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The Pledge

History & Problems

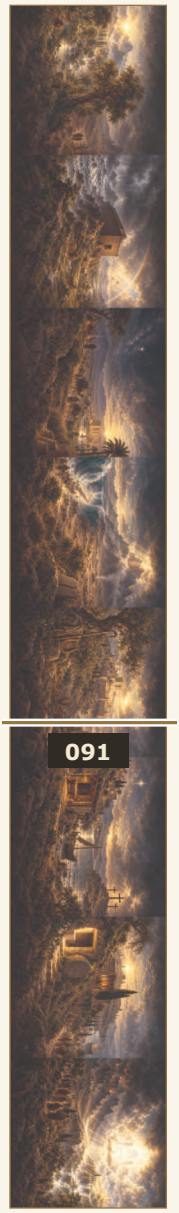
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



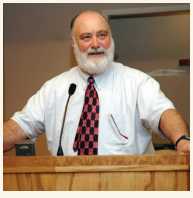
Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21

Civic pledges join questions of history, allegiance, and conscience. John Weaver discusses the origins and problems of the pledge, asking how public commitments should be examined by Scripture. These messages invite readers to distinguish the language of loyalty from the obligations that such language may imply.

“There is also a difference between allegiance to one's country and allegiance to one's government.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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The Pledge-History & Problems

Old Testament Studies

John Weaver

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The Pledge-History & Problems

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Contents

Chapter 1: The Pledge-History & Problems-1 5

The Pledge: History and Problems 5

Introduction and Scripture Reading 5

The Pledge and Patriotism 6

Indifferent Matters and Serious Questions 8

The Author of the Pledge 9

The Author: Francis Bellamy 9

Acknowledgment of God and Prayer or Scripture 12

The Aim 13

The Aim: National Socialism 14

National vs. Federal Government 16

State Education and Idolatry 17

Conclusion and Prayer 20

Chapter 2: The Pledge-History & Problems-2 21

Review of Previous Week 21

The Pledge of Allegiance Analyzed 23

Historical Context of Loyalty Oaths 23

Analysis of 'I Pledge' 24

Analysis of 'Allegiance' 26

Allegiance to Country vs. Government 28

Analysis of 'the Flag' 29

Analysis of 'the Republic' 31

Analysis of 'One Nation' and 'Under God' 34

Analysis of 'Indivisible' 37

Analysis of 'Liberty and Justice for All' 39

Applications and Conclusion 41

Topical Index 45

Scripture Index 47

Study Guide Link 49

CHAPTER 1

The Pledge-History & Problems-1

The Pledge: History and Problems

Introduction and Scripture Reading

This message is part one on the Pledge of Allegiance, its history, and its problems. Originally, I wanted to bring the entire message in one, but there is so much material that it will require at least two messages. Please listen to the entire message. Notice Exodus chapter 20, beginning with verse one: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." You are going to see the relevance of this Scripture when I close and end this message. But note verse 3: God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Everyone knows the Pledge of Allegiance, and most of us have recited that pledge since we were children. In fact, the pledge has

become part and parcel of our lives. The problem, or one of the problems, with the pledge is this: We have repeated it so often without thinking of its implications, its history, its origin, its aim, or anything. Most people repeat the pledge the way they sing a lot of the hymns of the faith. They just say the words. They never ever think about what they are saying, nor the implications of what they are saying.

The Pledge and Patriotism

In fact, we have equated the Pledge of Allegiance with patriotism and with being good Americans. Usually speaking, our feathers are very quickly ruffled by anyone who refuses to say the Pledge, or at least stand reverently while the Pledge is being said. The mindset of most Americans is simply this: Those who would not recite the Pledge of Allegiance or stand for the Pledge of Allegiance are, at the least, unpatriotic, and, at the most, they have to be either Marxist or Communist.

I hesitated in tackling this subject simply because it is indeed so controversial. As I deal with the Pledge of Allegiance, I am not simply trying to stir up trouble. I have enough of that already, and I am not trying to enter into a debate with anyone. I do not have time to enter into debates. However, I am trying to answer questions and present the truth in a reasonable, rational, and biblical framework. Before you jump down my throat, please listen to the second message as well.

Many of us, and many people, have equated the pledge with patriotism. The attitude of the average American is that anyone who will not recite that pledge or stand while it is being said is, at the least, unpatriotic, and perhaps, at the most, a Marxist or Communist.

