An Article On Sunday Legislation

Editor's Note:—The following article is taken from "Liberty, a Magazine of Religious Freedom." It was written by its editor, Charles S. Longacre, of Takoma Park, Washington. As far as we are able to learn to date, it is being backed by Seventh Day Adventists. In view of the present difference of opinion regarding methods for observance of the Sabbath, we pass this article on to our readers. One of our friends in Birmingham and "I have been told that the moving picture interests contribute to the support of this magazine called Liberty." Anyway, here's the article.)

WHY WE ARE OPPOSED TO SUNDAY LEGISLATION

By CHARLES S. LONGACRE

Our reason for opposing Sunday laws is that the Sunday rest day is a religious institution. We are opposed to compulsory Sunday observance laws for the same reason that we are opposed to the proposition that the civil magistrate should compel all people or any people to observe Saturday as the Sabbath under civil penalties. The civil government is ordained to enact civil laws which are designed to regulate man's proper relationship to his fellow men, but not man's relationship to his God, or his duties toward religion. Religious obligations are entirely outside the purview of human government.

We agree with Roger Williams that the civil magistrate by right has no authority to enforce any of the first four commandments of the decalogue, which regulate and prescribe exclusively a man's duties toward God. The civil government can only legislate upon the last six, on the second table, which relate to man's proper relationship to his neighbor or fellow man. Even the last six cannot be enforced by the civil magistrate as the commandments of God, because God's commandments are exceedingly broad and enter into the motives and intents of the heart.

Christianity operates in a distinct field of its own, and employs entirely different means and methods to advance its interests and tenets than does civil government. The church of Christ must follow Christ's teachings and methods. He never employed force. He never sought aid from the civil magistrate or Roman government to advance His kingdom in the earth. He never petitioned the civil government to legalize His doctrines or to aid His cause. He sought to write His precepts upon the hearts of men by the Spirit of the living God instead of writing them upon the statute books of the state with the pen of the legislator. He made Christianity inspirational rather than legalistic. He strongly reproved the legalists of His day for tarrying in the palace of Herod instead of seeking aid from God in the secret chamber of prayer. They were strong on legal exactions and short on works of mercy and love. Christ sought to establish His kingdom by winning His way into the hearts of men by the power of divine love.

The religious legalist of today who seeks to secure Sunday observance or religious observance of any day by the power of the civil law, is perverting the whole plan of God. The only power that God intended should ever dominate the human heart in matters of religious obligation, is the power of divine and human love. The Sunday law advocate who seeks to force the conscience under civil penalties, is seeking power and authority from beneath rather than divine grace from above. It is a deplorable thing to see so many churchmen and religious reformers sending their petitions for aid to our legislative tribunals rather than to the throne of God in heaven. Legalism and magisterial authority seem to be the goal and ambition of the religio-political preachers who believe that they can usher the kingdom of God into this world through the gateway of politics by reform legislation.

We have absolutely no objection to the Sunday observers' keeping Sunday, nor to preachers telling people from their pulpits that they ought to observe Sunday instead of Saturday as the Sabbath or Lord's day. What we do object to is this appeal to the civil authority to force us and others to observe Sunday when our conscience tells us differently.

The Sunday observer has no more right to compel us to observe Sunday than we have to compel the Sunday observer to observe Saturday under civil penalties. Let each of us respect the others rights, and let us all preach Sabbath observance from our pulpits with all the power that Heaven grants us, but let none of us seek to crush the dissenter by recourse to force, by an appeal to legal precedents or court decisions, by resorting to prejudice and mud slinging, or by an appeal that we are right and should prevail because we are the most popular church and constitute the overwhelming majority. Legal precedents and majorities never yet have settled religious opinions and differences. In matters of religious obligation the conscience is supreme, and majorities and legal precedents do not control.

By the authority of civil law the Puritans compelled everybody to go to their churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut and to support their clergy by the payment of church rates levied by civil authority. The fact that a religious obligation is enacted into a civil law and enforced by the civil magistrate, does not make such a statute civil. That is mixing religion and politics, and such laws are religio-political laws. It is just this mixing of religion and politics that has been the cause of all the religious persecutions of the past.

