

NATIONAL REFORM LEAFLET.

NUMBER 18.

The Christian Citizenship Pledge.

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This pledge is in the following terms:

We, citizens of the United States whose names are underwritten, acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler of nations, and His law as the supreme standard of right and wrong; and we pledge ourselves to Him and to one another to study the laws of His kingdom; to obey His will as citizens in all things so far as known to us; and to use our influence and power, as citizens, to secure the acknowledgment of His authority and obedience to His will in all things by our nation and our government.

This pledge defines the National Reform movement. The National Reform Association seeks to unite all Christian

The price of this leaflet is three cents a copy. Address the National Reform Association, 209 Ninth St. Pittsburgh, Pa.

citizens in a movement to bring this nation and government into right relations with God through Jesus Christ. The pledge is the political creed and the bond of union of those Christian citizens who seek to secure that end. It makes clear that this is a movement of men acting in the civil sphere. A frequent popular misconception makes it necessary to say that this is in no sense a movement of any church or combination of churches, or indeed of church members as such. It may be true that the large majority of those engaged in this work are members of the different Christian denominations. Yet the fact remains that in this work they act not in the sphere of church membership, but distinctly in the sphere of citizenship.

In this connection it ought to be said also that we believe in the total separation of Church and State. It may safely be said that any attempt to unite Church and State would meet with no more strenuous opposition from any quarter than from the National Reform Association. In proof of this fact we need only to notice that this movement num-

bers among its supporters representatives of almost every church in America. Which one of these various churches could we propose to establish without provoking opposition from all the others?

On the contrary, the National Reform movement is the "united effort of citizens who are convinced that the highest welfare of the nation is bound up in our distinctly Christian institutions, and who see these endangered by the assaults of secularism; of citizens who, while they believe that the cause of Christ in every way will be promoted by the triumph of the principles of Christian civil government, yet mainly for the sake of the nation, and from motives of purest patriotism, seek to anchor our beloved country in her constitution and laws and practice to the throne and government of Christ Himself." (Manual of Christian Civil Government, p. 29.) This distinction between a Christian's civil and his ecclesiastical duties is fundamental, and, kept in mind, will free us from many misconceptions. Our aim in this movement is not primarily to make men Christians, but to lead Christians in the sphere of citizen-

ship to act as Christian citizens should act. We aim, not to make men "religious by law," but to secure such a state of civil society as will not make men irreligious by law. We seek to lead men, already religious in their domestic and ecclesiastical relations of life, to permit their religion to grip their civil life, so that their whole life shall be positively Christian. We seek to bring our nation and government to that plane from which to openly wicked men it will be possible to say: "The powers that be are ordained of God and the magistrate is the minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Rom. 13: 1, 4.) We would have the government infringe on no man's religious liberty, or abridge his ecclesiastical freedom. We would merely have the government say to men, "You must be civil." We in no way seek to influence a man within the church, but solely within the state. Since there is a Christian standard of action in the one as well as in the other, we feel that great importance attaches to a movement which seeks to lead men to a sincere and conscientious

discharge of the duties of Christian citizenship.

TO PRECLUDE MISUNDERSTANDING.

We are greatly helped in our understanding of God's revelation to man and His law in its application to man when we remember that God holds man individually responsible to Him in the three principal relations of life, viz.: the family, the state and the church. The two former of these relations are founded in man's nature—God created man to occupy them in obedience to His authority and law. The latter is founded in grace. Until sin had ruined man in the two natural relationships, the domestic and the civil, God did not provide for him the ecclesiastical. Embraced in God's design when He instituted the Church, after man's fall, was this: that man, redeemed by grace, might in the church be fitted for again discharging his duties to God and man in the home and in the state. It follows that man, by nature the subject of God's moral law in both the home and state, is doubly obligated, after he is redeemed, to obey the will of God in these two spheres of life. A Christian is a man redeemed,

bought back—a WHOLE man—a man made right again with God in all the relations of life. When through the various channels of grace Christ completes His work of saving men in all these relations—that is to say, when the Church is right and the home and the state are transformed into what they were designed to be when man was created, or in other words when the homes and nations of this world are brought into complete submission to God and His law—then, and not till then, will the kingdom of heaven be established upon earth, the New Jerusalem (God's perfected society) will come down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21: 2), and voices will be heard in heaven, saying "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

The citizen contemplated in this Christian Citizenship Pledge is a man redeemed, who, in the sphere of civil life, has been made acquainted with Christ, the Ruler of nations, and who, accordingly, is striving to perform in the sphere of citizenship those duties owed to Christ by every man born into the civil relation of

life. He is a man who has been appointed by Christ to civil duties and who owns his allegiance to Christ in the discharge of those duties.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.

