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Rev. Dr. McAllister, Pittsburgh, gave an address on

. THE POLITICAL ATTITUDE OF REFORMED PRESBYTERIANISM.

Reformed Presbyterianism is the sum of the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. This Church had its birth in Scotland in the dawn of the First Reformation. It was "Presbyterian" in its government, and "Reformed" from the corruptions of Popery. The nurture as well as the birth of Reformed Presbyterianism has been in an atmosphere of political struggle. It has ever been in the front of the conflict, whether in Scotland or in other countries, for civil as well as for religious liberty. Taking its principles from the Word of God, it has applied them, as that Word does, to political life as well as to all other human relationships. In answer to the question as to its political attitude, it is maintained that it is an attitude:—

I.—*Of unswerving loyalty to just political authority.*

Learning from the Scriptures that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that "whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God" (Romans xiii. 1, 2), it has ever recognized rightful civil rulers as the ministers of God for good to men, and has heartily been subject to all such political authority "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake," and "for the Lord's sake" as well—(see Romans xiii. 5 and 1 Peter ii. 13). Taught by the same Divine law to pray "for kings and for all that are in authority" (1 Tim. ii. 2), Reformed Presbyterians have ever held political rulers in high honour because of their office, and have borne most patiently with the grievances and injustice to themselves that have resulted from the political mistakes of their rightful civil magistrates of higher or lower rank. Citizens who do not recognize civil government as God's institution, nor the nation as the creature of God, nor the ruler as the minister of God, clothed with political authority, flowing through the people as the channel from God as its ultimate

source, may be loyal to their rulers from lower motives. But that loyalty is not best fitted to bear the strain of sectional rivalries, of conflicting, selfish financial interests, and of partisan strife. Its roots are in the shallow stratum of a secular political philosophy. They wither in the drought of national adversity. Kings and presidents, legislatures and judges are scoffed and jeered and cast off with contempt and hatred in times of political excitement for no sufficient reason. But the loyalty which is rooted deep in religious conviction, and which renders obedience to civil rulers in a proper sense as to the Lord, is the kind which binds the political organization in its head and in its subjects in strongest bonds of unity. Such is the loyalty of Reformed Presbyterianism.

II.—*Of sincere attachment to constitutional political liberty.*

Reformed Presbyterians are Covenanters. They are persuaded that among the most precious instruments in all political history are the National Covenants of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of Great Britain and Ireland. These Covenants are not only exponents of the principles of constitutional liberty in the ecclesiastical sphere—they are pre-eminently political constitutions, and their principles of constitutional liberty are applicable in all lands and under different forms of government. Reformed Presbyterians, particularly those of us who belong to the United States, may be strongly inclined to the Republican form of government. We may believe that that form is in closest harmony with the Divine standard which commands the choosing of able men and men that fear God from among the people, and the placing of these in the seats of political authority (Ex. xviii. 21). But we all agree, as Reformed Presbyterian Covenanters, that constitutional government, whether under the monarchical or republican form, is the main thing. So some of us may prefer, all things considered, a written political constitution. But whether the nation's fundamental law or the political constitution may be written or unwritten, a constitutional government

with its constitutional limitations, its adjustment of the legislative, judicial, and executive departments, its provision for its own modification in harmony with its stability, is that for which Reformed Presbyterianism has ever contended. These constitutional provisions of a republican government are the guarantees of liberty. They balance liberty with law. They are a sacred compact between the governors and the governed, and between the people of the sovereign nation among themselves. It is in this way that Reformed Presbyterianism reconciles the elements of truth in each of two apparently conflicting theories of the State, when it traces the sovereign power of the political organism to God, and at the same time recognizes the place of a political compact or covenant, or a constitution of government, into which the members of the nation enter with each other for the administration of civil affairs. Avoiding the political error of the Divine right of kings, and the no less pernicious political heresy of the social compact, it anchors the State as sovereign under God to the Throne of God, and on the basis of his perfect law of liberty secures to all the members of the political body the Covenanted constitutional guarantees of both civil and religious liberty.

III.—*Of devotion to the political as well as the natural rights of all men.*

Political rights are to be distinguished from natural rights, that is, from such rights as the right to life and the right to personal liberty. Political rights must, of course, be in harmony with the law of nature and with all natural rights, but they are nevertheless distinct from the latter, being rights which the political society defines in reference to its own constitution and administration, such as the right of suffrage, and the right of holding office in the body politic.

