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A REPORT OF THE
CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP CONFERENCE,

DEVOTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF

POLITICAL LOYALTY TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

HELD IN THE

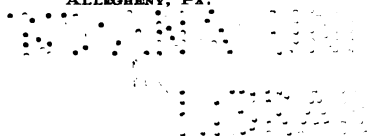
ALLEGHENY COVENANTER
CHURCH.

CORNER OF SANDUSKY AND NORTH DIAMOND STREETS.

MONDAY AND TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 24TH AND 25TH, 1902.

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POLITICAL LOYALTY TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
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1902.
PRESS OF JOHN C. PARK,
ALLEGHENY, PA.



Monday Evening February 24.

Monday evening session was presided over by Mr. D. S. Anderson, Allegheny, Pa. Dr. D. B. Wilson conducted devotional exercises.

Then followed the evening addresses.

What is the Consistent Attitude for a Christian to take Under a Government which bars Christ Out?

It is assumed at the outset that the state is a divine institution; that as such it of necessity stands in fundamental relationship to God; that in keeping with this relationship God has been pleased to appoint his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Ruler of Nations; and that he has furthermore in his Holy Word graciously furnished men with an infallible standard for the determination of national conduct. It is assumed as well that in consequence of these great foundational truths all nations ought to recognize God as the source of authority and the author of law; ought with unwavering loyalty to acknowledge Jesus Christ in His royal capacity as King; and ought with untellable gratitude to take the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures as the unerringly apt and adequate manual to direct them in the solution of every question bearing on the moral issues involved in civic life. Moreover, it is assumed that the nation in which we live has for some reason neglected to acknowledge God as the source of authority; that it has elected to carry on government according to a supreme and fundamental law which leaves Christ out; that it has given the Word of God no place in the legislative, judicial and executive councils of the land; and that in this way it has, as a matter of fact, ignored and set at naught the divine arrangement for the well being of society. Again, it is assumed that the attitude of our nation in this respect is an attitude of implicit rebellion against the Most High God; that it is an attitude whose primal, whose basal quality is indisputably sinful; that the sin is akin to the first sin of Adam in which he essayed to be independent of the will of God; that in substance it is the first

sin of Adam perpetuating and visibilizing itself in the state; that it has in it all the elements arising from the want of original righteousness; that it contains in it in epitome the corruption that pervades the whole nature of man; in a word, that it is original sin articulating itself at the source of civil life; and that from it, in consequence, as from a fountain of impurity, flow vast and ever swelling volumes of that putridinous iniquity with which the terrific vortex of party politics is being fed and fouled and gorged at this very hour.

That is to say, then, it is assumed, to begin with, that this nation, in attempting to carry on government according to a supreme law which rules God, Christ and the Bible out, is guilty not simply of one sin among many sins, but rather of the one intrinsic sin, the germ of all the rest, or of the one dynamic sin which generates the many. "Sin, in the Biblical view," says James Orr in his *Christian View of God and the World*, and he is speaking of sin in its essential character, "consists in the revolt of the creature will from its rightful allegiance to the sovereign will of God, and the setting up of a false independence, the substitution of a life for self for a life for God." This statement, as is obvious, connects itself inherently with the subject before us. To disobey the divine command to acknowledge Christ as King and His Word as law is for the creature will of the state to revolt from its rightful allegiance to the sovereign will of God; is for it to set up a false and baneful independence in the presence of "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords;" is for it to substitute a life for self for a life for God. In being guilty of such a sin, therefore, the sin of undeniable rebellion, this nation, it is assumed, has broken the one spiritual bond by which it, or any other nation, can stand in unison with God, in league with his Son, or in subserviance to His law.

The question, then, which every Christian in our land has to face is this—What attitude shall I maintain in a nation that has lifted up the hand of rebellion against the Most High? What principles shall control my actions in a land where the creature will of the state has revolted from its rightful allegiance to the sovereign will of God, has set up a false independence of its own, has substituted a life for self for a life for God? Or, from still another angle, what stand shall I take in a civil society that has undertaken to carry on government according to a law which bars Christ out, and with him His Holy Word, and with unruffled serenity has raised its voice in substantial accord with the chief priests in the Judgment Hall of Pilate, when they cried: "We have no king but Caesar?" In circumstances such as these, what position must I take?

Now it is evident, in the first place, that a loyal follower of Christ cannot consistently design himself to a life of inaction.