It is absolutely impossible to equate the Pledge with patriotism. If you make the Pledge of Allegiance your standard for patriotism, how were men patriotic before the Pledge was ever written? Would you consider George Washington a patriot? Would you consider Thomas Jefferson a patriot? Would you consider Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson patriots? Would you consider Charles Lindbergh and

Congressman Louis McFadden, who warned us concerning the Federal Reserve System, patriots? The answer is yes.

Yet none of those men, and a whole multitude of others, ever recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Many could not have recited it, because the pledge was not even written until August of 1892, and it really did not become fully recognized in America until about 1923. The Pledge of Allegiance is basically of recent origin.

Francis Bellamy wrote the pledge. Its original words were these: "I pledge allegiance to my flag, and the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." The little word "to" was added in October of 1892: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the republic for which it stands."

It was on Columbus Day of October 1882 that the Pledge of Allegiance and an official program were presented, where all the public school children stood and gave the Pledge of Allegiance. On June 14, 1923, at the first National Flag Conference held in Washington, D.C., under the leadership of the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, the words of the pledge were changed. Words were added on the ground that some foreign-born children and adults, when giving the pledge, might have the flag of their native land in mind. Thus the words became: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." In 1924, the words "of America" were added: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

There have been legal battles concerning the Pledge of Allegiance for a multitude of years. In its 1940 Gobitis decision, the Supreme Court ruled that public schools could compel students to recite the pledge. The United States Congress recognized the pledge officially in 1942. In 1943, the Gobitis decision was overruled in the Barnett decision. The Supreme Court reversed itself and said that schoolchildren could not be forced to recite the pledge as part of their school-day routine.

Today, when you come to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the wording is set in the U.S. Code at 4 U.S. Code 4. On Flag Day in 1954, under the urging and at the desire of President Dwight David Eisenhower and some other organizations, the words "under God" were added. When you recite the words "under God," understand that those words were not added until 1954.

Listen carefully. I said earlier that you cannot make the Pledge of Allegiance your standard for patriotism. If you do, may I ask you, which version is your standard? The first one, the second one, the third one, or the fourth one? It has been revised four times now.

Another problem associated with the Pledge of Allegiance is that a few well-intentioned individuals wish to demonstrate their patriotism by legislating that the pledge must be said in every public and private organization known to man. If the pledge is not recited, they become upset and question the patriotism of those who do not wish to have it recited.

Let me make a statement that I want everyone to remember. It is not my intent to attack anyone in this message, nor am I questioning anyone's patriotism who either recites or does not recite the pledge. My intention is to lay out the facts so that we may be knowledgeable and have the facts to decide for ourselves whether or not, as Christians and as Southerners, we should be reciting the Pledge. Understand also from the outset that this subject would fall into the category of what the Apostle Paul classified as indifferent.

Indifferent Matters and Serious Questions

Let me explain what I mean by that. When something is indifferent, it does not affect our salvation. No one is more saved for reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and no one is less saved for not reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. In that sense of the word, it is indifferent. Later, if we understand the intent and understand idolatry, we may have a different view of some things. I am simply saying that, basically, no one is more saved for reciting it, and no one is less saved for not reciting it.

However, as one author pointed out, while the current U.S. government is not tolerant of any expression of faith,

acknowledgement of, or allegiance to God on the part of teachers and students, it nevertheless expects students to repeat a secular prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, invoking the name of God—an obvious conflict they are willing to use for their own purely secular purposes. Tim Manning, Sr., in his book on the Pledge, has two very serious and solemn questions.

Considering the religious convictions and strong sense of moral commitment still held by many Americans, the question is being raised as to why and by what authority does the now secular state require its subjects, particularly children, to daily repeat for years an oath of unquestioning fidelity to a political entity that emphatically rejects the belief that God's laws are sovereign and above all human laws? That is a good question.

The second question is closely related to the first: Is the United States government so designed and constituted that we should pledge an oath of allegiance to it? Does the federal government that possesses, or should possess, clearly defined, enumerated, and delegated powers and responsibilities assigned to it by the states, possess sovereignty in order to require a pledge of allegiance from the citizens of its constituent states? That is equally a good question.

The Author of the Pledge

To answer these questions, and hopefully many more, consider several things with me. I will give you an outline, though we will probably cover only two points today: the author of the pledge, the aim of the pledge, the analysis of the pledge, and finally the applications that will be brought forward. Let us begin with the author. If I asked who wrote the Pledge of Allegiance, most of you could probably tell me Francis Bellamy. But that is probably about all you could tell me.

