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CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP CONFERENCE,

DEVOTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF

POLITICAL LOYALTY TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

HELD IN THE

ALLEGHENY COVENANTER
CHURCH.

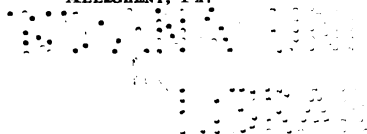
CORNER OF SANDUSKY AND NORTH DIAMOND STREETS.

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

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PRESS OF JOHN C. PARK,
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The Rev. F. M. Foster, Ph. D., New York City, was introduced and gave the following address:

“All True Reform Principles Lead to the Position Against Swearing to Carry on Government According to a Law That Leaves Out Christ.”

A mighty storm, lashing a tumultuous sea, and blackening the heavens, caught a vessel in its teeth. The captain had to sail by the compass. The needle guided him upon the rocks, and the ship went down. Afterwards, a diver brought up, among other things, that compass, when all was explained. A sailor, cleaning about it, had broken off the mere point of a knife blade. The merest trifle! but the ship went down! There are those who are wont to speak of the lack of all Christianity in the National Constitution as a trifle and who think that those who call attention to it are making much of a small matter, but we are here to say that the ship of state, sailing without sun or star in a dangerous sea, is depending on a compass whose needle is deflected, by an unscriptural political philosophy, and she is driving for the rocks! We present no apology for insisting that that compass be corrected: and, until it is done, we decline to fire the engines! !

“All true reform principles!” There are so-called reform principles which are not “true” nor are they reforming in their nature. The canvass preceding the elections in New York last fall, had much to do with the theory of reform. The cry, morning, noon and night, was Reform! Reform!! Reform!!! Deliver our city! Down with Tammany! Reform! An onlooker who attended one of the mass meetings, at which thousands were crushed within, and thousands were crushed without, said, the hero of the evening was the candidate for District Attorney, William Travis Jerome. When he entered the building the vast audience came screaming to its feet, climbed on the chairs, cried and shouted and roared, as did the Ephesians of the great goddess Diana, until human nature could carry the frenzy no

farther, and sank down exhausted! A stranger would have supposed that Mr. Jerome was a mighty deliverer from some awful enemy! But what? He stood, as plain as words could say it, and types could print it, for an open saloon on the Lord's day! He stood in bold and defiant opposition to the Lord God Almighty! He led the charge against Sinai! Ministers preached, prayed, and beseeched men to help him. And so blinded were the people, and infatuated with their leader, that they swept him on to victory.

This they called "reform!" "Tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice; lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!" The last election was the greatest disaster to the cause of righteousness that New York has seen in many a day. This kind of reform has a national graveyard at the end of it. We are not here to discuss it, further than to show, by illustration, that it is not based upon "True Reform Principles," named in the subject assigned.

But what are true reform principles? The mist and haze, and shall we not say, ignorance, here are great. A wordy battle, in the public press of New York, has been going on these months, the one side boldly affirming that the state has nothing to do with moral law, and that whatever the people wish they should have. The other side, rejecting with equal emphasis the principle that the state is bound by the divine law, is not quite satisfied to cast aside all moral safeguards. They stumble in the darkness, but turn up, finally, on the wrong side. There has been, during the last one hundred years, nearly continuous retrograde movement. In our large cities, and in many smaller ones, the public conscience is becoming more and more debauched. Trains on the Sabbath; mails on the Sabbath; visiting and entertaining on the Sabbath; papers on the Sabbath; theaters on the Sabbath; street cleaning on the Sabbath; excursions and rioting on the Sabbath; entertainments in church, under guise of worship on the Sabbath; all these are now so common that when you insist on the divine law, you are regarded as a "misfit," stared at as a crank, or frozen with sarcasm! There is not a reform that touches effectively any one of the above named sins! We say, effectively! They are simply overwhelming the Church of God! !

When Major General Hooker was in command, the Army of the Potomac was reviewed by President Lincoln. Fully sixty thousand men were in line—infantry, cavalry, artillery and wagon-trains. As the artillery saluted the President, the mule trains took fright, and, in spite of quartermasters, wagonmasters and teamsters, went thundering down upon the well-ordered lines pell-mell, almost as bad as a Confederate charge! How the panic-stricken mules did "Whee-haw"

and the army-wagons went "rattley-bang," that day on the Stafford plains! A great deal of the reform work of the present day is like the charging of those mule-trains. Nobody is hurt! and in an incredibly short time the lines are re-formed—mules and all!