Turning now more particularly to the terms of the pledge we find in concise and fitting language these very principles. The first thing the pledge requires of the Christian citizen is *the acknowledgment that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Ruler of nations, and that His law is the supreme standard of right and wrong*. The second part of this statement is axiomatic. If Christ be a King he must promulgate law; and His law can be nothing other than the supreme standard of right and wrong. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the Ruler of nations appears from a variety of considerations. In order to be the Saviour of men He must possess supreme authority over nations of men. Would any one undertake to maintain that Christ can save men without ruling them? Christ must be *Lord*. He was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. How can he be

Lord of the life of any man if a part of his life, and a part so important as the political, is not under the sway of Christ? Many men are almost exclusively engaged in political activity; their influence in the world is almost wholly within the sphere of citizenship. If the life is to be saved at all they must be saved in their citizenship. If Christ be not the Ruler of nations, then all that men desiring to escape His royal authority need to do to accomplish their impious purpose is to enter the civil domain and confine themselves to the duties of citizenship. Moreover, how can the Lord Jesus Christ rule his Church, defend her, prosper her, open up all nations to her entrance with the gospel of salvation unless he has the sovereign right to exercise absolute supremacy over the nations? Is that not precisely what our Lord meant when, in view of all authority in heaven and on earth having been given unto Him, He commissioned His disciples to "go therefore into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature"? Is it not clear that to be the King of the Church Christ must be King of nations? He can not be King of men

unless He be King of nations. How can He be King of nations unless He be King of kings? He can not be King of men unless He be King of kings of men. He can not be the Ruler of men unless He be the Ruler of the rulers of men. How can He be the Leaders of men unless He be the Leader of the leaders of Men? He can not be the Commander of men unless He be also the Commander of the commanders of men. Thus, "He who is to save the world, to secure for all mankind the highest and best things possible, must be the leader of all men through all time. He must unite men sundered and divided by sin; must appeal to their loyalty by a legitimate authority, to their love by His virtue and goodness, to their confidence by His wisdom; must arouse and inspire them; must direct their multitudinous energies to single aims; must keep all peoples marching like cohorts of an army toward one goal; must maintain this guidance through successive generations. No one doing less than this for men would be worthy to be called the Saviour of men. And He who does this for men governs men, is a 'leader and commander of the

people.'” (“Christ, the Ruler of Nations,” pp. 4, 5.) Christ’s kingly office is necessary to His priesthood. He is a priest upon His throne. He must not only redeem men from the guilt of sin but must reign over them in righteousness. “And He who rules the world must rule the nations of the world—for these are the ‘powers’ of the earth, earth’s mightiest factors for evil or for good. Unless they are made subject to Him, the authority of God is not re-established over one of the largest spheres of human life. If no other title than Jesus, Saviour of men, were given Him in the Scriptures, if no promise and no prophecy foretold the submission of the nations to Him, we would still know, on antecedent grounds, that the world’s Saviour is the Ruler of the nations.” (Ibid.)

THIS PRINCIPLE TAUGHT IN THE SCRIPTURES.

But we are not left to argument on antecedent grounds. The Word of God teaches in the most unmistakable language that the Lord Jesus Christ is the King of nations. This is necessarily implied when the Scriptures teach that the

authority of Christ is universal. All the resources of language are employed to set forth the absolutely unlimited character of His domain. Paul declares: “God raised from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (or age), but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet.” If ALL things are put under His feet, it is hard to understand how such important things as the civil governments of the earth are excluded. This same apostle argues this question for us (1 Cor. 15:27) as though to meet the very objection that there must be exceptions to the general statement, that “all things” are put under Him: “Since all things are put under Him, He only is excepted who did put all things under Him.” There is the word of Paul in dealing with the very subject of exceptions, that the Father alone is excepted from the mediatorial sway of King Jesus. If His authority is universal, it follows that moral beings, including nations and governments as moral agents, must be subject to

Him. These words are but the echo of Christ's own declaration: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18.)

Neither are we left here again to inference from plain declarations of Christ's universal dominion. God's Word expressly declares that all kings shall fall down before Him, that all nations shall serve Him, that He shall judge among the nations, that His dominion embraces all peoples, nations and languages. (Ps. 72:8, 11; Isa. 2:4; Dan. 7:4.)

In this Word He is given titles which must be all but meaningless unless it be true that He has authority over nations. He is called "King of Nations," "The Governor Among the Nations," "Prince of the Kings of the Earth" and "Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords."

Another class of passages represents Him as actually exercising authority over nations. While the nations are said not to yield obedience yet He is set forth as their rightful ruler. God has given Him to rule in midst of His opposers, to smite them with His rod and to dash them into

pieces if they continue their rebellion. (Psalm 2:1, 2, 3, 9; 110:1, 2, 5, 6; Rev. 2:26, 27; 19:15.) Therefore the Second Psalm both enjoins and counsels rulers to submit to Him their appointed Lord: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth; kiss the Son lest He be angry and ye perish when His wrath is kindled but a little."