The Author: Francis Bellamy

Most of you know that I love books, and I have a few of them. When someone recommends a book to me, usually the first question I ask is, Who is the author? If I know the author, I can probably tell you whether the book is good or bad, or at least what slant or perspective you will find in it, because I know the author. When I ask who the

author of the Pledge of Allegiance is and you tell me Francis Bellamy, what do you know about Francis Bellamy?

A great deal of information about Francis Bellamy can be found simply on the internet. However, there are three books I want to recommend. The first is a little pamphlet written by Pastor Charles Jennings, To Pledge or Not to Pledge, which is an excellent little booklet. The second is not yet printed, but Tim Manning graciously gave me a copy. His book is entitled The Pledge of Allegiance: Is It Patriotic? It is an excellent and wonderful book. The third was written by John Bayer and is entitled The Pledge of Allegiance: A Centennial History from 1892 to 1992. I will quote a great deal from it and have adapted much of this material from it. These three books are primary sources and are full of wonderful information.

Francis Bellamy was born in Mount Morris, New York, into the home of his father, David Bellamy, a Baptist minister. As a child, he attended a public school in Rome, New York. In 1872, he entered the University of Rochester as a ministerial student. At his graduation commencement, he spoke on the subject of The Poetry of Human Brotherhood.

In his speech, he applauded the concepts of the French Revolution. He said those concepts awakened a man to a realization of his personal dignity and God-given rights. Soon he was openly advocating the French Revolutionary slogan, "liberty, equality, and fraternity."

In 1876, Bellamy enrolled in Rochester Theological Seminary. Upon his graduation in 1880, he began his public ministry in the Baptist Church in Middle Falls, New York, and soon became involved with the National Prohibition Party. In 1885, he moved to the Dearborn Street Baptist Church and changed its name to Bethany Baptist Church. There he began to expound his ideas on socialism.

He worked with the poor of the city and brought a sermon entitled, "Jesus the Socialist." He then preached a whole series of sermons on the socialism of the primitive church. Francis Bellamy had cousins, one of whom was Edward, a best-selling author. Two of Edward's books were entitled "Looking Backward" and "Equality."

Edward Bellamy was a leader in the socialistic movement of that day. Both books advocated a socialistic utopian state, with political, social, and economic equality for all, operated by national government. Francis Bellamy became vice president of the Christian Society of Socialists, an auxiliary of his cousin's nationalism movement. In 1891, he was forced to resign from his Boston church because conservative businessmen viewed his work and sermons as increasingly socialistic and unbiblical.

Do they have a right to complain? The answer is unequivocally yes. Let me spell it out to you: the Word of God does not teach socialism. If you know enough about the French Revolution, you know that it was humanistic to the bone. It did everything it could to outlaw God, His Word, His worship, and any recognition of Him. They even elevated a prostitute on the altar and worshipped her.

Bellamy was a socialist to the core, and Francis Bellamy did not get his socialism from the Word of God. Some of you may understand the word fascism, but what do I mean by socialism? Socialism is usually defined as government ownership and control of the means of production—land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship. In other words, the government owns everything. Fascism: the government owns everything, controls everything, and does everything for the benefit of all. Many understand that part of socialism is the redistribution of wealth.

That is what the income tax is all about: taking from some and giving to others. It is a means of socialism.

Bellamy was not only a socialist himself; he also organized a society for Christian socialists. That society had a declaration of principles. Bellamy said that economic rights and powers were gifts of God—not for the receiver's use only, but for the benefit of all. We would say that everything we have is a gift from God, but he did not stop there. He said that all social, political, and industrial relations should be based on the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, in the spirit and teachings of Jesus. Capitalism, he said, was not based upon Christian love, but on a selfish individualism.

Another name for Francis Bellamy's socialism was nationalism, or National Socialist. Bellamy, his cousins, and his associates taught

National Socialism thirty years before Hitler. In fact, the original pledge included the Nazi salute. The official program for the National Columbus Public School celebration of October 21, 1892, was drawn up by Francis Bellamy himself. It called for the reading of the president's proclamation by the master of ceremonies, the raising of the flag by veterans, and a salute to the flag by the pupils. The program instructed: "At a signal from the principal, the students in ordered ranks, hands to the side, face the flag. Another order is given. Every pupil gives the flag the military salute, the right hand lifted palm downward to align with his forehead close to it. Standing thus, all repeat together slowly, 'I pledge allegiance to my flag.'"