It has been estimated that there are about twenty-five per cent. of our voting population that do not go to the polls at all. They have virtually, if not explicitly, declared that under present conditions they will have nothing more to do with the electing of men to fill their country's places of public trust. Many of these men, no doubt, have persuaded themselves that they are too busy to vote. Others, again, have concluded from the way things are going that voting is useless. But some, and the number of these is by no means inconsiderable, are fast becoming unwilling to be implicated in the intolerable wickedness that is allowed to sway its undisputed scepter in every campaign. Consequently, in this third class who do not choose to cast their ballots are to be found some of the excellent of the earth, some who are intensely loyal to Christ—Christians indeed in whom there is no guile. They are men who have come to be disgusted with such thieving, such bribery, such low chicanery of every description, as have verily become ubiquitous in the world of politics at the present time. They are men who have been keen enough to see that whichever way the elections in any given case may go, the results simply serve to register the degree by which the successful party has been able to exceed the defeated ones in political intrigue. No wonder, then, that they are filled with loathing and with righteous indignation. No wonder that, in despair of doing good, they should finally resolve that they will have nothing more to do with politics, that they will quit the field, that they will stay at home, and even that they will abandon everything to the unprincipled men who are already at the helm and leave them free to cleave their wicked way untrammelled. The wonder is that they are willing to stop with that. The wonder is that such a strong aversion to this moral putrefaction should not impel them to take decided steps against the men who are thus in their own high-handed way doing the utmost that in them lies to sink their poisoned spears into the heart of the King of righteousness. No loyal Christian can consistently retire from the field until the fight is over and the victory is won. At bottom, it is the honor of Jesus Christ that is at stake. It is His right to the first place in the supreme law of the land that is involved. And this nation of ours has been crying out for more than a hundred years through the majestic voice of its great Constitution: "Away with Him, away with Him." The crucifixion has been going on. Political wickedness has been nailing the Son of God to the tree, has been putting Him again and again to an open shame, and is doing it now. It will not do therefore to stand back and say with a sort of inertia: "Let be, let us see whether Elijah cometh to take Him down." Something must be done, and the faithful follower of Christ must go to work and do it. If he can do nothing else, he can at least let the public hear what he knows. The one or

two Apostles that stood on Golgotha and witnessed the agonies of the Son of Man had no power, it is true, to take their beloved Lord from the cross, but by the help of God they reported what they saw, and all Christendom has bowed the knee. And so, also, in the present crisis, the true Christian, to be consistent at all, must labor in some way for the good of society, must put forth his energies in some direction to stay the hand that is striking the thorns and driving the nails and thrusting the spear, must in nowise and under no possible kind of a pretense remain inactive.

Again, in the second place, it is evident that a loyal follower of Christ cannot consistently act in any position or under any provisions where the supreme test of action has been framed in such a way as to keep Christ out.

No man may be said to be following Christ when he enters doors which shut Christ out. He may have been following Him up to the very threshold of such doors, but when he has crossed the threshold and has closed the doors, then he and Christ, it would seem, have, for the time being at least, parted company. It can hardly be held that a man is following the one whom he has left behind him. Moreover, within the doors that bar Christ out there is always the spirit of a false independence, and no man is ever permitted to enter such a place until he has engaged beforehand to be true to the spirit and to be governed by the principles which the institution, let it be what it may, was established to propagate. At all events, this is true of that great building made by the hands and the hearts and the intellects of the founders of this Republic—the Constitution of the United States. It, at least, “as by the sequel you will see,” set up an unwarranted independence, and asked men to be true in their political life to an unchristian spirit and to deal out their services under little better than pagan pledges, when in 1787 it swung to, with perfect composure, in the face of God, Christ and the Bible, the two dark massive doors of its enacting clause and its oath of office. By the former it declared the principles which were to find embodiment in the subsequent parts of the Constitution and were consequently to form the basis for the government of the people for whom the Constitution was ordained and established. By the latter it provided that sworn allegiance to these principles should constitute the supreme test of action for every man that proposed to hold an office or cast a ballot under its aegis. What, then, are these principles? And are they such as a true and loyal Christian may consistently swear allegiance to? These are fair questions and are worthy of the dispassionate consideration of every Christian citizen.

