

Hillsborough Recorder

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS—THE GUARDIANS OF OUR LIBERTY.

Vol. XLIV.

HILLSBOROUGH, N. C., SEPTEMBER 23, 1863.

No. 2213.

ARE WE A CHRISTIAN NATION?

The following extract from Bishop Pierce's Fast Day sermon, we clip from the *Southern Christian Advocate*. Bishop Pierce says:

On the ground that our fathers separated Church and State, secured freedom of conscience, granted toleration to all religions, the popular inference has been all along that we were a *Christian nation*. But rightly viewed, the facts do not justify the conclusion. Indeed the principle affirmed, considered as abstractions, or in their practical effects upon legislation or public opinion, ignore all reference to God and his law, and made the government so essentially secular, political and human, as virtually to assume that God has no right in it—no control of it, and that to work it was our business, while the Deity was more appropriately employed in another, perhaps a higher sphere. Accordingly, in the Constitution there was no acknowledgment of His being or His providence, and much legislation under it was directly in the face of His authority, and every man had a right to be as wicked and mischievous as he pleased.

Now, I am neither a heretic in politics nor a bigot in religion. I do not desire to see the Church, my own or any other, established by the State; I do not desire that the State should adopt and publish a creed and command everybody to believe it. I ask for no inquisitions into any man's private opinions or practices, nor want no tests or oaths. But I do not believe that in the organic law, God should be acknowledged in his being, perfections, providence and empire; not as the universal Father of a world of dependent creatures; that is poetry, sentimentalism, and may be nothing more—but as the God of the Bible, Maker, Preserver, Governor, Redeemer, Judge, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The theocracy of the Jews, though not prescribed as a model for the nations of the earth, was intended to be the type, in substance if not in form, of all righteous government. In the progress of civilization and religion, as the world approaches the grand prophetic period, when "truth shall spring out of the earth and righteousness shall look down from heaven," the governments of earth will all be assimilated to this pattern. In confirmation of this idea, it is already true, that the best portions of the civil codes of all the nations of Asia and Europe, both ancient and modern, were borrowed from the Mosaic laws. It is equally true of ourselves.

The Constitution of the Confederate States of America has taken one step in the right direction, but does not go far enough. In its appeal to Almighty God, it uses the language of Deism, or natural religion, rather than of Christianity. It does not honor God as he reveals himself in those relations which concern us most, and by which the Divine glory is most illustriously declared. God magnifies his *Word* above all His name, but there is no allusion to it. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." "All things were made by Him and for Him," and yet he is not confessed. Now, as a Christian people, accrediting the Bible as a revelation from God, I think there ought to be in our Constitution a distinct recognition of the Christian religion. The moral character of a nation in the Divine estimate, depends largely upon public national acts. Hence, I attach great importance to these national fasts. Though many may neglect, some treat them with contempt, yet, proceeding from elected rulers, the representatives of the people, they characterize the country. They are solemn official exponents of religious faith and sentiment, which as we learn from the condescending expressions of the Divine word are acceptable to God. If our rulers never called us to those acts of self-denial, confession and intercession, the thousands of praying people over the land could not save the government from the odium of atheism or infidelity. And if the instrument under which we organize the Confederacy is ominously silent on a point so vital as Christianity, what can we expect but hostility

or indifference? Either would provoke the Divine displeasure, and limit, if not forfeit, the Divine blessing. While Noah, Job and Daniel, if they were living, might not and could not prevail to save from overthrow an infidel, godless government—a government which honors God and Christianity, sets itself to execute His will in its legitimate sphere, becomes the "minister of God for good," and never makes policy or expediency a plea for unrighteous, impious legislation, may inherit the protection of heaven, despite the individual transgressions of the people. This is the lesson of history both sacred and profane.