Multitudes of boasted friends of human rights and loud-mouthed advocates of freedom have in fact been the most inveterate opponents of the natural liberties of portions of our race. The great country dear to many of us by birth or

by adoption—a country which has proudly claimed the name of “the land of the free”—has shamefully denied to negroes, and the American Indians, and the Chinese, even their natural rights. It is to the credit of Reformed Presbyterianism that from the beginning of the present century, when the question of holding human beings in the bondage of American slavery demanded a decision in Church as well as State, they decided by their highest ecclesiastical authority that no slave-holder could remain in their communion. And they decided still further—an aspect of their political attitude to be considered more fully presently—that this iniquity of involuntary servitude was a sufficient ground for separation by practical political dissent from the responsible governing political society. And during all their history in all lands in which their lot has been cast they have been the unflinching opponents of slavery and the undaunted friends and helpers of the slave. In no portions of the United States were stations of the underground railway so frequent and so well known and generally used as in settlements north of the Ohio of Reformed Presbyterians. And to-day they are the same steadfast and uncompromising champions of the natural rights of negroes, Indians, Chinamen, and all others of their fellowmen, no matter what their race or their religion.

But more than this. While they have been widely accused of bigoted intolerance in the sphere of civil and political relationships, they have of all men most vigorously protested against the exclusion from political rights and privileges of any member of the human family on the ground of colour, race, or any other consideration that does not of necessity involve the highest welfare of the entire political body as a jural society and a moral organism. Political rights, even more than purely natural rights, must rest on a moral foundation. The Divine law stipulates that “he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God” (2 Sam. xxiii. 3). And the principles of Reformed Presbyterianism, therefore,

demand that when this moral basis of Scriptural qualification is laid down, when the highest and most precious interests of the political body as the institutions of rights are conserved first of all, no prejudice against any class of the citizens of a country is to be permitted to exclude them from the enjoyment of their political rights and privileges in the commonwealth of which they form an integral part. Discriminations against Chinamen as Chinamen, or against negroes as negroes, or against men of any colour, or natives of any country, as such, are assaults on political rights which Reformed Presbyterians have always steadfastly and valiantly opposed. Political authority under God and Christ and the Divine law, and at the same time the political authority of the people, for the people and by the people, and the whole people, without any discriminations, except those that on intellectual or moral grounds will apply to all races and classes alike, has and will ever be a primary maxim in civil government of the members of this Church.

IV.—*Of the purest and most exalted patriotism.*

One of the cheapest of social virtues in these times of political excitement, both in Great Britain and America, is what is popularly called "patriotism." This so-called "patriotism" is a love of country for the lover's rather than the country's gain. It is seen at its fullest development when it dons the garments of a parade during or following a political campaign, and marches to the music of brass bands with streaming flags and flaring lamps, shrieking itself hoarse in the midst of the conflict, or at the victorious election returns. This kind of patriotism may be ready to fight for country against all foes. It may say: "My country, right or wrong," and may not hesitate to encounter death in defence of country when that defence means battling against the right.

But there is another kind of patriotism. And this kind loves the fatherland with such a pure devotion that it cannot bear to see that object of faithful love in the wrong. It is not

only ready to take up arms and face death on the battlefield in defence of country against all enemies of the right, but it dares to show to the fatherland its sins and to fellow-countrymen their transgressions. It is so clear-visioned that it can see the country's sins and consequent danger; and so conscientious and unselfish that it does not shrink from the difficult duty of pointing out the wrongs that are being perpetrated and their certain damaging or perhaps fatal results.

The pages of British and American history bear witness that Reformed Presbyterians have never hesitated to lay down their lives for their country. The blood of Scotland's martyrs was poured out in the struggles of the seventeenth century for fatherland as well as for home and the Church of God. And the records of the Revolutionary War and the War of the Rebellion in America attest that no class of citizens was more largely represented in the ranks of the country's defenders than Reformed Presbyterians. But far beyond this service to which they marched with hosts of other citizens, amidst the huzzas of millions, have been their patriotic contendings on many a field of moral conflict amidst the jeers and scoffs of the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen. As the steadfast and uncompromising opponents of slavery, secret orders, intemperance, Sabbath desecration, profanity, gambling, and every other public iniquity, and especially of these great evils in political life when the full tide of popularity was in their favour, Reformed Presbyterians have during all their history proved their patriotism to be of the purest and most exalted kind.

V.—*Of practical dissent from political iniquity.*

The divine law is imperative in requiring separation from all sin. Loyal followers of Christ must not be partakers in any way of other men's sins. They must not be unequally yoked in fellowship or communion with the enemies of their Lord and Saviour (2 Cor. vi. 14-17). A measure of connection Christians must have with others in this world. But all

responsible connection with any course or act of opposition to Christ's kingdom they must scrupulously avoid.

Political iniquity is the wrong-doing of the body politic. It is not to be expected that any political being will be perfect. A truly Christian State may fall into serious error, and be guilty of many a wrong. Against all such possible wrong-doing of a truly Christian political body a protest and dissent may be entered by a loyal follower of Christ without separation from the erring organization. But a vigorous and earnest protest and dissent in the spirit of love should in all cases be promptly entered, and consistently and faithfully maintained until reformation has been effected.