There is Reform! Reform!! Reform!!! They can be measured by the yard, and the money spent, by bushels. But the successful reforms can be counted on the fingers of one hand—not enough to save the City of Sodom.

The cause cannot be that the righteous are not interested. They are. They work, they pray, they pay. What is the matter? This leads to our subject, I. They are, in general, attempting to reform evil without Christ. II. They swear to maintain the very thing they are trying to reform. With reference to the first, we say, with all the emphasis at our command, that reform without Christ is a failure! Satan is too wise; has too many resources; is too powerful. He is entrenched in the unregenerate heart. He is the prince of this world, the ruler of the powers of darkness. For man to attempt to dislodge him, to despoil him, to drive him out is like a baby fighting an enraged lion. Christ has given fair warning; "Without Me ye can do nothing." The reforms of the present day are, in nearly every case, attempts at reform without Christ. He is dropped out somewhere along the line. A few years ago, the Sabbath reform got befogged and began building on the foundation of a civil Sabbath, practically ignoring the divine commandment. The foundation sank so fast that the reformers had to jump for their lives! A civil Sabbath, under the Constitution of the United States, means the kind of Sabbath the majority wish. It surrenders Sinai and God. These left out, what majority has the right to say, "Cease working on the first day of the week!" There is no law without Christ. There is no Sabbath but from Christ! He alone has authority to give law to the creature which He has made, and to the state which He has instituted. Man will finally recognize no other authority as binding. Conscience will not respond to man's commandment, but it will respond to the authority of Almighty God.

A few weeks ago, we received circulars, petitions and arguments from the New York Woman's Christian Temperance Union, urging the legislature not to submit the question of opening saloons on the Lord's day to popular vote. In all these blanks, arguments and petitions, there was not one reference to God, or the slightest hint that there is a divine Ruler whose law is to be obeyed. Such methods of reform ignore the only One that can give reform—the Lord Jesus Christ!

At a general ministers' meeting, New York, five or six years ago, called for the purpose of considering the press and the Sabbath, speaker after speaker stated, in reply to a minister who was foolish enough to say that the Fourth Commandment should be brought to the attention of publishers of such papers, that the Fourth Commandment had nothing to do with the matter; that to bring it into the question would be unjustifiable and hurtful. What was the result? A Committee of Ministers was appointed to confer with the editors, which Committee, as soon as it could appropriately do so proceeded to die, and was buried without funeral services. Remarkable? No! A reform that does not stand on the Commandment of Almighty God as its basis is doomed to failure! Where God does not go forth with the armies of Israel, they suffer defeat, which is speedily turned into disastrous, awful rout! The cause of right is so repugnant to the wicked that it must be supported by the artillery of heaven and the hosts of Almighty God. When will we learn that this is true—"Without Me ye can do nothing!" "Through God we shall do valiently, for He it is that shall tread down our enemies." "In the name of our God, we will set up our banners." We will have reforms by judgments, but we will not have peaceable reforms until we realize that they depend upon the co-operation and leadership of Christ; and not until His people, openly, avowedly, and triumphantly declare, seven days in the week and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, that the reform is begun and carried forward at His Commandment. This is the true principle of reform, and all true reform principles proceed on this line.

The II. is like unto it, viz.: The Christian cannot swear to uphold or administer government by a sinful principle or law. The multitudes that fall down slain because they swear, to uphold the very thing which they acknowledge is wrong, is marvelous to behold! Usually, however, any attempted activity, under such conditions, results in what might be called "Reform paralysis." The symptoms of this disease are not always noticeable at the first. Then, zeal is fairly going to waste. But presently as the matter is better understood, ardor cools, and indifference is manifested. The subject is in the first stages of "reform paralysis!"

What is the matter? The matter is the man sees that he has sworn to uphold the very thing which he condemns as a sin against God. A straight look into the eye of such facts will do one of two things: It will make a man stop swearing, or, it will make him stop reforming. Reforms, in so far as they have to do with morality and the acknowledgment of the divine law, are public declarations that sin exists. Sometimes these sins lie in statutory, sometimes in Con-

stitutional law. If sins exist in the statutory law the legislator has, ignorantly or intentionally, transgressed his instructions, and has enacted law contrary to the Constitution. His mistake is corrected by the courts. But when a law is found to be constitutional, that law becomes practically an integral part of the Constitution.