Believing, as I do, that God has committed to us the christianization of the African race, it is specially harmonious with this high and holy trust, that we invoke and secure the Divine favor by a solemn acknowledgment of His word, as well as His Providence. God has identified His name among men with Christianity. It is His wisdom and His power. Before a human breath had broken the solitude of eternal nothingness, redemption revolved in the infinite mind. In this glorious conception of the Godhead, the Universe was created. Creation with its astronomic wonders, the earth with its mountains piled in majesty, its vales spread out in beauty, its seas rolling in grandeur, was intended as the theatre for its display. The genealogical line of antediluvian patriarchs was recorded in the sacred story, and perpetuated in the family of Noah for this. For this, Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldees, made the depository of truth and the father of a great nation. Around this offspring of the Divine mind, inspiration has clustered the marvellous annals of the Israelitish people, and maintained the royal seed of David's line in the house of Judah till Shiloh came. The advent of the Son of God was the fulfilment of prophecy and promise, and when the chosen race "despised and rejected him," wrath came upon them to the uttermost. Through the provocations innumerable, the nation was preserved in fulfillment of the Scriptures, for the introduction of Christianity. Their malicious unbelief, their insulting scorn of Christ was the signal for their overthrow and dispersion. Even now these tribes "of the wandering foot and weary breast," though scattered and peeled, are kept distinct, unmingled, a miraculous demonstration of the truth of God and of the fearful guilt of making light of Jesus of Nazareth. Wherever you find a Jew, on the banks of the Ganges or the Tiber, the Thames or the Rhine, the Jordan or the Mississippi, you behold a living witness of God's primitive justice in the defence of the Christian religion. His isolation, loneliness and perpetuity is at once a miracle and a seal which find their explanation in the threatenings of the past and the prophecies of the future. He has survived the lagot and the sword, Papal persecution and Moslem barbarism, the reproach of nations and the waste of ages, on purpose to be at last the crowning trophy of the all-conquering cross.

The vast extent and unity of the Roman empire is a historic fact which has its solution in the plans of God for the easy and rapid circulation of Christianity. But when the truth had triumphed over the throne of the Caesars and the Church of God had been corrupted by power and pride and numbers, by another touch of the finger of Providence, this colossal dominion fell to rise no more. Its disruption by Northern hordes was another step in the solemn march of history toward the grand issue which regulates the dealings of God with men and nations, even the honor of the cross and the diffusion of Christianity. If we scan the shadows which flicker over the tablets of the past, or search amid the cemeteries of fallen dynasties and buried empires, or if we trace the path of revolution and commerce and gauge the comparative strength of pagan and Christian governments, everywhere,—always, alike, in the epitaph of the dead and in the annals of the living, we read the same great historic lesson—"them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me will be lightly

esteemed." Oh! if we would be "a wise and understanding people"—"a great nation—having God nigh unto us in all that we call upon him for," let us avow our faith in His revelation, identify our government with His honor, and commit our interest to the power that is pledged to perpetuate the Church and to insure her dominion. Then amid the rise and fall of kingdoms and all the mutations of time, our republic shall embody one element—pure, true, eternal—an element which shall ally us in friendship with Heaven, and stamp upon all our prosperity the seal of the divine blessing.

To avoid controversy, to forestall objections, I would be content if the framers of our constitution in their appeal to God, would designate the Almighty as FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST, because these names imply all that is distinctive and peculiar in the Christian scheme. The demand is neither extravagant nor sectarian, and even though it might be regarded by some as a concession to the Church, yet it is as little as a Christian people could consistently ask or a professedly Christian government expect to grant. The promises of God to the Church are sublime. She is advancing to her glorious destiny. To her friends Heaven pledges all that is valuable in time or desirable in eternity. As a patriot and a Christian, I desire for myself, my children and my countrymen, the shelteringegis of Almighty God—the benediction of His only begotten Son—the sanctifying ministry of the Eternal Spirit.

HOW IT WORKS.

The seventy-five per cent. proviso in the military exemption bill is not entirely devoid of bad results, as we shall presently see.

At a recent sale in a neighboring town, a manufacturer bought a quantity of lard oil, bidders running up the price to \$25 per gallon. This was certainly enormous. But when asked how he could afford to manufacture goods and pay such extravagant prices for materials, he rather surprised his hearers when he told them he would have been better pleased if they had run the oil to \$75 per gallon instead of \$25. He said the law allows him 75 per cent. profit over cost of production, and of course the greater his expenses, correspondingly large were his profits, as 75 per cent. on \$75 was preferable to 75 per cent. on \$25, and so on. Thus it will be seen that it is to the interest of certain persons to keep up the prices of, we might say, every leading article,—and here, at last, lies one of the main secrets of the present high prices which are more damaging to our cause than all things else combined.