Let us begin with the first. The enacting clause, or the preamble as it is called, lodges all authority in the people. “We, the people of

the United States," to use its own language, are designated as the source and fountain of all authority in this land. As there is in this no recognition, no intimation even, of the true source from which all authority, both in heaven and on earth, can come, there is in it, in consequence, both in spirit and in fact, the setting up of a false independence, there is in it a tacit but none the less effectual usurpation of the authority that belongs to God alone, a deep and profound and awful violation of the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And yet this is but the half of it. The brief clause in question not only misplaces the source of authority and power, but with cold colorless precision it actually rules out the One whom God, as the fountain of all authority, has appointed to be "the Governor among the Nations." In effect, it resolves itself to this—We, the people of the United States, without owing any allegiance to, or acknowledging any dependence upon, or asking any help from, or promising any submission to, the Lord Jesus Christ, do ordain and establish this Constitution. These, therefore, the substitution of human for divine authority and the rejection of Jesus Christ, are the two outstanding principles that meet us at the very threshold of our supreme and fundamental law.

The third principle, however, is the same in kind, as also is the fourth. The enacting clause proceeds at once to enumerate the purposes which the Constitution was intended to realize, the ends which it was meant to accomplish, the blessings which it was designed to guarantee. But in doing so it specifies such things, and only such things, as can come ultimately from God alone, through Jesus Christ. To whom but God does it pertain to make a nation and form it continuously into "a more perfect union?" Who but God can supply men with the power and the disposition to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty?" "By me," says God, shall men be able to "decree justice." It is God that "giveth quietness." He is "our defense." Upon Him wait "the eyes of all." And when He dispenses "the blessings of liberty," then shall men "be free indeed." These are God's prerogatives. Shall flesh and blood presume, as Isaiah puts it, to "sit in the seat of God?" When the great kingdom of Babylon magnified its powers and said: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High," what was the sentence that flamed down upon it in righteous wrath from heaven? Was it not this: "Thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit?" And was it not done? Men cannot arrogate to themselves functions that appertain to the Lord of the Universe without affronting "the Majesty on High." Yet this, when considered from the point of view

which is concerned with the rights of God, is precisely the third principle in consonance with which the enacting clause of the Constitution was formulated.

The fourth principle to be mentioned here lies embedded in the assertion that the one document, to the exclusion of all others, shall be the supreme law of the land. "We, the people of the United States," the instrument declares, "do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." By "this Constitution," and by it alone, all transactions—legislative, executive or judicial—must be tried. With it all treaties must accord; in fact, they are a part of it. The Book whose contents were written by the finger of God has no place in the councils of the United States of America. And what is more, its teachings have been flatly contravened. Take a few examples. The Word: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." The Constitution: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The Word: "He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of Truth," and, "Thou shalt swear by my name." The Constitution: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm)" by no God and in no Name. The Word, speaking of Christ: "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." The Constitution, in a treaty with Tripoli: "The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion; it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquillity of Musselmans." That is to say, that the fourth principle thus enunciated in the enacting clause not only bars the Bible out, but with the same stroke prepares the way for the construction of certain sections in the body of the Constitution which shall distinctly contradict the plainest teachings of the Scriptures with respect to some of the most vital interests of society. The Word has been ruled out, and that, too, as it would seem, by keen calm calculation.

These, then, in so far as the divine rights are concerned, are the great cardinal principles that lie embosomed in the preamble of the Constitution, namely, that in the sphere of political life there shall be the substitution of human for divine authority, the rejection of Christ, the assumption of divine prerogatives, and the slighting of the Bible. These are the four dark and frowning panels in the first of those colossal doors that guard the entrance to this, our proud edifice of civil government.

But there is another door, to-wit.: the oath of office. By it, as has been noted, every man that would be an officer or would vote for one is bound beforehand in sworn allegiance to the principles laid down in the enacting clause, and made articulate in the body, of the Constitution. All officers, both national and state, "shall be bound by oath, or affirmation," says the instrument itself, "to support this Constitu-

