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CHRIST OR COLENZO.

BY ROBERT PATTERSON, D. D.

Should a manufacturer receive a large order, purporting to be written by the confidential clerk of a highly respectable firm in a distant city, on their behalf, he would probably make some inquiry as to its genuineness. If the letter referred to previous transactions with other houses in the place, he would ascertain from them whether it was the habit of the firm to allow this clerk to write orders, and ask them if the signature was genuine. If they unanimously said that such was the habit of the house, that the writing was that of their buying clerk, and that the signature was that of the head of the firm, he would feel assured on the subject. But if, in returning to his store, he should meet a stranger who had overheard his inquiry, and who should volunteer the information, that he had been a clerk in the office of this firm; that he knew their mode of business, and the writing of all the clerks; should ask to see the letter, and declare that it was not written by their chief clerk, but evidently by half a dozen casual callers at the office, and that the so-called signature was not the signature of the firm, but merely an unintelligible scrawl; and, moreover, that the references to previous transactions with other houses were quite wide of the truth, and that, in fact, the firm was not in that line of business at all—but that, nevertheless, the order was a good one, and he would recommend him send on the goods on the strength of it—for that such was their mode of doing business, in a blundering way—our inquirer would stand for a moment astonished. The positiveness of this man's assertions would, it is true, be balanced against the folly of his advice; yet still a little feeling of uneasiness would prevent an immediate determination whether he were knave or fool; and as a large amount of money was involved, he would like to satisfy his mind fully on the matter; but as he is on his way to the telegraph office, he meets the son of the senior partner, who is also the active member of the firm, and who has come to town to attend to this business. He produces the letter, and asks him, "Is it genuine?" He replies, "It is all right; I will be responsible;" and proceeds to comment on and explain its various specifications. That settles the matter. The insinuations of the dismissed hireling are at once seen to proceed from jealousy and

your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool." There is nothing so dangerous as delay. There are millions to-day in hell, who never intended to go there—who only put off their salvation to a more convenient season.

"It will interfere with my pleasure," says another. My friend, real pleasure and substantial happiness are to be found but in the comforts and consolations of religion. "I am still in the days of my youth," another responds. Yes, and so are tens of thousands who are every day passing to meet their God. Few, very few, die of old age, and none regretting that they remembered their Creator in the days of their youth.

Says another:—"It will increase my responsibilities, multiply my obligations." Now, is this really so? What is the sum of your responsibilities? What is the sum total of your obligations? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." This is the sum of your obligations, and it is the sum of mine,—not to be increased or diminished by any act of ours. This is all that is required of the greatest saint, nor is less required at the hands of the greatest sinner. This includes all possible duties, and certainly the confession and practice of religion.

Thus we have briefly considered, and endeavoured to answer some of the excuses men plead as reasons why they are not Christians.

And now, reader, will you still meet the gracious invitation, "Come, for all things are now ready," with, "I pray thee have me excused?" Beware, lest God take you at your word, lest you be excused, lest you never come. Remember that there is danger of grieving away the Spirit of God, of tempting God to say of us, as of Ephraim of old—"He is joined to his idols, let him alone." Pause and reflect before you farther press your excuse. It would excuse you from happiness here, and from glory hereafter. In life it would deprive you of God's gracious and comforting presence, and in death leave you but the blackness of darkness for ever. O, you cannot, you must not, you dare not excuse yourself in the face of such a dread alternative. If you do you, will be guilty of suicide, self-murder. At the bar of God your blood will be required at your hands. Trifle, then, no longer with the interests of your immortal soul. Death, judgment, and eternity, are at hand. No excuse will avail to stay the arrest of death, avert the sentence of doom, alleviate the burnings of the quenchless fire, or the torments of the undying worm. Then, "If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

"Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

ON THE AMENDMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES,
PROPOSED BY A "RELIGIOUS COUNCIL," AT PITTSBURGH.