Art. VI, Sec. 2, reads: "This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof shall be the supreme law of the land." Laws of the United States which deal with traffic in liquors, being made in pursuance thereof, are a part of the Constitution, and to this law the voting citizen swears. The law ordering out the mail trains on the Sabbath, is for the same reason a part of the Constitution, and the Christian who votes swears that it shall be maintained. Every Christian who votes swears that post-masters shall open their offices on certain hours on Sabbath. We know the moral character of the Constitution of the United States by the money which, by law, is harvested from the liquor traffic, just as you know the character of the man who runs a saloon or who receives dividends from it. Christians would be horrified to be partner in a saloon. But if the corporation be a large one, say, seventy-five million of people, conscience is satisfied! Christians would not think of carrying on business on the Lord's day. But if the company be big enough, say seventy-five million of people, they will swear by the great Name of God that that business shall go on!

We are justified in confidently affirming that the Constitution contains unscriptural provisions, gives being to, and upholds wrong and sinful laws, and he who swears to it, swears to uphold rebellion against Almighty God. This is a most serious matter. Swearing to uphold these sins paralyzes conscience and effort to amend the Constitution. This explains why so few push the Christian amendment. And herein is the reason why reform associations usually take down this headlight, and hang it at the tail of the train. And it furthermore explains why the rebellion against God set forth in the Constitution is, in this day, rarely emphasized! !

Prohibitionists make addresses which stir the soul; while, at the same time, they are trying to put a man at the head of the greatest liquor concern in the world.

We insist upon two things: I. God does not require such inconsistency. II. God will not bless such inconsistency. It is unreasonable to suppose that God will bless a man's efforts to reform a condition which he swears to uphold.

This conclusion can be safely affirmed. The reform which does not emphasize the sin of that which it wishes to remove, and does not emphasize the point at which men come in touch with it, is superficial;

it will never touch the conscience; does not deliver men from sin; nor does it make them better. For he who professes that a matter is right, and yet, goes on doing the contrary, and swearing that he will do it, is adding to his guilt. "He that knew his Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

The demonstration is complete! The argument is irrefutable! True reform principles lead to the position against swearing to administer government by a law which ignores Christ.

Furthermore, men act on this general principle in politics. At one time the "silver" question caused many Democrats to leave the Democratic party. They would not aid in helping their party into power, since it had espoused that political heresy. Republicans have left their party and have refused to aid in keeping it in power, because some one principle, which they did not believe was espoused. Prohibitionists have left both Republican and Democratic parties, because neither of them stands for temperance. These are dissenters, and they ask nobody's pardon. They decline to administer government on those lines.

Now, refusing to administer the Constitution of the United States, because it has objectionable provisions, is one and the same principle with the Democrat refusing to administer the Republican platform, the Republican, the Democratic and the Prohibitionist, either of them it is saying we will not administer that Constitution ourselves or through our representative. If it is honorable for the Republican to stand for what he believes; for the Prohibitionist to stand for what he believes; so is it equally honorable for the Covenanter to refuse to administer the government on the basis of the father of all platforms, the Constitution of the United States. And the ground for his action is, not some difference of view as to tariff, or the coinage of silver, but because this great national platform has refused to accept the great, Scriptural Commandment, denied the authority of Almighty God over the nation, His right to give law, and the duty of the nation to obey His will.

Some may ask, well, what would become of us if all took your position? I ask, what will become of us, if they do not? Just one week ago, a young man, hardly out of his "teens," of good family, was found dead in a Raine's law hotel, where he had registered, with a young girl, a few hours before. The pastor of the family stated, in an address last Friday evening, that the morals of the community were such as to cause most serious alarm; that the facts, as he knew from personal knowledge, "which reached the public, were not nearly so voluminous, as they might well be made, not nearly as ugly, as de-

formed, as monstrous as they can be and may be painted." The churches are losing their religion, the homes their piety, and the morals of the community are sounding depths never before explored! It is the logical result of government without God! I ask our friends, with God's law routed at nearly every point, with wickedness coming in like a flood, with our sons and daughters as the price, I ask them how much longer must the experiment continue?