

# Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter.

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## ORIGINAL.

### THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.\*

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By the term, Apostolic Benediction, the closing act of public worship is usually designated. The word apostolic applied to the benediction is not to be understood as describing a service that belonged only to the apostles. It has come into use as expressing an official act to be performed by any ordained minister.

I. We will inquire into the warrant for the use of the formula usually employed. That there should be some suitable form of closing the services of public worship is a natural suggestion. At the ending of a letter to a friend we usually express a wish for his welfare, and frequently a prayer to that effect. In this way nearly all the apostolic epistles end.

There was a formula of blessings prescribed by God in the Old Testament church, to be pronounced by the priests in dismissing public assemblies. It is contained in Numbers 6:22-27: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace: And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

On the established principle that there is no abridgement, but an extension of the privileges of the Christian church over the Jewish, it follows that the command to the priests officially to bless the people, comes with all the force of a divine obligation to the Christian ministry. And, as we will see as we proceed, the matter of the benediction in the two cases harmonize.

\* Lecture read in the course of Pastoral Theology in R. P. Seminary, January 20, 1888.

presented in the first statement, is a truth ; but if it does not, as its legitimate consequence, lead to a refusal to incorporate with a nation that refuses or neglects to do this, it is but a sentiment, not a practical doctrine. Our Lord tells us, Matt. 12:30, "He that is not with him is against him," a truth that applies to nations as well as to individuals. Nations that forget God shall be turned into *sheol*. *Rev. ver.* Ps. 9:17. The kingdoms that have not called on the name of God are the objects of his wrath. Ps. 79:6.

The fact that the United Presbyterian church has given no formal deliverance on this subject is some relief to its members in not applying the principles professed, in a consistent practice. But the Reformed Presbyterian church long ago clearly gave her judgment in judicial decision, holding that as the government is not, by its formal act, for Christ, it is against him. This being the case, she maintains that for Christians to incorporate with the government is to be partakere of its sin of refusing to submit to him, and to be exposed to his wrath.

In teaching in substance that a consistent application of truth professed, is not necessary to maintain the profession, the conference committed an ethical error, and in consenting to this belittling of the application of the principles so clearly stated in the second statement in the series adopted, the committee of the Reformed Presbyterian church made a damaging concession, that if not retracted may lead to the breaking down of our distinctive standing.

THOS. SPROULL.

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### SELMA MISSION.

It is profitable for the work and for the church that you hear from us frequently. The school has seldom been more crowded than at present. All the departments are full. Brother Dill's hands are full ; but he is equal to the task. Everything is moving on beautifully and harmoniously. The children in all the departments are required to learn Scripture verses, and these are recited at the regular devotional exercises on Thursday morning. The exercises of the Society of Inquiry are held every Friday. This meeting is designed to focalize the religious influences of the mission, and cause the undecided to decide for Christ. The exercises are varied from time to time to increase the interest. There is a fine class of young men and young women now in school. A large number of them are from the country. Most of these are also in the Sabbath school. Mrs. Dill has a grand class of young men, numbering nearly twenty. The hope of the church rests in these youth. Would that the mission had facilities for keeping these under its influence all the time.

The work at Pleasant Grove is doing nicely. A day school has recently been opened and has some twenty pupils. It is taught by one of the young ladies of the academic department. There is great need of more workers in this field ; and the prospects were never brighter, and the opportunities more favorable for occupying.

G. M. ELLIOTT.

*Selma, Feb. 11, 1888.*

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### KANSAS PRESBYTERY.

The Presbytery of Kansas held its late meeting at Blanchard, Iowa, October 11, 1887.

The distance travelled by many of the members was great, yet the attendance was large. Some of the members feel that the time is near when this large Presbytery should be divided. Will some wise man trace the line or lines of division ?

The principal business before the court was the ordination and installation of B. M. Sharp as pastor of Long Branch congregation. The trial pieces and the examination of the candidate were heartily sustained. The usual forms were duly observed. Prayer was made by the moderator, Rev. P. H. Wylie, hands were imposed by the ministerial members of the Presbytery, and the candidate was set apart to the office of the ministry, and installed pastor of Long Branch congregation. Brother Sharp enters upon his work in this encouraging field with much promise of success. Rev. J. H. Wylie was received upon certificate