Acknowledgment of God and Prayer or Scripture

"And to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." At the words, "To my flag," the right hand was extended gracefully, palm upward toward the flag, and remained in that gesture until the end of the affirmation, whereupon all hands immediately dropped to the side. Then, still standing as the instrument struck a chord, all would sing, "America, my country, 'tis of thee."

So the original recitation of the pledge began like this. Only when you said, "my flag," did you turn the palm upward.

Daniel Ford was a friend of Francis Bellamy. In fact, he was a member of Bethany Baptist Church and a close friend and supporter of Bellamy. He agreed with the socialistic ideas. After Bellamy was basically forced to resign his church, Daniel Ford offered him a position on the staff of his magazine, entitled The Youth's Companion.

The Youth's Companion was a national magazine and quite successful. After Daniel Ford's death, two million dollars of his fortune went to the Baptist Social Union of Boston, which built Ford Hall, a meeting place for the Ford Hall Forum. This was two million dollars in 1920 money, not two million in today's money—millions much more than two today. The hall was built for open discussion of controversial social, economic, political, and religious issues. In 1928, a conservative Baptist group, along with the Daughters of the

American Revolution, charged the forum with promoting anti-Christian, un-American, socialistic, and communistic ideas.

The forum, therefore, was announced by the Boston Baptist Social Union. Let me explain how serious a socialist Francis Bellamy really was. He agreed with his cousin Edward's book, "Looking Backward." This book is about a man who goes to sleep in 1887 and awakens in the year 2000. When he wakes, he finds that the United States has become one giant socialistic monopoly. He wasn't too far off, was he?

The document openly portrays men as military draftees from the ages of 21 until 45 in the United States Industrial Army—not the military army, but the industrial army. In other words, when you reach 21, you enter the service of the state; when you reach 45, you exit the service of the state. Bellamy's glorification of the military includes government control of all jobs.

Who determines what you do? Who determines where you work? The government. Everyone is issued ration cards, used to draw goods from government storehouses. Everyone is permitted only the same amount in value annually. The entire school system is a governmental school system, integral to the development of the industrial army and the entire socialistic monopolistic system. The point I'm trying to make is this.

The Aim

These men were very serious socialists. Edward Bellamy's book, "Looking Backward," was such a success that it inspired nationalistic movements and nationalist clubs, or Bellamy clubs, throughout the country. Their members wanted the federal government to nationalize the American economy. They saw governmental schools as a means of promoting and acquiring national socialism. They were not far off there either. Bellamy and his cousins were totalitarian socialists, and the ideas that inspired the pledge have caused mass atrocities worldwide. I did not say the pledge caused mass atrocities worldwide. I said the socialistic ideas that inspired the pledge have caused mass atrocities worldwide. Many problems that exist in our own country today are the fruits of socialism.

Who was Francis Bellamy? He was an ousted, defrocked Baptist preacher, a socialist, a Freemason, and one who embraced Abraham Lincoln's philosophy of the centralization of power. He wanted a strong, central, nationalistic government that would control everything and run everything. So there is the author.

The Aim: National Socialism

Secondly, I want to talk about the aim. When you think about who Francis Bellamy was and what he believed, you should ask yourself: What were his intentions? What did he intend by writing the pledge? What did he mean? What do those words mean that we recite all the time? Francis Bellamy was asked to write the pledge, and he eagerly accepted. What I am going to share now are Bellamy's own words concerning the thoughts that entered his mind in August of 1892, when he wrote the pledge. I am quoting his words; these are not mine.

He said, "It began as an intensive communing with salient points of our national history, from the Declaration of Independence onwards, with the makings of the Constitution, with the meaning of the Civil War, with the aspiration of the people." Now, end quote. Let me ask a question. He said it began with an intensive communion with the salient points on our national history, with the Declaration of Independence, with the makings of the Constitution, with the meaning of the Civil War. Here's my question. Whose meaning of the Civil War?

I hope everyone understands that every individual speaks from his own framework and from his own perspective. Your own framework and your own perspective is always influenced by your theology or your lack thereof, or your culture or your lack thereof. So he said, when I began to write the pledge, I began to think of the salient points of our history, the Declaration, the Constitution, the meaning of the Civil War.