tion." Now it will readily be granted that this oath which all the officers are obliged to take is one in signification which, indeed one in essence with, the oath administered to the President by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. This latter oath, however, is accurately worded and explicitly prescribed in the Constitution itself. The President solemnly engages, to the best of his ability, to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." The meaning of the term "support," therefore, may be held to be defined with consummate skill and with perfect clearness in the Presidential oath. To "support," or uphold the Constitution is exactly to "preserve, protect and defend" it to the best of one's ability. Moreover, the choice of these three words, so far from being merely a happy coincidence, belongs to a plan that had been weighed in the balances with exquisite nicety, that nothing might be found wanting. The first, to take them up in their order, is manifestly the most generic of the three and may be said to contemplate environments that are perfectly peaceful. To "preserve," as all will agree, means simply to maintain intact and unimpaired, to keep in the same condition, unmolested, without change or alteration. But the second word, it will be observed, begins to be specific and may be said to contemplate a somewhat unsettled state of affairs. It postulates a condition in which the outlook is more or less threatening, one that discloses indications that an attack of some kind is likely to be made. To "protect," accordingly, implies the taking of such steps as may promise to be effectual in preventing the attack, of whatsoever sort it may be. The third term, however, presupposes that the attack has at length been made, and that the forces at hand must be called out immediately to meet the enemy. Thus to "defend" is to take the field for the purpose of vindicating the cause that has been assailed. So that the wording of the oath, as is patent, is clear in its import, definite in its aim, comprehensive in its scope. The terms define with admirable lucidity the nature of the obligations under which every man that would execute the provisions of the Constitution is inevitably placed. In a word, they embody and elucidate the constitutional conception of civil allegiance.

The oath of office, therefore, puts all who take it—whether they take it in person or through representatives—under sworn allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. In other words, it binds them, first of all, to "preserve" the whole Constitution to the best of their ability, that is, among other things, to maintain intact and unimpaired, to keep in the same condition, unchanged and unmolested, these four principles, as foundational, namely, that the Constitution is right in substituting human for divine authority, that it is right in rejecting Jesus Christ as King, that it is right in arrogating to itself the prerogatives that belong to God, and that it is right in casting aside the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, it binds them, in the second

place, to "protect" the whole Constitution to the best of their ability, that is, among other things, to take such steps, in case they should be called for, as may prove to be effectual in preventing any attack, armed or argumentative, upon the ruinous assumptions that in political affairs it is right to substitute human for divine authority, to reject Christ, to presume to perform the functions that appertain to Almighty God, and to dishonor the Bible. And lastly, it binds them to "defend" the whole Constitution to the best of their ability, that is, among other things, to take the field, whenever these doctrines or any one of them may happen to be assailed, and vindicate them as best they can, showing, however, vigorously the conscience may recoil from the task, that it is right for the Constitution to ignore the sovereign authority of God, that it is right for it to make no recognition of the Lord, Jesus Christ as "the Governor among the Nations," that it is right for it to enrobe itself in unacknowledged might and majesty and say like Babylon: "I will be like the Most High," and that it is right for it to blot from the supreme law of the land every trace of the Word of God. For if the oath means anything, it means unqualified allegiance to all that falls legitimately, at the time of taking it, within its compass.

Thus if language is to be regarded as of any value at all, the oath of office, it would seem, "solemnly" and inviolably holds the men who take it to the maintenance of such foundational principles as the Constitution at the time contains. And though all men may, indeed, and many men do take the liberty now and then to speak and even to labor against the principles which they have bound themselves previously by oath to "preserve, protect and defend," yet it would be unwise, not to say perilous, to teach that such liberty had come to be theirs by virtue of their oath to the contrary. Swearing with uplifted hand to do a thing is hardly the particular act which gives a man the freedom to labor and pray for its undoing. Nor is there any relief in the fact that the Constitution provides for its own amendment, for every man that casts his ballot engages solemnly, to the best of his ability, to "support" the Constitution just as it is until the amendments, of whatsoever nature they may be, shall have been made; he engages—so long as it remains in its present condition—to "preserve, protect and defend" it with its ground work of false and atheistic principles just as they are, at least for the time being. But to engage to "support" the Constitution as it now is is all one in principle whether it be for a minute or for a millennium. Of course it is plain enough that the men who at any given time swear to "preserve, protect and defend" the Constitution as it is may with unchallengeable consistency labor for the adoption of any amendment which shall be in harmony with, and shall promise to give a more perfect expression