When, however, the political wrong is fundamental in its character, when the defect is such a radical and constitutional one as to give the governing political organization, by the terms of its compact, a character of antagonism to Christ and His law, the loyal Christian's duty is clear. He must come out and be separate from the political society which thus in its organic law or fundamental articles of political agreement puts dishonour upon the King of kings.

It is on this ground that Reformed Presbyterians are political dissenters. Not from any indifference to the public welfare; not because they are so deeply immersed in business as to have no time to give to a political campaign; not because they are unwilling to bear the burdens and undergo the annoyances and vexations of political life; not because they believe that human nature is so corrupt and politics so rotten that there is no hope of reformation until the Lord himself shall come personally and take His kingdom—for none of these or any kindred reasons do they dissent and refuse to incorporate with the body politic, but for the one sufficient reason that they cannot enter into the political covenant by which the governing society agrees to administer the affairs of State in disregard of the paramount authority of Him who is Governor among the nations.

The sad fact which multitudes of thoughtful citizens outside the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Great Britain and America admit to-day is, that the governments of these great countries are based by their constitutions on immoral and un-Christian principles, in so far as they exalt the will of the people, or of any human ruler, to the place which the law of Christ alone can occupy, as supreme and ultimately authoritative moral law for men in political as well as in all other relations. In a word, God and Christ and the Divine Law are denied their rightful place at the basis of the political organization. This is deplored by multitudes of Christians in many Churches. And while others do not carry into practical effect the truth which they admit, Reformed Presbyterians have Covenanted with the Lord and with each other, that they will not take part in the administration of the affairs of any body politic in any way, or by any act, which would express or imply approval of the placing of false religions in the administration of the State on a level with the one and only true religion, and that they will continue to dissent and refuse identification with the government until God and Christ and the moral laws of the Christian religion are accorded their due authoritative place, and until in all questions of national conduct the final appeal may be made, according to the constitutional compact, written or unwritten, to the ultimate standard which Christ, as King of kings, has given for the control of a nation's life.

VI.—*Of earnest and hopeful effort for political reformation.*

The Christian principles of civil government are destined to triumph. This is the sure word of prophecy. Great voices will yet be heard in heaven saying that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15). Reformed Presbyterians are therefore the most hopeful workers in the sphere of political life. In Great Britain they do not despair of their constitutional monarchy, nor in America do they despair of their republic;

but in both countries they labour steadily and hopefully for the fulfilment of the prophecy of the 110th Psalm, believing that each of these great nations shall yet be a willing people in God's day of power under Him who sits at the right hand of the Father on His Mediatorial Throne.

While, then, Reformed Presbyterians bear a message as Political Dissenters to Christian citizens, calling upon them to come out and to be separate from the responsible body politic that dishonours the Saviour King, as National Reformers they bear a message to the nation as such, calling upon it to turn from all iniquity and conform its entire life and conduct to the Divine Law. And while they seek the ear of the sovereign people in popular gatherings, and through literature widely disseminated, they go to the nation's capital and lift up their voice in the halls where the representatives of the sovereign people gather, not calling upon the nation to dissent, for the nation is incapable of political dissent and non-incorporation, but calling upon it to "kiss the Son," and to accept as its ultimate standard of right and wrong the law of Him to whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

In these and other kindred ways, Reformed Presbyterians are the most active of political toilers, though they take no part in an election contest nor hold political office. They have every motive to most enthusiastic and confident effort. They are fully persuaded that by the Divine decree the nations have been given to Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. They believe that the instrumentalities and agencies of this dispensation of the Holy Spirit are adequate to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose of the redemption of this world from the usurped dominion of Satan. And they are rejoiced to know that God uses His people as co-workers with Himself in the accomplishment of this purpose. Therefore they work with their might for the regeneration of political society. With a constancy of

effort, and a degree of personal sacrifice a thousandfold greater than ever required by the spasmodic energies of a voter's or candidate's campaign, they press onward in their work of national reformation in full assurance that the glorious day is drawing near when they, together with all other loyal followers of the Saviour King, may consistently swear allegiance to the indisputably Christian fundamental law of their beloved land, and help administer an avowedly and truly Christian government to the honour of their God and His Christ, and the highest welfare of their fellow-men.

P S A L M LXXII.

His name for ever shall endure;
 Last like the sun it shall:
 Men shall be blessed in Him, and bless'd
 All nations shall Him call.

Now blessed be the Lord our God,
 The God of Israel,
 For He alone doth wondrous works,
 In glory that excel.

And blessed be His glorious name
 To all eternity:
 The whole earth let His glory fill,
 Amen, so let it be.

Rev. Dr. Trumbull, Morning Sun, Iowa, led in prayer, and pronounced the Benediction.