BY WILLIAM S. BENTON.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—I propose, with your permission, to make some observations on the nature and character of the amendments proposed to be introduced into the Constitution of the United States, by a meeting of ministers and others, held at Pittsburgh, Pa., on the 4th

and 6th of July last. These I find published, along with an extended report of the proceedings of said meeting, (called a "Religious Council,") in the *Presbyterian Witness* of Cincinnati, of July 15th, accompanied by a semi-authoritative letter by "J. A." of "Xenia," explaining and enforcing the importance of the action of said "Council," and further developing the programme of its contemplated future operations. In "J. A." of "Xenia," we at once recognise, (as is intended,) the author and the chief promoter of this movement; and as his letter to the *Witness*, accompanying the proceedings of the Pittsburgh Meeting for publication, may be regarded as semi-official, we shall avail ourselves, (without feeling that we trench at all on personal ground,) of the additional light he throws on the movement—giving him cheerfully all the credit for zeal to which he is entitled.

As the Pittsburgh brethren, or "Religious Council," moreover, "appointed a Central Committee, composed of distinguished gentlemen of different evangelical denominations throughout the country," "to have charge of this whole matter,"—"as this Central Committee" are "to issue immediately, an address to the people of the United States on this subject,"—and as they are "to appoint, from time to time, sub-committees in the chief towns and cities of the United States, with power to add to their number, *under the supervision of the Central Committee,*" which sub-committees are to "have charge of this matter in their respective localities; to present the subject to the public by Addresses and Newspaper Articles; and to call Conventions of the people in their neighbourhoods, promotive of the object sought,"*—your readers, Messrs. Editors, will perceive that the movement is intended to be on a magnificent scale!—that there is here a great work cut out for them all by "J. A." and the Pittsburgh brethren, to do!—and that if they will put their shoulders to the wheel, (Ministers, Elders, and People; Editors and Platform Orators;) if they will *write up*, and *publish*, and *make speeches* "in their neighbourhoods promotive of it," but always, be it observed, "under the *supervision* of the Central Committee!"—why—they will show themselves, Messrs. Editors, loyal, dutiful, and obedient subjects of this grand, self-constituted Pittsburgh "Central Committee!" That will be honour enough, will it not? As for us, as we do not aspire to any of the multifarious offices in the gift of this "Central Committee," to be exercised under its patronage and *supervision*, we propose, as a loyal citizen of a free government, and also as a member of the United Presbyterian church, and loyal to its time-honoured and time-tried principles respecting the origin and constitution of civil government, and respecting civil and religious liberty and the rights of conscience, to examine with a proper freedom and independence, the dogmas propounded for our adoption by "J. A." and the Pittsburgh "Religious Council"—to analyze the *religious principles* proposed by them for National adoption, and to be ingrafted into the National Constitution.

There is a seeming discrepancy between the published report of the action of the Pittsburgh meeting, and "J. A.'s." letter to the *Presb. Witness* explaining and illustrating that action, which I confess myself unable to reconcile. Perhaps "J. A." or some other of the Pitts-

* See the proceedings of the Pittsburgh "Religious Council," as published.

burgh Religious Councillors will be pleased to explain it. In the published Proceedings, we are informed that, (as has been already stated,) "a Central Committee composed of distinguished gentlemen, of different evangelical denominations, throughout the country was appointed," whereas "J. A." in his letter to the *Witness*, says—"The Central Committee at Pittsburgh will soon issue an Address to the nation on the subject." Query; are that "Central Committee of distinguished gentlemen of different evangelical denominations throughout the country," and this "Central Committee at Pittsburgh," spoken of by "J. A.," one and the same? If so, we conclude that either the "Central Committee at Pittsburgh" must have ascertained and collected the minds and sentiments of the "distinguished gentlemen throughout the country" with incredible diligence and success, so as to embody these in the forthcoming Address to the nation; else, that the said "Central Committee at Pittsburgh," (composed probably of some half-dozen brethren there,) will issue the Address to the nation in the name of that "Central Committee of distinguished gentlemen of different evangelical denominations throughout the country!" In other words, it will be merely a *Pittsburgh affair*; just as the "Convention of Delegates from all the evangelical churches throughout the nation," dwindled down to a *Pittsburgh "Religious Council!"* Truly, "J. A." and the Pittsburgh brethren are magnificent program-mists! Whatever may be thought of the religious principles they propose to introduce into our National Constitution, in this respect at least, they certainly bear off the palm from all competitors.