Now, Bellamy continues, and I'm quoting. Listen to what he says. "The true reasons for allegiance to the flag is the republic for which it stands. And what does that vast thing, the republic, mean? It is the concise political word for the nation, the one nation which the Civil War was fought to prove. To make that One Nation idea clear, we

must specify that it is indivisible, as Webster and Lincoln used to repeat in their great speeches, and its future," and then a question mark. Now, before I go further, listen to what he said. The true reason for the allegiance of the flag is the republic for which it stands, and what does that vast thing, the republic, mean? Now, I'm going to explain this when I get to the analysis, but listen carefully. It is the concise political word for the nation, one nation which the Civil War was fought to prove. He says to make that one nation idea clear, we must specify that it is indivisible as Webster and Lincoln used to repeat in their great speeches.

I do not know whether you have grasped the meaning of what he has just said, but I am going to explain it, particularly what he means by “the one nation.”

Tim Manning’s phrase, “and its future,” is answered in the next paragraph. I am quoting Tim Manning again, but listen to what he says. Bellamy saw that, as a result of the Civil War, the United States had taken a giant step toward becoming the socialistic utopia—a utopian society born of the French Revolution that he dreamed of creating in the United States. Bellamy stated that the purpose of the Pledge of Allegiance was to fulfill his and his cousin’s lifelong goal of making their socialism fantasy a reality. The true reason for allegiance to the flag was to indoctrinate American schoolchildren into what our Founding Fathers would have considered totalitarian socialism.

Why did Francis Bellamy write the pledge? The answer is to promote his idea of National Socialism. In simple terms, if Bellamy’s idea of National Socialism is correct, then states’ rights are wrong. States’ independence and state sovereignty are meaningless. In other words, what mattered to Bellamy and to his socialistic cousins and friends was the nation.

The many had to be sacrificed for the one. There is a historical battle between the philosophies of nominalism and realism; those philosophies have always been at each other's throat. One teaches that the many are more important than the one, while the other teaches that the one is more important than the many. In National Socialism, the one is more important than the many. Thus, individuals or states must be sacrificed for the nation and for unity.

According to Abraham Lincoln and those who followed the philosophy of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, the nation preceded the states: the nation existed before the states. I do not know how you can get that from history and truth, but according to their philosophy, the nation existed first. There is a debate entitled "The Great Debate" between Peter Marshall and Steve Wilkins. It is wonderful; you need to watch it. Peter Marshall's position is that the nation preceded the states and, therefore, is more important. There is a difference between federalism and nationalism. When we think of nationalism, we tend to think that we are for our nation.

Let us be honest. If you have two boxers, one from Russia and one from the United States of America, automatically we are pulling for the American. Why? We are Americans. When we think of the word nationalism, we understand it to mean being for our nation. But words have meanings, and words do not always mean what we think they mean. The meanings of words change. If you want to understand something someone said 200 years ago, you had better know what those words meant 200 years ago. There is a difference between nationalism and federalism.

National vs. Federal Government

Our founding fathers did not create a national government, but rather a federal government. There is a huge difference. This is from Bouvier's Law Dictionary, 8th edition, and it gives the legal distinction: "National government, a government of a single state or nation, united as a community by what is termed the social compact, and possessing complete and perfect supremacy over persons and things so far as they can be made the lawful objects of civil government." A national government is one that possesses complete and perfect supremacy over persons and things so far as they can be made the lawful objects of civil government.

You could put down totalitarianism, tyranny, or dictatorship. Here is what Bouvier says concerning a federal government: “A federal government is distinguished from a national government by its being the government of a community of independent and sovereign states united by compact.” What did the sovereign, independent, and free thirteen states do in 1787? They came

together by compact, created the federal government, and gave it certain limited, defined powers. The rest they kept to themselves; they reserved it to themselves. Our Founding Fathers did not create a national government; they created a federal government. But Bellamy and his cousins and associates wanted a national government.

Bellamy wrote an address entitled “The Meaning of Four Centuries.” As a strong proponent of public education, he stated: “We assemble here that we too may exalt the free school that embodies the American principle of universal enlightenment and equality, the most characteristic product of our four centuries of American life.”

State Education and Idolatry

“One institution more than any other has wrought out the achievements of the past and is today the most trusted for the future. Our fathers, in their wisdom, knew that the foundation of liberty, fraternity, and equality must be universal education. The free school,” put government school there, public school, “the free school, therefore, was conceived as the cornerstone of our republic. Washington and Jefferson recognized that the education of citizens is not the prerogative of the church or of other private interests.” Put parents there. “That while religious training belongs to the church and while technical and higher culture may be given by private institutions, the training of citizens in the common knowledge and in the common duties of citizenship belongs irrevocably to the state.”

