

The Commoner.

Whatever may be one's opinion as to the importance that the word "God" appearing in the constitution, it would seem that if this country is good enough for this clergyman and his associates to live in, and its form of government is good enough for this clergyman and his associates under, they should be willing to assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

Responsibilities of citizenship are assumed by swearing loyalty to the constitution. This does not mean that men who take this oath approve of the omission from the constitution of all mention of the Creator. There may be, too, in other respects amendments and improvements which a man might suggest to the constitution, but the fact that that great article could be improved does not justify a man in refusing to declare his allegiance to his adopted country by swearing loyalty to the constitution of that country.

The charge that the constitution is an "immoral document" is an interesting one when read in the light of the constitution itself and the history of the amendments and revisions in that document. It is always advantageous to the American citizen to study the constitution of his country. Let us take a glance through this great state paper, and see if the charge that it is an "immoral document" can be supported.

In the first place, let it be remembered that the Declaration of Independence, the greatest of all state documents ever written in the history of the world, did recognize the existence of God, and the signers of this declaration solemnly declared their "firm reliance on the protection of divine providence." Human slavery existed at that time and long after the Declaration of Independence was signed, and yet the institution of slavery was wholly inconsistent with the sublime truths contained in the declaration.

Did men who, like Jefferson, hated slavery and as he said, in the presence of that institution, trembled when he remembered that God was just—did men like Jefferson refuse to append their signatures to that declaration because it was hypocritical in the presence of slavery and hence immoral? By no means. Jefferson and the men who believed as he did in regard to human slavery, understood that when they were framing the declaration, they were building for eternity and they believed that this declaration would be the guide and model by which all future constitutions and statutes would be shaped.

We have seen in our own time how the federal constitution has been remodeled in order to bring it more in keeping with the declaration. We have seen in our own time the institution of human slavery fall to the ground in the presence of Jefferson's "passionate chant of human freedom."

The preamble of this "immoral document" declares the purpose of its framers to be to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Is there anything immoral in that? On the contrary, does it not seek to carry out the purposes of a wise and just God, who has Himself recognized the necessity of providing law and order for frail humanity in order that justice among men may be established?

From the beginning to the end of this great constitution there is the evident purpose of its framers to protect the weak from the strong, to produce the greatest good to the greatest number, to see that every man living under that constitution is permitted to enjoy the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The provisions for representation in the law-making body were framed with the purpose of seeing that exact justice was done, and the rules for enactment of laws were shaped with the evident purpose that the interests of the many should be preserved, and that the selfish purposes of the few should be defeated.

Throughout, the greatest care was taken by the men of the colonial period, according to their

information at the time, to provide a well ordered government in which morality and justice would be maintained.

When the constitution was first adopted no bill of rights was included, but it was promised that a bill of rights would be incorporated, and the first ten amendments to our present constitution were in part the fulfillment of this pledge. In this bill of rights is guaranteed the very privilege which the men of the Reformed Presbyterian church have of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

Perfect religious freedom, freedom of speech and of the press, the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of any grievance that may exist, these are some of the guarantees in this "immoral document."

No soldier shall, as is the case in some countries, in time of peace be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war but in a manner to be prescribed by law. This is a provision in this "immoral document."

The people are guaranteed in this "immoral document" security in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. Provision is explicitly made in this "immoral document" for the protection of the life and liberty of the individual and for the guarantee of the safeguards essential to a fair and impartial trial of one charged with crime.

Excessive fine, cruel and unusual punishment are prohibited by this "immoral document;" and it is explicitly stated in this same "immoral document" that nothing contained therein shall be construed to deny or disparage any rights retained by the people. And in order to make it clearly understood that the power is with the people and that the men who administer government have only that authority which the people gave in the constitution, it is explicitly stated that the powers not delegated by the constitution or prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively or to the people.

Later this great document was amended so that the institution of slavery would be denied a place under the flag of this country, and states were denied the right of making or enforcing any law which would abridge the privileges of citizenship; or the making of any law that would deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; or to deny to any person the equal protection of the law.

