there is unquestionably the greatest amount of religious freedom here that can be found anywhere on the face of this earth.

It is a great privilege to be an American citizen. It does help one to realize that his fellow man can have a different opinion from him and yet be all right and it does encourage broadmindedness on the part of all of us but it does not take away from us the privilege of believing what we wish. What would happen in America if a person was taken up because of his religious faith as Paul was arrested, because it is contrary to the opinion of this country in which we live. In deed and in truth it is a great privilege to be an American citizen.

---Robert H. Wright, President