Did you hear the slogan of the French Revolution—liberty, fraternity, and equality? What did he say was the primary institution to teach that? The free school, the government school, the public school. Then he invokes Washington and Jefferson and takes them out of context. He says they recognized that the education of citizens is not the prerogative of the church or of other private interests. Who else would have a private interest in the education of children? Their parents. So what is he saying? The church has nothing to do with this, and parents have nothing to do with this. The obligation to train children, he says, belongs irrevocably to the state.

Remember that liberty, fraternity, and equality was the slogan of the French Revolution. Under this slogan, French revolutionaries believed that mass killing by the state was always justified because it was done for the grand purpose of achieving equality.

How many millions of people were executed in France under the guise of liberty, fraternity, and equality? Under that slogan, millions have been mass murdered for the purpose of achieving equality. It was the Republic, the nation, that was important; the people were expendable. Bellamy's philosophy was that our children should be indoctrinated by the state in order to ensure that they would be good little statists.

He envisioned a national government, not a federal one, with total and complete control. Tim Manning said, "The purpose of the war being called for by President Lincoln was to revolutionize the United States government, changing it from a constitutional republic into a plutocratic, socialistic nation."

"The Pledge of Allegiance is the representative embodiment of the heart of the Deep North's uncivil rebellion during the 1860s. All who did not support the pledge, back when it was written, were passionately denounced in newspapers as unpatriotic, un-American, and traitorous. Those disagreeing with governmental foreign policy today, or with the use of the United States military, are still labeled and libeled this way by the news media."

What was it that President Bush said concerning the war in Iraq? "If you're not for us, then you're against us." Manning goes on: "The pledge also was born out of 19th century concepts of nationalistic socialism and atheism centered in the New England states." It seems to me that other problems arose out of the New England states, but that is where he said it was centered.

"Today, the government and its minions in the media continue to deny that the United States are now or have ever been a confederated republic and refuse to recognize its distinctively Christian origin, character, and foundation. They boast that the federal government never made a distinction between Christianity and other religious faiths or lack of faith, and force individual states to do the same. Even a cursory study of our republic's founding will

put to rest the misconception that the United States were never Christian republics and intended to remain so."

The central focus of Bellamy in writing the Pledge of Allegiance was to elevate the state and create a universal vow of allegiance to the state's authority. Bellamy said the idea of the pledge came from the loyalty oaths imposed upon Southerners during Lincoln's war to prevent Southern independence, and during the social and physical deconstruction of Southern life and culture. During the war and after the war, in the time commonly known as the Reconstruction Era, many adult Southerners were given the option of taking the loyalty oath or being shot. This, with the strength of Christianity in the South, explains why many Southerners are still sensitive on this subject.

The ideas that inspired the pledge are the same ideas that led to the socialist and communist mass atrocities worldwide during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They are not, however, the principles that inspired the founding fathers of this country and its Constitution.

We have forgotten that government can become a god, just like any false idol or statue. When you ascribe power, authority, or sovereignty to government over and above and beyond that which God gave it, you have engaged in idolatry. The founding fathers of the United States and the Confederate States of America publicly and repeatedly acknowledged the supremacy of biblical law. They said that government was to be in subjection to the law of God.

What is the attitude of the modern-day American? Government can do whatever it wants to do. The average American says, “You can't fight city hall.” What are they saying? Government is God. Government is sovereign. Because of that attitude, our government has given us aborticide, infanticide, euthanasia, and genocide. It promotes, protects, and funds sodomy, theft, wickedness, and many and multitudinous legal ways.

Consider the recent ruling of eminent domain. What was the idea of the apostles when they were confronted by their leaders and asked, “Did we not straightly command you that you should not preach anymore in his name?” Peter and the other apostles said, “We

ought to obey God rather than man." What were they saying? Government is not God. God is God. We will obey government as long as it is in line with the law of God. But when we have to choose between government and God, we will take God because He is the true sovereign.

Conclusion and Prayer

Lord willing, next week, I'm going to show you an analysis of the pledge, what we're saying, and what is meant by those words.

Our Father, we ask you in the name of Jesus Christ to help us, teach us, give us wisdom, give us insight, help us to learn, help us to be knowledgeable, and help us to apply truth. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Pledge-History & Problems-2

Review of Previous Week

Today is the second part on the Pledge of Allegiance. I simply entitle it, “The Pledge, Its History and Its Problems.” We begin by reading Exodus 20, verses 1 through 3: “And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God who hath brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Certainly, we are going to understand one application of verse 3 before we close today.