Such unmistakable language prepares us for the express prediction that among the glorious accomplishments of the future will be the submission of nations and governments to Christ's authority. In the Apocalypse John records that he heard the seventh trumpet sound, and great voices in heaven saying: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." And in the final vision of the City of God he saw the "Nations of the saved walking in the light of it, and the kings of the earth bringing their glory and their honor into it." On the strength of such words of God Dr. A. A. Hodge, of Princeton, based his sublime appeal, which should ring out and echo until our nation hears and hearkens: "I charge you, citizens of

the United States, afloat on your wild sea of politics, there is another King, one Jesus: the safety of the State can be secured only in the way of whole-souled loyalty to His person and obedience to His law."

When we pledge ourselves to Christ and to one another to study the laws of His kingdom our engagement is but the just and suitable acknowledgment of the kingly authority which we have seen belongs to Christ. But we need clear views as to what the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Christ is. Some regard it as identical with the Church, and use the two terms interchangeably. But this would make nonsense of a large part of the Word of God. Try it, and read some familiar passages, substituting "the Church" for the Kingdom of God. Matt. 4:17. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," would read, "Repent, for the Church is at hand." Acts 14:22, where Paul says: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God." would then read, "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Church." When we come to

study the laws of Christ's Kingdom we will first of all come to accept the statement of the Apostle Peter: "Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all"—and of Paul: "His Kingdom ruleth over all." Then we will see that the Church is but a part of Christ's Kingdom. His Kingdom is the whole universe of God. There is but one being in the universe not under the sway of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is God the Father. This world and everything in it belongs to His Kingdom. How small a part of His Kingdom is the Church! Why can men not read? Can they not understand that they limit the sway of Christ in this world to the Church? To whom do other things in this world belong? Who owns England, Germany and France and China and America? Do they belong to the devil? Did not Christ come to redeem the world from the dominion of the devil? When the devil led man to fall into sin he got control of things down here. But the Son of Man came to destroy the works of the devil. Every sin and every effect of sin are works of the devil and the blessed Lord came to destroy every one of them. He crushed the

dragon's head beneath His heel, and broke his dominion, and this world, from Calvary's awful hour to this moment and forever and ever, belongs again to God. And because Christ humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross, God also hath given Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. By our Christian citizenship pledge we bow our knees and confess with our tongues the Lordship of Christ. Hereby we declare that we do not believe in limiting the royal dominion of Christ to a part of man. We vow that this man shall reign over us in every relation of the life He has redeemed. We do not believe the dictum: "The Church for Christ, the world with its powers for the devil." We do not believe that Christ's Kingdom is a section of the world cut off and hedged in from the remainder; and that when He redeems a man He must, in order to rule him, keep him shut up in that section of the world which the devil permits Him

to rule as His peculiar domain. Neither do we believe that a Christian's sphere of activity must be so circumscribed as to shut him out of many legitimate relations of life. No! This world and everything rightfully in it belongs to our exalted Lord; and everything wrongfully in it belongs to the devil and is doomed to be overthrown when Christ comes to cast the devil out and take unto Him His great power and reign. Therefore we believe Christ wants His children to enter every legitimate relationship, claim it and use it for Him. We believe Christ wants us to do precisely what we here pledge ourselves to do, "to obey His will, as citizens, in all things so far as known to us; and to use our influence and power, as citizens, to secure the acknowledgment of His authority and obedience to His will in all things by our nation and our government." THESE IDEAS ARE SHARED BY THE BEST AND GREATEST MINDS.

And we are in right royal company in holding to these principles of civil life. Miss Frances E. Williard, in one of her annual addresses before the national convention of the Women's Christian Tem-

perance Union (Nashville, 1887) affirmed that that great organization of women had "one vital, organic thought, one absorbing purpose, one undying enthusiasm. It is that CHRIST BE THIS WORLD'S KING—King of its courts, its camps, its commerce; King of its colleges and cloisters; King of its customs and constitutions; . . . Christ and His law, the true basis of government and the supreme authority in national as in individual life."

George Washington is good authority on anything pertaining to citizenship. In his first message to Congress he ascribes the nation's blessings to "a gracious Providence." In another message to the Senate and House of Representatives he writes: "I humbly implore that Being on whose will the fate of nations depends, to crown with success our mutual endeavors for the general happiness." In still another he calls to mind "the gracious indulgence of heaven by which the American people became a nation" and requests Congress to unite with him in "imploping the Supreme Ruler of nations to spread His holy protection over these United

States" and "to perpetuate to our country that prosperity which His goodness has already conferred." In his last annual message to Congress he presents his "fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and Sovereign Arbiter of nations, that His providential care may still be extended to the United States."