Congress, in endeavoring to devise a mode of keeping prices down, only provided for everything to go up, up, up. That great curse to the world, "human nature," abounds to some extent even yet. It pervades all classes of society, our legislative councils as well as the trader, the manufacturer, the editor and people generally, not excepting even the lawyer—and hence the seeming impossibility for one class to restrain the selfish and unpatriotic course of the other, and our reason for not being so presumptuous as to suggest a corrective of the abuse just cited. But that a corrective is needed no one will deny.

Hillsborough Patriot.

THE WAY TO HELP THE CAUSE.

Let those who have been speculating in the necessities of life cease instantly, and if they can find no other occupation, let them join the army and help to save the wealth they have already accumulated. 2d. Let those who have provisions to sell, not hold on to their stuff for a higher price, and in that way give occasion for bread riots. The man who refuses to sell the necessities of life now, or is striving to advance the price, is an extortioner and a miser, and is doing the Confederate cause great injury. 3d. Let every man at home think less of making money and more of helping our authorities to gain independence. 4th. Those who have the means

must help the poor, and they must give liberally and not grudgingly.

It is not worth while to try to conceal the fact that our cause is being jeopardized by the selfishness and avariciousness of the Southern people; and it is not worth while to deny that unless there is a change in this respect, ruin and subjugation will overtake us all. How can we expect to succeed in the present mighty struggle for liberty while nine-tenths of the men at home are devoting all their energies to accumulating wealth. We say again, as we have often said, that no one has a right to devote his time to getting rich while his country is in distress and while a large number of our citizens are suffering, bleeding and dying on the battle field. For the sake of liberty and equality, for the sake of our children's welfare who will live after us, for the sake of humanity and christianity, for God's sake, let there be an immediate change in the conduct of our people. If there is not a speedy change we are ruined and disgraced people; and all the blood that has been shed and all the suffering that has been endured, goes for naught. A few men cannot save the cause while the large majority are running wild after the almighty dollar. We speak earnestly and plainly, because it is time to do so, and because it is an important matter.

Charlotte Democrat.

The United States and Japan.—War has broken out between Yankee Doodle and Japan. We were prepared for it, by a review which we read a few weeks ago, of a narrative of his sojourn at Joddo, written by the English Ambassador there, who said that the authorities had ordered all foreigners to quit the island, and had murdered many of them. The same writer says that the potentate who signed the treaty with Commodore Perry was put to death, and that the aristocracy, who much resemble the barons of the feudal system in the middle ages of Europe, both with respect to the independence of their power and their relations to the crown, had all determined that none of the treaties made with the powers of Christendom should be carried into effect. Of course France, England, and Russia, as well as Yankee Doodle, will be down upon the unfortunate Asiatics, and we shall see a repetition of the crimes which made India an Aceldama and deluged China with blood.

News from Japan to the 24th of July is received by way of San Francisco. Actual hostilities between the Japanese and the Treaty Powers had commenced. On the 15th of July an English ship, bound from Nargasadi to Kanagawa by an inland passage, was fired upon by Japanese forts and vessels, which had previously fired upon the American ship Pembroke. She was much injured, and had four men killed and six wounded. Subsequently the American steamer Wyoming visited the place to punish the Japanese for firing upon the Pembroke. She blew up one Japanese steamer and sunk another, and silenced nearly all the neighboring forts. She received twenty shots, and had five men killed and six wounded. The forts were afterwards attacked by two British war vessels, and after a bombardment, a detachment of British troops were landed, who destroyed the fortifications and an adjacent village. The Japanese showed very little fight.

DESSERTERS CAPTURED.—An organized band of deserters, numbering sixty or seventy, was captured in Franklin county, Va., a few days ago, by Capt. Ridgway, the Enrolling Officer of that county, and his guard, assisted by some citizens. Under the lead of an escaped convict, named Goodson, the deserters had commenced pillaging and robbing the people, breaking open houses and committing other depredations, preparing for winter, by laying in supplies of provisions and clothing. It is said that they had actually erected in the mountains a sort of fort in which they designed to defend themselves, if attacked, against all authority, civil or military. But their career has been brought to a close.

Richmond Whig.