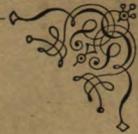


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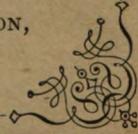
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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NATIONAL CONVENTION
TO SECURE THE
RELIGIOUS AMENDMENT
OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES,
HELD IN
PITTSBURG, FEBRUARY 4, 5, 1874.
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT.



PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY THE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN ASSOCIATION,
No. 104 NORTH SIXTH STREET.



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Here, then, is the state of the question :

Natural morality, on every point of essential value to society, has wandered, and is polluted in its teachings, and affords no shadow of evidence that it will not debase and disorder the whole fabric of social life.

Natural morality, taking away Christianity, would make us responsible for the infanticide of Chinamen; the polygamy of Utah, the legalization of prostitution, and the abominations of the Oneida community; the sudden disturbances of mob-law and private revenge; the destructive doctrines of Communism; the Fetishism of our (uncivilized) negroes; the code duello; and the lottery. It must encourage dishonesty, and fail to rebuke blasphemy. It opens the way for theft and rapine, and the doctrine that might makes right. It opens the window for every imprisoned dove of virtue to fly away; and flings wide the door for every beastly sin to enter. The outlook is not encouraging.

President George P. Hays, D.D., was next introduced by the President, and spoke as follows :

THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE OF THE NATION.

ADDRESS OF PRES. GEO. P. HAYS, D.D.

In the effort to anchor this nation to fundamental truth on the subject of morality, it is often asked, would it not be better to address yourselves to the people? Is the nation a thing other than the people? We shall understand this point best by beginning with a private corporation, and then going up to public corporations. Suppose Brown, Jones and Smith organize a bank, under the name of the Merchants' National bank, and so receive deposits and lend money on notes and mortgages. Who owns this banking house? Who is sued when payment of deposits is refused? Who sues when mortgages are foreclosed? Not Brown, surely, nor Jones nor Smith, but the bank. And suppose Brown sells out to Davis, and Jones to Jenkins, and Smith to Wilson, is then the bank not the same national bank? Does any one deny its liability for its deposits, and its right to collect on the notes it holds? And now suppose Brown, Jones and Smith, organize themselves again into a bank, by the name of the Merchants' National bank, can they collect the mortgages they took before? But, if, the corporation is not distinct from the individuals, they ought to, as they are the same men in the same business, and with the same name as before.

Now, all the experience of governments shows that it is of vital importance that these corporations should be bound by strict regulations. In the late Constitutional Convention there was no subject of greater difficulty than that of corporations, and every effort was made to control and restrain them by provisions so explicit that they could not be evaded. The very same Convention found a like difficulty in laying down regulations for the government of the State itself. The State is only a public corporation, as the bank is a private one, and the call for a Convention to amend the Constitution came from the people, not so much because they felt that new regulations were needed for the private corporations, as that they felt that the old Constitution did not properly regulate the duties of the State itself. The organization, duties and powers of the government itself, in its executive, legislative and judicial departments, in their judgment, needed revision, and they called the Convention for

that work. By explicit declaration, by oaths and penalties, that Convention sought to enforce it on the minds and bind it to the consciences of future officers that they were to do right. Would it have been out of place for them to have said, the Bible is for this State the standard of morality, and, on all subjects concerning which the State takes action, it is to be the guide?

What makes this subject of such deep personal importance to all of us, is the fact, that the State is what might be called a necessary corporation. A bank is an optional corporation. If you and I do not like it, we need not enter it; or if, being in it, a course be adopted which we disapprove of, we can leave it. It is at our own option whether we enter it, how long we stay in it, and when we go out. It is not so with the State. By our birth we become part of it, are under its protection and subject to its punishments. We cannot get out of it. If we leave the United States, we go to some other country, and are part of society and under law there. Our only escape is to flee to some Robinson Crusoe island, and be sure that no man Friday ever comes on it with us; for if he does, it is certain that either we will be his master, or he ours, and both master and slave accountable to God for the use of our power. If it be important that these optional corporations, like banks and such like, should be under proper charter regulations, when men can leave them if they wish, how much more important is it that these necessary corporations, like the State and the family, should be held fast to the eternal morals of God. Over the private corporations there is the state, and over the state is the nation, to see that it does not transgress the proper boundaries of its duty. But who is over the nation, but God? If history teaches any lesson, it teaches this especially, that no nation can turn aside from God's laws, and live; and as nations are necessary corporations, part of which you and I and our posterity must be, we are urged to bind nations generally, and especially our own nation, to God's truth, by every fear of national calamities, and every desire for our nation's prosperity.

The place to put such a clause, anchoring this nation to the truth, is in the Constitution. What are the different parts of a constitution? They are, mainly, these three: first, the statutory, which organizes the different branches of the government, declaring how many branches there shall be, and how many and what officers shall discharge the duties of each branch. Thus our national Constitution declares that there shall be three separate and independent branches, the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial; and that the Legislative shall be vested in two Houses of Congress. Under the Articles of Confederation there was but one house.

The next department of a Constitution is that which is affirmatory; declaring what ends these different branches shall seek, separately and collectively: thus the Constitution declares that "the United States shall guaranty to every State in this Union a republican form of government."

The present Constitution of this State makes it the duty of the State to maintain a system of public education, and appropriate not less than one million dollars for its support each year. Now, what more important duty could be set before a government than the promotion of that morality, whose standard is the Bible, and so shaping all their governmental action, that the people shall be kept from the crimes which are a nation's overthrow, such as perjury, theft, fraud, oppression, and public corruption?

