CHRISTS' SEPARATION FROM CHRIST-LESS GOVERNMENTS

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"Ye are Christ's." — 1 Cor. 3:23.

SHOULD SEPARATION FROM CHRISTLESS GOVERNMENTS BE MADE A CONDITION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

The Christian Church in the United States required as a condition of membership the acceptance of the principle of Biblical Separation. This meant that her members may not accept any civil office or trust in which they be required to take any oath of allegiance to the present Constitution of the United States, nor vote for any officer who is required to take such an oath.

This condition of membership is based upon

THE BIBLE

"Every natural doctrine and unchangeable fact." The "mammon" doctrine is that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator, is the only appointed King of Nations, and that...
His law as revealed in the Bible is the supreme rule by which to decide moral issues in political life. The undeniable fact is that the Constitution of the United States contains no recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Nation's King, nor of the authority of His law; and that it contains provisions which are hostile to His royal prerogatives. The Church maintains this position of Political Separation in the spirit of patriotic devotion to our country, and of supreme loyalty to our Lord.

It is not the purpose of this tracts to discuss, either the doctrine of the kingly authority of Jesus Christ, or the fact of the Christian character of the Constitution of the United States; but to show that these things being true, this term of membership as maintained by the Covenanters Church is Scriptural; and, that, so far from being narrow and sectarian in its character, it rests upon one of the broadest, most essential, fundamental and practical principles of evangelical Christianity; and that its acceptance and maintenance by the whole Church be vital to the establishment of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in the world.

SEPARATION.

Separation from Christless Governments Should be Made a Condition of Membership in the Christian Church.

The passage of scripture which stands at the head of this tract, gives the keynote of the Christian life. "Ye are Christ's." To have a right to membership in the Christian Church, one must be a Christian. To be a Christian, one must be Christ's. To be Christ's involves three things, viz.:

First.—To be entirely consecrated to Christ.
Second.—To be transformed into Christ's image.
Third.—To be Christ's witnesses.

Upon these three principles acknowledged by all Christians to be true, it is undertaken to answer the above question in the affirmative.

CONSECRATION.

Because the Church Should Require Her Members to be Entirely Consecrated to Christ.

This consecration includes three things:

1. The consecration of the whole man to Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24; 10:37-38). This is the condition of discipleship. It contains Christ's term of fellowship. The Church cannot modify it. She cannot admit as members the proceedings of faith of any one who holds back any sphere of his life from Christ. Ye are Christ's wholly.
The Rev. Dr. Terrett, of the Presbyterian Church, in an address of great power, on "Christ, the Nation's King," spoke eloquently on this subject. He said:

"Christ claims the man, the whole man, for Himself, in obedience and service. But man is whole only in his relations, domestic, social, and political. Man was born to be a citizen. He was made for the nation, as truly as for the home. He is not, cannot be, all that he ought to be as a man, until he is all that he ought to be as a citizen. If it be true, then, that man belongs by nature to political relations, who shall say that in those relations he is exalted from the authority of Jesus Christ? If he be Christ's servant, he will show it here. He cannot be Christ's servant and not show it here. The Government of the United States has laid down conditions to be accepted by the candidate for the presidency. It is absolute. There is no room for argument. This is Christ's term of admission to a membership of the church. It is here appointed as the initiatory ordinance of the church and made the badge of the Christian profession. The terms on which it is to be administered are expressly laid down: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Baptism is here appointed as the initiatory ordinance of the church and made the badge of the Christian profession. The terms on which it is to be administered are expressly laid down: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This is Christ's term of admission to a membership of the church. The Government of the United States has also laid down conditions to be accepted by the candidate for official trust. He must accept the
Constitution of the United States and the laws made under it, as the supreme rule of his political conduct. Now there cannot be two supreme laws over a man's life. Our government renders no allegiance to Jesus Christ, nor recognizes any authority of His law. Under his supreme authority we have the God-defying Sabbath laws; the Sabbath of the world. On this line of thinking, the whole system of shameful, adulterous divorce laws, all permitted, authorized, published and executed. This is in defiance of the authority of Jesus Christ, whom the Christian has solemnly promised to obey. Every Christian official of the post-office where Sabbath mails are established, from the Postmaster General down, fulfills his official duty by breaking his sacramental vow. The Christian judge who issues a license to sell intoxicating drinks, or enforces divorce in violation of the divine law of marriage, does the same thing.

My brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ offers no compromise. "No man can serve two masters." (Matt. 6:24) Christian men cannot go on administering unchristian laws. If the American people will not place their government in true allegiance to Jesus Christ, then the Christian Church must enforce the supreme authority of the law of Christ over the lives of her members, and let Christian governments be administered by Christlike men.

3. The third thing involved in this consecration is complete separation from the Christless world. On this point the conditions of fellowship are equally explicit. "Therefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17)

Can the Church so modify these terms laid down by her Divine Head, as to admit to her communion those who remain in corporate fellowship with immorality, corrupt, and Christless civil powers?

It is often asserted that Christians are the salt of the earth and that they should enter the mass of political corruption; and partly in this statement Christians have no redemptive power without Christ. "Apart from me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5, R. V.) "If the salt have lost its savor, wherein shall it be seasoned?" Christians are not permitted to take their Savior with them into this government. The chief magistrate, although he bittely professes to be a Christian, cannot even call the nation to Thanksgiving in His name. Talk about good men purifying politics which they enter on an express agreement to have Christ and His law out! What is the result? "The salt loses its savor. "And is heart-sore good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." (Matt. 5:13).