to, the fundamental principles upon which the constitutional structure at the moment in question is standing. An amendment of such a character, it is clear, would in the essence of it be but a step—and in most cases, perhaps, an indispensable step—in the preservation, protection and defense of the Constitution. But that men who have pledged themselves to “preserve, protect and defend” the supreme law as it is may by any possibility labor consistently for a proposed amendment which shall be out of harmony with and subversive of the fundamental principles upon which the structure is based is not so demonstrable. An amendment of such a character would manifestly involve an intrinsic contradiction, for an amendment, according to all the laws of proper thinking, must be in keeping with the essence and the spirit of the instrument which it aims to amend. And this—unless it is justifiable to juggle with that that is sacred—is doubly, is infallibly imperative where morals are concerned, for in such a sphere at least men cannot pledge themselves to the false and be true to the truth, at the same time and on the same question. To swear to “preserve, protect and defend” a constitutional law which rules God, Christ and the Bible out is wholly out of harmony with any suitable efforts to have the divine supremacy acknowledged. The two are inherently contradictory. The oath that binds men to do the one binds them not to do the other. The oath of office is therefore inexorable. It binds all who take it into an alliance with the wrong. And until the agreement is broken there is no escape from the meshes of the sin.

These terms, therefore—first, to “support” the Constitution, or uphold it in all its provisions; secondly, to “preserve” it, or keep it in its integrity as it is; thirdly, to “protect” it, or guard it against every kind of assault; fourthly, to “defend” it, or contend for its principles in the face of opposition—these terms are the modes of speech fixed upon by the founders of our Republic to define allegiance. They are the terms that were adopted to collect and condense into the smallest intelligible limits the ideas that were designed to constitute the supreme test of action for every citizen that should choose to cast a ballot. They are the terms, which, in connection with that that lies behind them and gives them substance, contain the stipulations by which men are wont to bind themselves, though in large measure unthinkingly, to disclaim the crown rights of the Nazarene within the realm of state. They are the four dark and ominous panels in the second of those colossal doors that guard the entrance to our imposing and in many ways magnificent edifice of civil government.

In the year 1787, then, in the Constitutional Convention, these two ponderous doors were made, matched, fitted, joined, and, when all was ready, swung together in the face of divine supremacy and all that it involves with the low sullen hush of calm rebellion. The nation,

in its sovereign capacity, and for the honor of its majesty, tasked the strength of its clear mind and its strong right arm to bar the doors against the claims of Almighty God and of Jesus Christ, and it succeeded. To Him that sought admission through its portals then to the world of politics, to Him that seeks it now, the answer has ever been—"Lift up thy hand, O man, and swear, and say, 'And now, O God, on entering here I break with Thee; O Christ, I leave Thee out; O blessed Book, I seal thee up, and from Thy hand, O Sovereign Lord, I wrest the scepter of dominion!'" Is it too much for any man to say that when these two portals swing together thus in the face of the meek and lowly Son of Man, they ought at that very instant to swing together also in the face of every loyal Christian in the land? Shall the Blessed One, the Christ of God, be made to stand unheeded at the threshold of this proud edifice of ours, and shall His faithful follower calmly bid Him a fond adieu and pass in, leaving his Lord knocking at the door and waiting until His head is wet with dew and His locks with the drops of the night? Will loyalty go in where Christ has been legislated out? I hold it to be the eternal truth of God that loyalty to Christ stops her foot at the very spot where the Lord of Glory has been affronted.

But is this all? Is this the climax, the summit of the sin? Alas, no; by no means. There is another consideration before which the thought of leaving Christ behind pales into comparative insignificance. If I simply leave my Lord behind me when I pass those darksome portals, I do not well, of course, yet not the worst. The one thing above all others that should blanch my cheek and chill my heart is the awful fact that in crossing the threshold of our civil edifice I am obliged to identify myself with, to bind myself into one with, the great intelligent body politic that has always kept the doors closed against the Lord and his Anointed, and in doing so has said: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;" I am obliged to turn, on entering, and place my own strength—what little I may have—against the doors, that I may help to keep them shut in the face of Him "whose I am and whom I serve." I shudder to think of leaving my Lord behind me, standing without under the scorching scorn of men, but at the thought of crowding the door, however quietly in His face I exceedingly fear and quake. Here, if anywhere, I must "stand in awe, and sin not." For whatever other channels of action Christian loyalty may open up for me, it infallibly forbids me, once and forever, to join hands with men in swinging the doors of civil government against the Holy One of Israel whom God has exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour," against "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords."

What position, then, must I as a loyal Christian citizen take? This one—to be consistent—and no other. I must at whatever cost refuse to enter the edifice whose doors have been closed against Jesus Christ. I must not become one with those who have engaged to the best of their ability to keep Him out. I must stand without with Him who is “my strength and my Redeemer,” bearing His reproach; for apart from Him I can do nothing.

Mercer, Pa.

W. J. McKNIGHT.