Let me review a few minutes of what I covered last Sunday. I said in the introduction that, usually speaking, since most people have grown up with the pledge, our feathers are very easily and quickly ruffled when someone will not recite the pledge or at least would not stand reverently while the pledge is being recited. The average attitude is simply that someone who would not do that is, in the least, unpatriotic and, at the very most, Marxist or communist.

I also pointed out in my introduction that I hesitated tackling this subject only because it is controversial. I am not trying to start a fight, I am not trying to start a debate, and I am not trying to create problems, but I am rather trying to resolve problems by showing you some reasoning, some rationalism, and also some biblical common sense.

Last week we covered two points. We first of all looked at the author of the pledge. We discovered that Francis Bellamy was an ousted Baptist pastor, a Freemason, and, above all, a socialist to the nth degree. He advocated a centralized government with autocratic power, and he wanted government to control all the means of production. That means government would either own and/or control land, labor, and capital. He was also the head of the Christian Socialist Society, and he taught that government schools were the key to establishing the socialistic utopia in America. So he was indeed the author of the Pledge. Secondly, we looked at the aim, and very quickly I am going to tell you what he said when he began to contemplate writing the Pledge.

In August of 1892, he said, "It began as an intensive communing with salient points of our national history, from the Declaration of Independence onwards, with the making of the Constitution, with the meaning of the Civil War, with the aspiration of the people." When he sat down to write the pledge, he thought about not simply the national history, the Declaration, and the Constitution, but also the meaning of the Civil War. He then said, "The true reason for allegiance to the flag is the republic for which it stands. And what does that vast thing, the republic, mean? It is the concise political word for the nation, the one nation that the Civil War was thought to prove."

"To make that one nation idea clear, we must specify that it is indivisible as Webster and Lincoln used to repeat in their great speeches." Here he is saying once again that his philosophy is the same as Abraham Lincoln's and Daniel Webster's. He says the republic to him is the concise political word for the nation.

In his speech, "The Meaning of Four Centuries," he advocated a strong position for government schools: "We assemble here today that we too may exalt the free school of the government school that

embodies the American principle of universal enlightenment and equality, the most characteristic product of our four centuries of American life. One institution more than any other has wrought out the achievements of the past and is today the most trusted for the future. Our fathers in their wisdom knew that the foundations of liberty, fraternity, and equality, the slogan of the French Revolution, must be universal education. The free school, therefore, was conceived as the cornerstone of the republic. Washington and Jefferson recognized that the education of citizens is not the prerogative of the church or of other private interests, that while religious training belongs to the church and while technical and higher culture may be given by private institutions, the training of citizens in the common knowledge and the common duties of citizenship belongs irrevocably to the state."

The Pledge of Allegiance Analyzed

He said very clearly that the state has the right to educate the children. It is not the prerogative of the church, nor is it the prerogative of other private interests. Who would private interests refer to other than the parents? It is the parents who have the private interest in the children. Yet he says it is not the church that has the interest, nor the parents; it is the state. He was therefore looking at government schools as the way to bring up our children as good little statists. His aim was basically to elevate the state almost to the position of godhood, since it controlled every aspect of our lives.

The pledge had gone through at least four revisions. The pledge we recite today is codified in the United States Code, and it did not even become recognized by Congress until 1942. The phrase “under God” was not added until 1954. Let us now analyze the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Clyde Wilson has graphically pointed out this simple fact:

Historical Context of Loyalty Oaths

“There were in antebellum America no loyalty oaths or pledges of allegiance to the flag of the nation. Free-born American citizens would have considered such to be an insult to their patriotism, as well as an invasion of the rights of their states. Americans did not

pledge allegiance to the flag. They swore to uphold and defend the Constitution, the swearing having definite overtones of Christianity and the Anglo-American tradition, unlike the secularistic imperial pledge of allegiance."

In the antebellum South, before the War of Northern Aggression, there were no loyalty oaths and no pledges of allegiance. The only thing men swore to do was to uphold and defend the Constitution.

With that in mind, let us analyze the pledge, taking a phrase or even a word at a time, and see what is actually being said when someone says, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." The first words are, "I pledge." Do you realize that a pledge is a promise or an oath of allegiance? Webster, in his 1828 dictionary, defines a pledge as a promise or an agreement by which one binds himself to do something or forbear doing something.