The Church will soon be compelled to move in this matter to save her supplanted numbers. A godly minister remarked recently: "The condition of affairs is awful. Good men, officers and members of the Church are doing, or permitting others to do, or consenting to have done, things which are a disgrace to American citizenship, in any name of Christliness." There is a demand, everywhere, for a higher consecration; for a higher place of Christian living; for moral complete separation from the world; for men sanctified and meet for the Master's use. The Church must demand that her Saviour King be admitted to this sphere of political life, or that the sons and daughters of the King withdraw from it. "Ye are Christ's" by entire self-surrender to Him; by absolute obedience to His
law; and by complete separation from the
Christian world. You might as well undertake
to fulfill these conditions in a Christian Church,
as in a Christian state.

Transformation.

1. Because the Church Should Seek to Trans-
form Her Members into the Image of Christ.

"Whom He did foreknow, He also did pre-
destinate to be conformed to the image of His
Son." (Rom. 8:29). This is the transformation
of character. It is easy to see that character is
more important than profession. Profession
is for the sake of character. Profession without
character is vain. "Ye are Christ's" implies
that this training does not consist in teaching
theoretically the fourth commandment, but by
parental authority requiring obedience to it, until by the educating power of the
law the child is transfigured into the image of
Christ as a Sabbath-keeper. Sabbath laws, when
enforced, educate a community into Sabbath-
keeping. Probatory laws, when enforced, edu-
cate a community into other citizenship. Char-
acter is moulded by law. But there is no trans-
forming power in an un-enforced law.

The argument is presented, on the other
side, that the church should not enforce a law
against incorporation with a Christian govern-
ment, until she has educated her members into
the conviction that such incorporation is sinful.
The answer is that the enforcement of the law
is the educating process by which the convic-
tion that it is sinful is produced. "By the law
in the knowledges of sin." (Rom. 7:7).
It is most absurd to say that the Church can transform her members into the image of Christ by maintaining a high standard of morals in her teaching, and permitting a low standard of morals in the lives of her members. To say "It is no matter what a man believes if he only does right;" is absurd; but to say it is no matter what he does if he only believes right is wicked. The life of Jesus is the standard of morals in the Church's teaching, and, if she would transform them into life imago, she must apply the same standard to the lives of her members. Who believes for a moment that Jesus Christ would interpose with an immoral civil constitution? What Christian believes that our blessed Lord would carry on the Sabbath laws, or admit into our institutions licentious laws, or grant impunity to violation of the law of God? Witness. "Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14.)

Witnessing.

I. Because the Church Should be a True Witness for the Royal Rights of Her Divine Lord.

"Ye are Christ's," means ye are Christ's witnesses. Witnessing for Jesus Christ is the duty of the individual Christian, and of the Church as a body. The one who has wholly consecrated himself to Christ, and is transformed into his image, thereby qualified for this most exalted privilege, to be His witness, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.)

There are two great facts for which they that are Christ's are to be witnesses. First that He and His alone is the Redeemer and Saviour of men! Second, that He is the Supreme Ruler of the universe. These two facts present different aspects of Christ's redemptive work. The first has to do with the personal salvation of His people individually. The second has to do with the establishment of His kingdom on the earth. The Church is to bear witness to both the one and the other. Furthermore, the Church is to bear witness to God's allegiance to the Church as the world's Ruler, and the Church's allegiance to God. "He is the King of Glory." (Ps. 24:8.)

The Church must bear testimony for Him, both by the authoritative declaration of this truth of His Word, and also by the life of her members. These two must be consistent with each other. If the Church does the work of a witness, it must also be the life of the Church. It must be the Church as a body. The one who has wholly consecrated himself to Christ, and is transformed into his image, thereby qualified for this most exalted privilege, to be His witness, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.)
came by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." (Rev. 12:11.) Reflect for a moment what the result would be if the Church of Christ would assert the supremacy of His law over the political life of her members, and demand their withdrawal from the administration of governments not in allegiance to the King of kings. How long would it be before the Constitution of the United States would be placed in harmony with the law of God if no Christian were permitted to take the oath of office until this was done? How long would the Sabbath, now more and more violated, be permitted to be violated if every professed Christian were excluded from the privileges of the church? It is the disloyalty of Christ's own followers that leaves His crown in the dust. I dare affirm that, never until separation from Christians and immoral civil governments is made a condition of membership in the Church, have we any reason to expect the Kingdom of God to come in this world. On the other hand, when the Church takes this position, and when the Church, as the universal Church, takes this position, the most powerful moulding influence, will at once become a kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

3. This will be the condition of membership in the Church of the future. The Lord is preparing a people for Himself. The movement for a higher consecration is begun. Men are bending over their Bibles. There are bands of earnest Christians in all the Churches. They are determined to find a more complete separation from the heathen and Christ-hating world. They are full of expectation of the coming of their Lord. They will soon close hands. This is the Church of the future. If the Covenant Church remains true to her Lord, she will lead the way for the Church of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, and the hosts of the Lord, and the Lord of Hosts, will march on to complete and final victory, on the banner over all the world will be inscribed with one word—Christ's.
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