The history of this movement is briefly this. It is well known that many of our Christian citizens are deeply impressed with the conviction that the Constitution of our country—while, as a whole, securing the great ends of civil government far more effectually than the fundamental constitution and laws of any other nation—is sinfully deficient, in not expressly and explicitly recognising the authority of God as supreme over nations and their rulers. Also, it is believed by many, (although we think this has been far too readily conceded,) that the Constitution authorizes slavery, and requires the good and loyal citizen to return into slavery the poor fugitive from its cruel chains. These views being prevalent among many of our Christian citizens; and pretty extensively, too, among United Presbyterian Christians; any movement intended to remove or correct these real or supposed serious drawbacks to the general excellence of the Constitution of our beloved country, naturally elicited favour. Availing himself of this healthy condition of public religious feeling, "J. A.," the leader and prime mover in this Pittsburgh movement, corresponded with brethren in Philadelphia and elsewhere, urging that steps should be taken to call a Convention of Evangelical Christians, in order to consult together, and agree upon the terms of the proposed amendments of the Constitution; which should be such, of course, as would be generally acceptable to evangelical Christians, and in accord with the sentiments entertained by the evangelical churches in the nation. The original design of "J. A." was, to hold the Convention in Philadelphia. Accordingly he addressed letters to brethren there, in consequence of which the United Presbytery of Philadelphia considered the proposal, and (though some entertained serious doubts whether it

was a suitable time to agitate such questions,) they reported favourably on the proposal of a Christian Convention. "J. A." engaged to have the subject presented at the spring meetings of the various evangelical churches, with a view to induce them to send delegates to the proposed Convention, which was expected to meet on or about the 4th of July.

The Assembly and other church meetings came on. The Assembly of the U. P. Church met May 27th, when papers on the amendment of the Constitution of the United States were presented from "the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church," and from "a committee appointed by a Convention lately held in Pittsburgh."* It appears that the Pittsburgh brethren had already held a meeting or "convention," under the auspices of "J. A.," on the 8th (3d?) and 11th of May, when they seem to have fixed the terms of the proposed amendments to the Constitution! These were substantially, as will afterwards be seen, those subsequently adopted on the 6th of July, by the Pittsburgh "Religious Council." The amendments proposed by the Pittsburgh brethren, and those proposed by the Reformed Presbyterian General Synod, appear to be identical in character, and almost in the same terms. Both embody the peculiar views of the Covenanter brethren respecting civil government and the rights of conscience. That there may be no shade of dubiety on this head, we shall give the proposed amendments of the Pittsburgh "Convention" and "Religious Council," and those of the Covenanter "General Synod," in parallel columns, leaving our readers, if they can, to decide "which is which," provided they only keep their thumb upon the caption of each.

R. P. GEN. SYNOD'S AMENDMENTS.

"Resolved, (1.) That in the judgment of this Synod the time is come for the proposal of such amendments to the Federal Constitution, in the way provided by itself, as will supply the omission above referred to, and secure a distinct recognition of the being and supremacy of the God of Divine Revelation.

"Resolved, (2.) That in the judgment of Synod, the amendments or additions to be made to the National Constitution, should provide not only for a recognition of the existence and authority of God, but also of the Mediatorial supremacy of Jesus Christ his Son, 'the Prince of the kings of the Earth, and the Governor among the nations.'

"Resolved, (3.) That as several articles of the Federal Constitution have been and are construed in defence of slavery, Synod do earnestly ask the appropriate authorities, to effect such changes in them as will remove all ambiguity of phraseology on this subject, and make the Constitution, as its framers designed it to be, and as it really is in spirit, a document on the side of justice and liberty."—*Banner of the Covenant*, July 2, 1863.

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED BY PITTSBURGH RELIGIOUS COUNCIL.