The third department of a Constitution is that which is prohibitory; in which it is forbidden to do certain things, and which, when it does undertake to do them, makes such action null and void: thus, Congress can make no "ex post facto" law, or lay any export tax; and our present State Constitution prohibits special legislation on

many subjects. Now, as the Constitution of the United States prohibits an established religion, and guaranties to every citizen the free exercise of his religion, all the hue-and-cry about a union of Church and State is mere wasted breath, until somebody proposes to repeal that first amendment. So far as this movement is concerned, no friend of it proposes any such nonsense. What is proposed is, that, while that existing amendment properly guards us from the perilous extreme of a union of Church and State on the one hand, we shall by another amendment, (I would put it among the amendments, and not in the preamble,) be equally guarded from as perilous an extreme,—atheism, secularism, and utter wreck of fundamental morals, on the other. The mechanism of the heavens is only made perfect by the balancing of the centrifugal and centripetal forces. At present this nation is amply guarded by centrifugal forces, in its prohibitions from any peril of falling into the hands of the Church; but it is at the mercy of these, wanting, as it does, any centripetal force to keep it from wandering utterly away from all the light and heat and protection of the Son of God. The picture of all worlds given over to their centrifugal forces, and madly fleeing from all centres, out into the chaotic darkness of absolute space, is but a glimpse of the overthrow of nations that break away from God. Safety for this nation can only be found in avoiding atheism, as well as Church and State union.

But we are told the way to avoid these extremes, is to let the whole subject alone. Neutrality is the only way to avoid it properly, because the people are greatly divided on the subject. But it is an important question whether neutrality does avoid it. Let us look at some parallel cases. The people of this country are greatly divided between tariff and free trade. Here, and in the Northeast, they are greatly benefited by a tariff. In the West and South, free trade is just as great a gain; for then they sell their wheat and cotton dear, and buy their imports cheap. Now, suppose the government say, Because the people are so much divided, we will take a neutral position, and do nothing. South Carolina may have free trade if she wants it, and Pittsburgh may pay a tariff if she wants it. We will not interfere at all. How would you like that, iron masters, steel factors and wool growers? Why, that is blank, flat free trade. To lay on no tariff is itself free trade. The West is greatly exercised about transportation just now.* How would they like to have Congress and the Legislatures say, We do not want to take sides. We will do nothing in the matter. We will be neutral in the fight between you and the railroads. The most avaricious and unscrupulous railroad man ever born could ask no more than that; and such neutrality is just what the grangers are now complaining to Congress about. Neutrality on the subject we are now discussing, is just such a decision, and a taking sides for atheism, as neutrality is taking sides for free trade and railroads. The place in which we meet* furnishes just the sharp, clean-cut illustration we need to bring this point out. Here is an immense library, whose managers do not propose to be sectarian or establish a religion. In accordance with this plan, suppose their book committee refuses to buy any book that is published or written by a Presbyterian, a Methodist, an Episcopalian, a Baptist, or a Roman Catholic, and as there are many who do not believe in the Sabbath or the Bible, they allow neither the Bible nor any book that defends or upholds it a place on their shelves, and run the institution on the Sabbath just as on other days. But as they are liberal thinkers, they must not exclude any because of their skepticism, and so they buy Voltaire, Comte, Hume, Hobbes, Kant, Renan, Strauss, Darwin and Tom Paine, and then come before the public and ask for pa-

* Mercantile Library Hall.

tronage because they are neutral on religion. Shades of the W's,—Walker, Worcester and Webster! what a definition of neutrality!!! What more could atheists do, if they were getting up a library of their own? Just so, to attempt neutrality by a nation that has crimes to punish, and rights of property to decide, is equally impossible, and can only issue in practical but utter atheism. Our only safety is to shun atheism as we have shunned a union of Church and State, for the one has not been a whit behind the other in the ruin that marks its path in history; and the only manly, logical and effective way of evading it, is by adopting some such an amendment as we here propose.

We are often asked, Why do you not go to the people? Can an amendment of the Constitution make the people moral? If I understand the matter, that is just what we have been doing—"going to the people." This convention was called as a step in getting at the people, and if my eyes do not deceive me, we have got at a multitude of people. Since this movement was first started at a little meeting of a few people at Xenia, Ohio, in 1863, it has had marvellous success with the people. Politicians are very timid of us now. They will grow wise soon. Society in this country, politically considered, is very much like a pyramid, very broad at the base and very small at the top. At the base, and for more than half its altitude, are the quiet, thoughtful people with no ambitions for office, and contented no matter who is elected, so all goes on well. Above them is the drifting population who are shaken with every wind and quiver like a jelly cone on a wedding table, while above them on the apex ride the politicians. To ride there with safety is no small feat of dexterity, and, as a rule, it is most important to the rider to keep those shaky people who will scratch their ticket for a drink of whisky, in as good a humor as possible. But where are they when the foundations move? Those foundation masses set themselves on the salary question, and reluctant obstinacy had to yield. It is to that class that this appeal is made, and by them it is best received; and when once they are moved, hundreds of politicians who would not for the world commit themselves to it now, will bawl themselves hoarse in applause, and swear they knew it would be so, and were on that side from the beginning. Patience and perseverance! The friends of our country are settling their repose on the Rock of Ages, and the generations and nations of the future shall build after the same example.

Dr. Pollock, chairman of the nominating committee, presented the following list of officers for the Association, who were unanimously elected.

PRESIDENT:

The Hon. FELIX R. BRUNOT, *Pittsburgh, Pa.*

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

His Excellency, JAMES M. HARVEY, *United States Senate.*

His Excellency, ROBERT W. FURNAS, *Governor of Nebraska.*

The Hon. LORENZO SAWYER, *U. S. Circuit Court, San Francisco, Cal.*

The Hon. G. W. BROOKS, *U. S. District Court of North Carolina.*

The Hon. EDGAR W. HILLYER, *U. S. District Court of Nevada.*