The church has no business in politics. She has no business in legislative halls, seeking enactments in order to advance her own cause and punish dissenters. Whenever the church enters the civil realm and the state invades the religious domain, persecution of dissenters in inevitable. The doctrine that the state has a right, and has often exercised it, to enact religious obligations into civil statutes, has, in the past, led to the justification of the most cruel persecutions of dissenters which this world ever saw.

It is for this reason that we are opposed, not only to compulsory Sunday observance enforced by civil magistrates, but to every effort to enforce religious obligations by civil penalties. When it comes to a question as to whom we ought to obey when civil authorities come in conflict with divine obligations, we answer with Peter: "We must obey God rather than men."

FINED $39.25 FOR USING PROFANE "LANGUIDGE"

Walter Bartel, Windemere street, Detroit, who was arrested February 19, in front of the First State Bank on a charge of using abusive language in the presence of women and children, pleaded not guilty when arraigned in Justice Buck's court, Mar. 1, and asked for a jury trial which took place March 5. Frank L. Doty appeared for the village, while Mr. Bartel had no lawyer.

According to officer Meyers, Bartel was loading angle irons on a truck parked straight out from the curb and its position obstructed traffic turning west on Maple avenue. When he told the driver to move the truck parallel to the curb he swore at him and refused to do so until he had finished loading. Soon officer Green came up and repeated the order to move which he said was answered by oaths and refusal. Whereupon he arrested Bartel who was still said to be swearing even after they had reached the police station.

Harry Starr, Walter Stanley, Mrs. Lawler, and Lloyd McQuarter were in various of the village offices at the time and they all testified on the witness stand that they had other heard Bartel talking in an unnecessarily loud voice or swearing.

Bartel told a different story. He said that both officers had been very curt when telling him to move. He replied that he had only three or four more irons to load and would move as soon as it was done but Green, he said, told him that if he didn't keep still he'd slap his face. (Though Bartel's quotation was couched in much stronger language.) McCall, a negro helping Bartel, was the only witness for the defendent. He was very cautious in his testimony and wasn't very clear about what he had heard and seen on February 19. He saw no woman and children nearby and heard very little "cussing". He finally admitted, however, that Bartel "got talking big talk like a man will do" and that he had heard Green say "he'd slap him on the nose or mouth," or something like that. Green denied the face slapping charge.

Mrs. John H. Mariotte, W. G. Olsen, E. A. O'Neal, Russell McBride, Leon Mix, and W. J. Thornton composed the jury which brought in a verdict of "guilty." He was fined $39.25.

ANNEXATION ELECTION NOTICE

To the qualified electors o fthe Township of Bloomfield, and the Village of Birmingham, County of Oakland, State of Michigan:

Notice is hereby given that on the Spring Election to be held on Monday, April 5, 1926, there will be submitted to the electors of said Township and Village the question of annexation of certain territory to the Village of Birmingham.

To the Board of Supervisors of the County of Oakland, State of Michigan.

Gentlemen:

We, the undersigned, pursuant to the provisions of Act No. 278 of the Public Acts of 1909 entitled "An Act to provide for the incorporation of the Villages and for revising and amending their charters and the Acts amendatory thereof, respectfully represent as follows:

1. Each and all the signers of this petition are qualified electors and reside within the Village of Birmingham or Township of Bloomfield, which said Village of Birmingham and Township of Bloomfield are to be affected by the change proposed in this petition.

2. Your petitioners severally reside within said Village of said Township at the address set opposite their respective names.

3. Not less than 75 of the undersigned petitioners reside in the Village of Birmingham, and not less than 25 of the undersigned petitioners reside in the Township of Bloomfield.

4. According to the last preceding United States Census the population of the Village of Birmingham was 3694; the population of the Township of Bloomfield was 4900. The undersigned petitioners numbering collectively 80 constitute more than one per centum of the population of said territory to be affected by your affirmative action on this petition.

5. Your petitioners pray that all of that part of Bloomfield Township, Oakland County, Michigan, included in the following description, viz:

Beginning at the ¼ Corner of the N. line of Sec. 35, T. 2 N., R. 10 E., Bloomfield Twp., Oakland County, Mich., thence S. 88° 54' E. along the N. line of said section 356.0 ft. to a point; thence S. 2° 15' E. 793.45 ft. to a point; thence N. 88° 54' W. 4644 ft. to a point; thence N. 2° 15' W. 793.45 ft. to a point on the N. line of said section 35; thence S. 88° 54' E. 1139.4 ft. to the place of beginning. Containing 8.5 acres more or less, be detached from the Township of Bloomfield and annexed to the Village of Birmingham.