"The committee to whom were referred the resolution and amendment to report business for the action of the Council presented their report, which was unanimously adopted. It is as follows:

"Whereas, it is all-important that in all Conventions that may be called, in all addresses to the people, and in all petitions to the State legislatures and to Congress, there should be agreement in the statement in [of?] the amendment proposed to be made to the Constitution of the United States:

"Resolved, 1. That this Council adhere substantially to the statement of the amendment as set forth in the action of the original meeting in the city of Pittsburgh, May 8—11, 1863; and that all future Conventions or Councils are requested to do the same.

"The amendment proposed is in the brackets, and is as follows:—We, the people of the United States, [recognising the being and attributes of Almighty God; the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; the law of God as a paramount rule; and Jesus the Messiah, the Saviour and the Lord of all,] in order to form a more perfect union, [to secure the natural rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,] &c."—*Presb. Witness*, July 16, 1863.

* See Minutes in *Evangelical Repository* for July, p. 68.

This was the form in which the subject came up before the United Presbyterian General Assembly, and it is to be presumed, came up also before the Assemblies, &c., of other evangelical churches. It is, we remark, a most significant fact, that neither the United Presbyterian Assembly, nor the Assemblies, Synods, Conferences, &c., of any of the evangelical churches, excepting only the two branches of Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanters,) responded to the invitation to send delegates to the Convention proposed to be held on the 4th of July. What reasons other bodies may have had we have not access to know. As to the United Presbyterian Assembly, we presume the reason why it declined to send delegates was, that it was not yet prepared to embrace the principles of the Covenanter brethren in regard to civil government. The Assembly declined to endorse these principles as set forth in these papers laid before it by the Covenanter General Synod and the Pittsburgh brethren; and having so declined, it further declined to stultify itself by sending delegates to a Convention, at which it was a foregone conclusion that these peculiar Covenanter principles were to be adopted. The true reason is to be found in the fact, that the amendments proposed by the promoters of the movement were not in accordance with, but some of them in direct opposition to, the settled principles respecting civil government, and civil and religious liberty, involving the rights of conscience, which are entertained by United Presbyterians, in common with all other Presbyterians throughout the world (our Covenanter brethren excepted.) But why did our Covenanter brethren send delegates to the Convention? Because the amendments proposed by the Pittsburgh brethren were in entire accordance with their peculiar views on these important subjects. This is, doubtless, the true solution of the all but utter failure of the plan of a Convention of delegates from all the evangelical churches.

And here let us pause a moment to express our great and sincere regret that a movement which was commenced on principles which commended themselves to the general support and advocacy of all our Christian citizens, should so soon have been turned aside to the support of the peculiar dogmas and creed respecting the constitution of civil government, of a small body of Christians, numbering in all perhaps 200 or 300 congregations and ministers throughout the world! Such "a lame and impotent conclusion" must necessarily operate as a heavy discouragement to right efforts in the future.

Well; the 4th of July, the time for holding the Pittsburgh Convention of delegates, arrived amid war and the invasion of Pennsylvania by a rebel foe! Only one delegate, out of three, appeared from the Reformed Presbyterians, "new side;" and two delegates, 't would seem, from the "old side."* A convention of but three delegates

* It is worthy of remark that these three *Reformed Presbyterian* delegates were all ministers, and the two from the "old side" branch were the two professors of that religious body. And, indeed, on glancing over the published proceedings of the Pittsburgh meeting (or "Council,") it is most noteworthy that, with the sole exception of the leader of the movement, all those that are stated to have taken part in the proceedings are ministers. Not that we think that a minister of the gospel is not in his right place in such a case. But it is certainly a remarkable fact that (so far as can be ascertained from the published proceedings,) not a single Christian citizen, lawyer, or statesman, capable of explaining and expounding Constitutional terms, and of defending right principles of civil and constitutional liberty, and the legal effect of the

seeming rather too select!—and all Covenanters at that!—with a masterly stroke of strategic policy, (the idea, probably, having been suggested by Gen. McClellan's famous "change of base" from the Chickahominy to Harrison's Landing, on the James River,) the promoters of the movement thought it wise to change the character of the Pittsburgh meeting from that of a "Convention of Delegates," to that of a "Religious Council," and to throw open the doors, and invite all Christians—ministers and others—to take part in its business in their individual capacity. It thus appears that (unless, perhaps, the Reformed Presbyterian Churches,) no church, or body of Christians are, or can be fairly held responsible for the principles respecting civil government put forth by the Pittsburgh "Religious Council." Not only so, but all other Christian bodies except those named, have positively or negatively repudiated them.

