

# What Covenanters Stand For

By Rev. M. A. Gault of Oakdale, Ill., and Designed  
to Be Read in Thousands of Homes in  
This and Other States.

The supremacy of Christ in all government has been the great central truth in our church's creed for more than two hundred and sixty years. We hold that the United States Constitution denies that supremacy and is immoral, because it substitutes human for Divine authority, by ignoring God, and Christ, and the Bible; and in prescribing no moral qualification for civil rulers. For this reason we hold that it is a grievous sin and dishonor to Christ for Christians to vote or hold office whenever an oath to this Constitution is implied. From the beginning of our history we have endeavored to regulate our political conduct according to this great Bible principle. Almost all our divisions and apostacies have been the result of Satan's efforts to drive us from this position. The most cruel and dastardly effort of this kind was the Division of 1833, when twenty-two out of the fifty-eight members of our Synod deserted our ranks, surrendered our blood bought testimony and started what is called the New Light faction.

We publish this circular and write specially of the New Light Division; because a correspondent of the Coulterville Republican, Thomas Chestnut of Clay Center, Kansas, has for about twenty years, been writing un-

der an assumed name and frequently maligning Covenanters, assaulting our position of political dissent, falsifying our church history, and charging us with disloyalty and being enemies of the government. He has kept this up until silence has ceased to be a virtue and become a crime. After one of his most malignant assaults and perversions of our church history, the poor editor afraid of the truth, most cruelly shut off our reply. It is well however, because the truth in the form of this circular will be read in thousands of homes where this diminutive Coulterville sheet has never even been heard of.

We will give as briefly as possible the main facts in the much perverted history of the New Light defection. Our authorities are, first a Narrative of this Division by Rev. William Sloane, the first pastor of the Oakdale congregation, published in the fall of 1833. He was an actor in that memorable Synod, and none who knew him will dispute his testimony. We have carefully examined also narratives of the Division by Rev. David Steele, who was clerk of our Synod in 1833, and one by Rev. Robert Gibson, published in 1834; and one also by Rev. David Scott; these all came through the trying scenes of that Division. We

have the history of it also in our Historical Testimony. All these witnesses agree in the following facts. When our synod met in Philadelphia, Aug. 8th, 1833, it was under trying circumstances. A New Light party had for several years kept up a determined agitation to silence our testimony against Godless politics. So defiantly did they assail this vital testimony which we had sworn to maintain, that a previous Synod had to suspend seven of these ministers. It was in the church of one of the suspended ministers that the Synod was appointed to meet. The clerk was in strong sympathy with these liberals and refused to give up the records. The city police had also been engaged to defend them in setting at defiance all Presbyterian order and discipline. We were in a large majority of thirty-six against their twenty-two; and seven of their ministers and three of their elders were under suspension. Why then did the majority withdraw and constitute the Synod in another church? This was an absolute necessity to avoid an inevitable and disgraceful collision with the police.

It was in obedience also to Paul's council to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. In a New York congregation where these New Lights were in the majority, they had excommunicated two elders and a hundred and twenty members without a semblance of a trial. And what for? Simply for refusing to hear one of their suspended ministers. A number of their ministers had traveled on Sabbath post-haste to force a pastor on a congregation by the aid of the city police. What could we expect to gain by meeting with such ecclesiastical anarchists? We quietly and orderly withdrew to the Cherry

street church, where our Synod was constituted and went on with its regular business.

Dare any one raise the question as to which party comprised the Covenanter Synod? We did not secede from the New Lights, because their Synod was not constituted when we left them. We did not secede from the Covenanter Synod, because we were in a large majority. We did not secede from the doctrines of the Covenanter church, because we still hold to the same doctrine and terms of communion, which were formulated in 1806. We claim they are the secessionists and have no right to assume the name Covenanter, for they have never Covenanted in America. Our Synod covenanted in Pittsburgh in 1871, after the example of our covenanted ancestors. They abandoned our terms of communion after 1833, by striking out of them the testimony against immoral constitutions of civil government and other vital features. They have been ever since in sworn league with our government in its rebellion against Christ. They no longer accepted the whole doctrine of Westminster Standards. They omit from their testimony any reference to such great evils as Intemperance, Secret Societies, or even American Slavery while that evil lasted. We only mention these sad defects to show the fearful consequences when Covenanters abandon their testimony. After their secession in 1833 they soon began to decline. Not only their ministers, but whole congregations and presbyteries deserted them and went into other denominations. Since surrendering their testimony they have no distinctive truth for which to stand, and this accounts for their marvelous declension. They now number scarcely more than a

dozen settled pastors, while we have over a hundred congregations and nearly a hundred and fifty ministers. We have flourishing foreign missions in Syria, Cyprus and China, and in this land successful Freedmen, Indian and Jewish missions.