December 1, 1925.

I, Hazel E. Lawler, Clerk of Village of Birmingham, do hereby certify that I have examined the list of signers on the attached petition for the Village, and find that 59 signers are registered voters of the Village of Birmingham.

(Signed) HAZEL E. LAWLER,
Village Clerk.

December 1, 1925.

I, James V. Bayley, Clerk for the Township off Bloomfield, do hereby certify that I have examined the list of signers on the attached petition for the Township, and find that 25 signers are registered voters of the Township of Bloomfield.

(Signed) JAMES V. BAYLEY,
Township Clerk.

State of Michigan, }
County of Oakland. }

Theo. Mercier, being duly sworn, deposes and says, as follows: that he resides in the Township of Bloomfield, Oakland County, and State of Michigan, and is one of the petitioners in the attached petition directed to the Board of Supervisors of the County of Oakland, State, of Michigan, and which said petition pray's that the territory described therein being part of the Township of Bloomfield, Oakland County, Michigan, be added to the Village of Birmingham, That said petition accurately describes the proposed boundaries of the territory to be annexed to the Village of Birmingham; that said petition is signed by more than 100 petitioners; that each and all of said petitioners are qualified electors residing within the Village of Birmingham and Township of Bloomfield, which said Village of Birmingham and Township of Bloomfield are to be affected thereby and collectively said petitioners constitute a number not less than one per centum of the population of the territory affected thereby according to the last preceding United States census; that the total number of said petitioners is not less than One Hundred (100) and not less than Seventy-five (75) of the signatures to the said petition were obtained from the Village of Birmingham, and not less than Twenty-five (25) of the signatures to said petition were obtained from the Township of Bloomfield.

Deponent further states that all of the statements contained in said petition are true to the best of the deponent's knowledge and belief.

And further deponent says not.

(Signed) THEO. MERCIER.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 1st day of December, A. D. 1925.

ROBERT Y. MOORE,
Notary Public.

My commission expires Aug. 23, 1927.
State of Michigan,
County of Oakland.
ss.

I, Burton P. Daugherty, Clerk of the Circuit Court for the County of Oakland, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the petition of the residents of the Township of Bloomfield and the Village of Birmingham, for the annexation of the territory to the Village of Birmingham from the Township of Bloomfield, as filed with the County Clerk, also of the recommendation and resolution of the Board of Supervisors as passed at their special session held on February 19, 1926, and now on file in my office; that I have compared the same with the original and is a true transcript therefrom and of the whole thereof.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said court at Pontiac, Michigan, this 24th day of February, A. D. 1926.

BURTON P. DAUGHERTY,
(Seal.) Clerk of Circuit Court.

The polls of said election will be open at 8:00 o'clock a. m., and will remain open until 9:00 o'clock p. m., (Eastern Standard Time), on said day of election, unless the Board of Election Inspectors shall, in their discretion, adjourn the polls at 12 o'clock noon, for one hour.

(Signed) JAMES V. BAYLEY,
Bloomfield Township Clerk.
Dated February 23, 1926. 45-46-47-48

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Middlesex In Bloomfield Hills

Prices to Advance
April 1st

Desirable Bloomfield Hills Property has advanced in value by leaps and bounds since Estates in Middlesex were originally priced.

Today these wonderful two to five acre tracts are selling at lower prices per acre than large farms farther from the City, despite the splendid development work which has already been done to enhance Middlesex values. Less desirable property in the immediate vicinity is selling for 50 to 100 percent more—consequently Middlesex prices must advance.

But there is still an opportunity to profit from the exceptionally low opening prices at which this property was offered—but only until April 1st.

Middlesex is in the heart of the East Bloomfield development at the corner of Adams (formerly Dodge) and Square Lake roads. It is quickly reached by wider Woodward to the center of Birmingham, east on Maple avenue to Adams road, then north to the property. With the completion of Woodward avenue it will not be necessary to enter the village as Adams road branches off of Woodward just south of Birmingham.

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As a result Dodge Brothers, Inc. were enabled on January 7th, to announce a schedule of prices that has revolutionized all previous standards of motor car value.

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Stylish new bodies finished in rich and distinctive colors.

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