And the last amendment to this "immoral document" was a declaration that the right of a citizen to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.

It may be true that there are important amendments yet to be made to this constitution. It is not true, however, that any man living under the protection of this constitution, has the moral right to brand it as an "immoral document." The constitution is an ordinance of civil government and while no mention of the Creator is made in that ordinance, the existence of God is recognized and men's obligations to Him are considered in the various forms and ceremonies by which our official bodies are conducted. The houses of congress are opened with prayer; the usual form of oath calls upon the Creator as a witness; presidents and governors in their messages pay tribute to the divine being; the chaplains in our legislatures, in our penal institutions, in our army and our navy all provide testimony that the government, based upon this constitution, is a government of Christian people.

Ex-Governor Taylor's Case.

Governor Durbin, of Indiana, has refused to honor a requisition made upon him by the Kentucky authorities for ex-Governor Taylor, who is now enjoying protection in the Hoosier state. Governor Durbin gives his reasons at length, but the reasons are all to enforce his statement that

Governor Taylor would not receive a fair and impartial trial in Kentucky. This is a serious charge to be made by the chief executive of one state against the courts of a sister state, and the weight of the objection is entirely destroyed by the fact that Governor Taylor is a prominent member of the republican party, and is being shielded from arrest by another prominent member of the same party. It will be recalled that Governor Goebel was shot down as the result of a political conspiracy, and it will also be recalled that many of the republican papers throughout the land failed to express any indignation or condemnation of the act. Governor Taylor escaped from Kentucky before arrest and has since been a fugitive from justice.

On June 13, 1900, Governor Mount, of Indiana, refused to honor a requisition for Taylor on substantially the same grounds as those given by Governor Durbin. Six days afterwards, on June 19, ex-Governor Taylor appeared at the republican national convention. The papers reported that Temporary Chairman Wolcott recognized "Governor Taylor of Kentucky," and addressing him, said: "Come to the platform, governor, they want to see you." Mr. Taylor accepted the invitation, and Chairman Wolcott advanced to meet him, and, according to the press reports, "the convention cheered."

This is the way that the republican national convention acted toward a man at that time charged with participation in the assassination of the chief executive of one of the states of the union. While the republicans are denouncing anarchy they ought not to forget that among the causes which lead up to the assassination of presidents is the heroizing of a man charged with the assassination of a governor. No one is able to form a correct opinion as to the guilt or innocence of Governor Taylor until the evidence is presented in court, but an indictment rendered by a grand jury raises a presumption that cannot be overthrown by the partisan opinion of a governor who has a political interest in the welfare of the man under accusation.

The above facts are given that the readers of The Commoner may see how political conditions affect the action of republican leaders. President McKinley was assassinated by an anarchist whose act had no political significance and could not be traced to anything said or done by any member of the opposite party, and yet republican papers were quick to try to make political capital out of the terrible deed, and some of them boldly charged the responsibility upon the democratic party. The Goebel assassination was purely a political act, participated in by republicans, and after an indictment was returned against the most prominent of these republicans, the chairman of a republican national convention invited him to the platform, republican delegates cheered his appearance, and two republican governors refused to surrender him for trial.

If a republican cannot be tried in a democratic state, will the republicans insist that a democrat could have a fair trial in a republican state? If the reasons presented by Governor Durbin are sound, then it is perfectly safe for a republican to kill any democratic executive and flee to a republican state, and if democratic governors act upon the same principle, it is safe for a democrat to kill a republican official and then flee to a democratic state. In other words, the position taken by Governor Durbin, if accepted as a precedent, invites a reign of lawlessness, and ought to alarm the friends of law and order, regardless of political affiliations.

Evading the Civil Service.

The civil service law in regard to the collection of tribute from federal employes is being very adroitly evaded by the republicans. A reader of The Commoner sends in a bit of literature that was received by all the employes of one of the larger postoffices. It is as pointed a demand for contri-