How deep seated must be the prejudice that inspires the Couterville Republican to charge us with disloyalty, and being enemies of our country, in a community where no denomination furnished as many volunteers to put down the Rebellion. It is on record that the congregation to which I have the honor to minister sent more soldiers to the front in the Civil war than any other in the county, the pastor, Rev. A. C. Todd went as captain of a company largely composed of his own members. No denomination in ratio to its numbers furnished as many defenders of the union, and it is about the only one that never had a soldier in the Rebel army. President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton knew the loyal and religious convictions of Covenanters, and they were not required to swear to the Constitution. We have always stood on the battle line in every conflict for civil and religious liberty. In the war of 1812 with England, our Synod hastened to declare its loyalty to the government, but specified that it would not permit its members to swear to the Constitution. It cost the nation a million graves and three billion dollars to strike African slavery out of the Constitution. We have reason to fear that it will cost a much higher price to blot out its infidelity. In its preamble it virtually displaces Christ from the head of his own moral system by lodging all authority in the people. By declaring itself the supreme law of the land, it rejects the law of

God by substituting another supreme standard. This is an awful and public violation of the command, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me". Thus it not only rejects the word of God but contains provisions that flatly contradict it. God says, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God". But the Constitution forbids any religious test, and contains no moral qualification for civil rulers. God says, "Thou shalt fear the Lord and swear by his name: "He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth." The Constitution prescribes no oath but only a form from which the name of God is excluded.

In the preamble the Constitution arrogates to itself Divine functions which is a dangerous thing for mortal man to do. It declares its purpose to be, "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty" Who does not know that it is the prerogative of God alone to secure these blessings. Will our nation like the proud king, exalt our throne above the stars and say, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" When king Herod sat upon his throne and made his famous oration, and the people gave a shout saying, it is the voice of a god and not of a man, immediately the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten by worms, and gave up the Ghost. He was stricken, not for persecuting the church, imprisoning Peter, or putting James to death, but for permitting his Word to be acclaimed as the word of God. But Herod's sin is not to be compared with that of the American people, who

in this enlightened christian century frame a national Constitution and arrogate to themselves Divine authority and prerogatives. Ingersoll once said, "Our forefathers in 1789 retired God from politics, and we mean to keep him retired". In 1865 Horace Greeley said in his New York Tribune, "Almighty God is not the source of all power and authority in our government. The people of the United States are such source. The proposed recognition of God in the Constitution involves a more fundamental and sweeping change than our father's separation from Great Britain".

O fellow Christian! before you cast your next ballot, will you not seriously consider what it involves? No such iron clad terms of communion are required by any church, as our government requires of you before you can have the privilege of its communion at the ballot box. You must swear a solemn oath to the Constitution, in the person of the President and every official whom you vote to elect. And what are the terms of the Constitution to which you must swear supreme allegiance? They are the substitution of human for Divine authority; the rejection of the Lord Jesus; the assumption of Divine prerogatives by the government; the rejection of the Word of God, and of any moral qualification for civil rulers. Is not such an oath virtually to lift up your hand and swear saying, "At this ballot box, O God, I reject thy Divine authority. Here, O Christ, I must part company with thee. I here reject thy blessed Word as the standard of my conduct. I here reject the scepter of dominion from thy hand and give it to We the people."

Well has F. B. Meyer said,

"The only principle of moving the world is to emulate Archimedes in getting a point without it. All the men who have left a mark in the elevation of their times, have been compelled to join the pilgrim host which is constantly passing through the city gates and taking up its stand by the cross on which Jesus died. Looking back on that memorable spot, we see the way thronged with apostles, martyrs, reformers and prophets of every age." It remains with us to say whether we will fall in with this pilgrim host and go forth without the camp bearing the reproach of Christ, than go into the camp of his enemies. There are many who argue that the wisest policy is to camp with the enemy and try to elevate their morals. But if we do so we must camp there alone, for our Lord has already gone. How can we expect to find a home where he is expelled? How can we be welcomed where our Master was cast out to the fate of the lowest criminals? Besides, entering the camp of Christless politics will soon drag us down by its evil influence. Instead of our leveling it up, it will level us down. A lady with defective vision consulted a noted oculist who said, "your eyes are all right: the difficulty is in your constitution. She began constitutional treatment and soon her sight was improved. Brethren, why is it that in spite of all the voting by Christian people, our politics are growing more and more corrupt, and crime and every form of evil is on the increase. It is because our national disease is constitutional. Jesus said "Without me ye can do nothing." No permanent reform can be effected by the ballot while our Constitution remains Christless.