Taking these and other utterances of the Father of our country, a man with the least homiletic instinct would find no trouble in preaching from them a sermon on Christian citizenship.

Hear the words of President John Adams and get his conception of Christian citizenship. In a proclamation for a National Fast day, dated March 6, 1799, he recommends that "citizens"—note that his address is to citizens—that "citizens on that day abstain, as far as may be, from their secular occupation, and devote the time to the sacred duties of religion, in public and in private; that they call to mind our [the nation's] numerous offenses against the most high God, confess them before Him with the sincerest penitence, implore His pardoning mercy,

through the great Mediator and Redeemer, for our past transgressions, and that, through the grace of His Holy Spirit, we may be disposed and enabled to yield a more suitable obedience to His righteous requisitions in time to come; that He would interpose to arrest the progress of that impiety and licentiousness in principle and practice so offensive to Himself and so ruinous to mankind; that he would make us deeply sensible that 'righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.' In the light of such utterances who can doubt that according to John Adams, worthy citizenship is Christian citizenship?

In equally unmistakable language did the Senate of the United States in 1863 declare itself. The phrases read as though they might have dropped from the pen of some champion of the National Reform Movement: "Devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations"; and again, "Deploring the national offences which have provoked His righteous judgment, yet encouraged in this day of trouble by the assurance of His Word, to

seek Him for succor according to His appointed way, through Jesus Christ." So the Senate goes on to ask President Lincoln to appoint "a day for national prayer and humiliation" and requests "all the people of the land to suspend their secular pursuits, and unite in keeping the day in solemn communion with the Lord of Hosts." etc.

Then Mr. Lincoln, who was then President and who spoke not as a private citizen but as the head of the nation, penned those immortal words in which he declaring it to be "the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, and to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures, and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

By uniting on this pledge we take our stand with our martyred and immortal President. Shall we not do what we can, as Christian citizens, to bring our nation to the acceptance of these glorious principles which he in the hour of our nation's bloody conflict devoutly declared? Let us endeavor to bring our beloved nation to such a plane of allegiance and

gratitude to the Ruler of nations that it can no longer be said as Lincoln in that day was constrained to say: "We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!"

These are the illustrious citizens whom we choose as our teachers. Where Washington, Franklin, Adams and Lincoln blazed the way we follow in this work of purest patriotism. So also have we right worthy company among notable leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ. This grand movement "has bound together with bands of love of country and love of truth and love of Christ the King, stronger than bands of steel, as devoted a company of Christian workers as this continent has ever known. Where are names of brighter lustre among the sainted dead of America than those of Bishops McIlvaine, Eastburn and Kerfoot, of the Protestant Episcopal Church; Bishops Gilbert Haven and Simpson, of the Meth-

odist Episcopal Church; the Hodges, father and son, of the Presbyterian Church; Drs. Pressly, Rodgers, Kerr, and Cooper of the United Presbyterian Church; Professors J. M. Willson and J. R. W. Sloane, and Dr. A. M. Milligan, of the old Covenantan Church; and pre-eminent among them all, the venerable Taylor Lewis, of the Reformed Church?" [Manual of Christian Civil Government, p. 45.] But who would undertake to call "the roll of the cloud of witnesses, living and dead—men who, like the worthies of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, were heroes of faith, never asking what is popular, but what is true; never what is for personal influence and advantage, but what is for Christ's honor and the country's highest good?" [Ibid.]

By this pledge we seek the mutual confidence, enthusiasm and strength necessary in a great social movement, and so fairly illustrated in the temperance pledge, the Covenants of the Waldenses and other witnessing societies, in the Christian Endeavor and other pledges of the marvelous Young People's movement of our day. By this pledge we seek to enter into the labors of those great heroes of faith who marched and died beneath the banner of the King of kings, and labored to bring our nation into loyal submission to His rule. They loved our

country and from considerations of patriotism they desired to see the stars and stripes float out beneath the standard of the King of nations. Shall we not by making our acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler of Nations, and His law as the supreme standard of right and wrong for men and nations, and by pledging ourselves to labor for such a worthy end as to bring our nation into loyal obedience to Him, join hands with those who have made the history of this movement illustrious, and with thousands of leading men in all churches to-day, and seeking to bring the rising generation to join hands with us, shall we not unitedly press onward with unwavering faith and undaunted courage to bring our nation to the feet of Him who has ascended far above all principality and power and might and dominion to the highest throne of the universe and thence sways with almighty arm an uncontrollable sceptre? May we not hope, through God, to take this, our beloved land, and place it as a bright and brilliant jewel in the crown of King Jesus, and having done this, make our nation a light on the highway of nations to help bring all kingdoms of earth under His beneficent sway, until "all peoples shall be blessed in Him and all nations shall call Him blessed?"