Our narrative part of this movement is almost brought to an end. We just wish further to call attention to the notable denial of freedom of discussion of the principles put forth for our adoption by the Pittsburgh "Religious Council." The proof of this we have already incidentally quoted from its published proceedings; but it will bear a second look, just for the curiosity of the thing as occurring in a free country, and as addressed by a self-constituted Pittsburgh "Religious Council," to all the Christian citizens of a great nation:—"Whereas it is all-important, that in all Conventions that may be called; in all addresses to the people; and in all petitions to the State Legislatures and to Congress, *there should be agreement in the statement in [of?] the amendment* proposed to be made to the Constitution of the United States,—*Resolved*, That this Council adhere substantially to the statement of the amendment as set forth in the action of the original meeting in the city of Pittsburgh, May 3—11, 1863; and that all future Conventions or Councils are requested to do the same!" One might suppose, almost, the "Pittsburgh Council" had taken a leaf from the Council of Trent! And the proceedings, even, of the Pittsburgh Council itself of the 4th and 6th of July, exhibit a curious instance, apparently, of cutting short the freedom of debate; for, on the first day, we observe that, while interesting "discussions" were "pending" on a resolution and amendment which had been fairly brought before the meeting, the discussion was quashed by a motion coming from the leader of the movement, to refer the resolution and amendment to a "special committee," to report "on Monday morning at 10 o'clock;" and the meeting was immediately adjourned. On Monday morning, as we have seen, the "special committee" had resolved to allow no change on the action of the former Convention. To this, all appear to have meekly submitted.

We come now to discuss the amendments proposed by the Pittsburgh Council, on their merits. This preliminary historical sketch of the movement has, however, extended to such length, that we shall defer

Constitution of the United States, took part in them! Not even a single layman! With all deference to the clergy, and deferring to their legitimate influence in their proper sphere, we are not yet quite prepared to accept all their dogmas respecting the Constitutional rights and liberties of American citizens; especially when led on by Covenanter Doctors and Professors, who repudiate the Constitution of our country in toto, and deny to our free government the character of an "ordinance of God."

this discussion to a future number. Meantime, we ask United Presbyterians to suspend their judgment, and not rashly commit themselves to the principles proposed to be ingrafted into the Constitution of the nation by our *Covenanter* brethren, and those who seem to have gone over to their views. We make this request with the more earnestness, because these principles seem already to have obtained too much favour from some of the conductors of our United Presbyterian press. In this connexion, however, it has given us unfeigned pleasure and satisfaction, to peruse an excellent article under the signature of "Citizen," in the *United Presbyterian* of July 23d, who nobly maintains and bears aloft the old banner of civil and religious liberty, so long and so ably borne by the Associate and Associate Reformed Churches of North America; and, let us hope, still to be maintained by the legitimate descendant and heir of their principles, the United Presbyterian Church. We quote here some of the most pregnant passages of "Citizen's" admirable article, and commend it as a whole to the calm reflection of the members of our church. He writes:—"Were these proposals [of the Pittsburgh Religious Council,] to carry, so as the matter of them should be ingrafted into the Constitution, those who hold views entirely different on the subjects referred to would be treated very unjustly; and truth itself would suffer, as, I am convinced, could easily be shown. Seceders in Scotland, and in this country, have held doctrines different from what is advanced in these proposals, concerning the Mediatorial kingdom of Christ; and I do, as a Seceder. A contrary doctrine is taught in the Westminster Confession, (taking it in its true meaning,) a professed adherence to which is given by all the different Presbyterian bodies in Britain and in this country; and in the Saybrook platform, (the Confession of the Association of the New England churches,) which agrees with our Confession on this subject. And even in the Judicial Acts of the Associate Reformed Church, in that which concerns the kingly authority of the Lord Jesus, we find the following:—"Jesus Christ is the only lawgiver of the church. This authority, strictly considered, belongs to him as Mediator—was given to him of the Father—and is distinct from that underived, essential dominion, of which, as a person in Jehovah, he is necessarily possessed,"—followed by a long train of Scripture argument to prove this. And Dr. Cooper, who was one of the committee for drawing up the basis [of union of the Associate and Associate Reformed churches,] contended strongly for the view I hold. And if it was right then, it is right now; as truth, like its glorious Author, who is in himself the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, changes not." "Such a principle as these proposals imply in them," continues "Citizen," "is the hinge upon which religious persecution turns, and has ever turned. Those who are at the head of a civil government hold a certain belief relative to religious subjects, either *pro* or *con*. Should they bring that belief into operation as the means or rule by which they are to govern those under them, those persons must believe as they do, or suffer persecution. Thus it has been in the Pope's dominions, and has been more or less, in all popish countries. Thus it was under the Roman, heathen, and Arian Emperors. Thus it is where Mahomedanism reigns; where the Greek religion is nationalized. And thus in England in the time of the bloody Mary and others; and in England and

Scotland in the times of Charles II., James II., and others; and *is now in England*, as none can get into places of trust there without taking the Sacrament in the form of the English church, unless a change has taken place of late in this respect.* And even in Scotland there is something of this, which still continues through the national establishment which still exists there." Once more, to quote from "Citizen,"—"The very last article in the Constitution is, that 'The Senators and Representatives, and the members of the several State Legislatures, and all Executive and Judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support the Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.' So that," continues "Citizen," "to carry these proposals into effect would be to contradict the Constitution itself. And I believe it to have been a wise step, in the framing of the Constitution, to include this in it. And more than this: should they be carried into effect, the free character of our government would be destroyed."

We thank "Citizen" for his well-timed testimony for those time-tried and time-honoured principles of our church, and of the churches from which it has derived its existence; principles which are identical with those which lie at the foundation of our free government and free civil Constitution; principles which, we firmly believe, constitute the palladium of free government and civil and religious liberty for the nations of the world.

P. S.—The bulk of this article was written, Messrs. Editors, before seeing your editorial on the same subject, in your August number. I have read that article with a great deal of satisfaction and instruction. As, however, my article does not reduplicate on the arguments nor scope of your editorial, (nor will my concluding article,) I respectfully offer it for publication in your valuable *Repository*.

* "CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS. The *Corporation Act*, passed in the 18th Charles II., 1661, prevented any person from being legally elected to any office belonging to the government of any city or corporation in England, unless he had, within the twelve months preceding, received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England; and enjoined him to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy when he took the oath of office. The *Test Act*, 25 Charles II., 1678, required all officers, civil and military, to take the oaths, and make the declaration against transubstantiation, in the Courts of King's Bench or Chancery, within six months after their admission; and also, within the same time, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the usage of the Church of England, in some public church. The *Corporation Act* was principally directed against Protestant Non-Conformists; the *Test Act* against Roman Catholics. *In the Year 1828 they were both abolished.*"—*The Popular Cyclopaedia; Glasgow; published by Blackie & Son.*

We take pleasure in thus showing that those wicked and ensnaring British enactments have been swept away. Still, to this day, the British sovereign is required, at his or her coronation, to *take the Sacrament*, in the assembled presence of the Peers and Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, by way of proving himself or herself a true Protestant!—a sad profanation of the highest religious ordinance. Strange, that while old England has been wiping out those tyrannical enactments which so long operated to infringe the civil and religious rights and liberties of her people, a party in our free country should be endeavouring to fasten a yoke of religious tests on our necks, of a similar character, such as our fathers found themselves unable to bear!