Analysis of 'I Pledge'

The word pledge is found twenty-two times in our Bible. It usually refers to something given temporarily as a promise for the performance of a duty, or as collateral for a loan. In Genesis 38, Judah used a pledge to commit fornication with his daughter-in-law, though he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. The Bible says: "And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law."

"And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets,

and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him."

"And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There is no harlot in this place. And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her."

I am not preaching on this text today, but the point is that she took his ring and his staff as a pledge, something she was going to hold until he gave her the fulfillment of his promise, which was a young kid of the flock. Now let me show you how important a pledge is.

Many of you understand that the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. It was a very prominent book. Our Lord and the disciples used it and quoted from it. The word pledge used in Genesis chapter 38—and I want you to notice this—is also used in the New Testament.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 22, the Bible talks about Christ and our salvation, saying, "who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Here we find the word earnest. The word pledge and the word earnest are the same in the Greek.

If you look in your Bibles to the book of Ephesians, chapter 1 and verse 14, the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit. In fact, look at the latter part of verse 13. There also we will see the significance of this pledge, or earnest, in relation to the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says in Ephesians 1:13, the latter part, "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest"—or which is the pledge—"of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Those of us who have been regenerated and converted by the grace of God have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit

is our pledge. It is our guarantee that Jesus Christ is going to return and complete our redemption, in the sense that we will be ultimately glorified and live with Him.

When Christ gave us the Holy Spirit, He was binding Himself to return and complete our salvation—not only by saving us out of our sin and from the penalty of sin, but from the very presence of sin itself. The Holy Spirit is our pledge, the guarantee that Jesus Christ is going to return. When you pledge, when you say, "I pledge," you are binding yourself. You are agreeing and promising something. Just as Christ promised to come back and redeem His own, when you say, "I pledge," you begin to bind yourself to something.

"I pledge allegiance." Allegiance is the obligation of fidelity and obedience to a government in consideration for the protection that the government gives. Webster defines allegiance as the tie or obligation of a subject to his prince or government; the duty of fidelity to a king, government, or state. There is a difference between express allegiance and what we would call natural allegiance. Express allegiance is the obligation that proceeds from an express promise or an oath of obligation. When you say, "I pledge allegiance," you are expressing allegiance, expressing an oath, tying and binding yourself to something over and above and beyond natural allegiance.

Analysis of 'Allegiance'

As Lampster is correct, if you are going to swap allegiance for governmental protection, I can assure you, you are going to be the loser. Our highest governmental officials are declaring that we must give up our rights for protection. Is it not strange and mind-boggling that, in the 21st century, with all our technological advances, our government cannot protect its own people without causing us to give up, lose, or waive our rights? The truth is this: I would rather have my rights and governmental protection. Thank you. I will protect myself. The amazing thing is this.

When Bellamy was writing the Pledge of Allegiance and chose the word pledge—“I pledge allegiance”—he did so very carefully and deliberately. Why? Because he knew that the word oath, or the phrase “oath of allegiance,” would be distasteful and uncomfortable

for Southerners. During and after the War of Northern Aggression, many Southerners were forced to take an oath of allegiance. They were either forced to take it, or they would be shot.

Here is an oath, or at least a portion of the oath, that Abraham Lincoln recommended: “I, [blank], fill in your name, do solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the union of the states thereunder, and that I will in like manner abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves.”

What Lincoln wanted was not only for them to bind themselves to the Constitution—which, by the way, all Southerners wanted anyhow, and which applied as it should be applied to North and South equally—but also to swear allegiance to every act that Congress passed. During those four years of war, there were no Southern representatives in Congress, and for several years afterward there were still none. Although the 14th Amendment was passed unlawfully, he said they had to swear allegiance to uphold it. Other oaths would bind Southerners and effectively lock them out of governmental office or positions of authority.

One was the ironclad oath, which I mentioned earlier when dealing with Jesse James. A portion of it went as follows: “I, [blank], do solemnly swear or affirm that I have never voluntarily borne arms against the United States since I have been a citizen thereof; that I have voluntarily given no aid, countenance, counsel, or encouragement to persons engaged in armed hostility thereto.” If Southerners did not take this oath, they could either be shot or cut out of all political offices or offices of authority. In Missouri, Kansas, and areas like that, you could not even preach, teach, or do anything unless you took this ironclad oath.

When we think about allegiance and say, “I pledge allegiance,” we have to admit that a natural allegiance is owed to one's own country. Natural allegiance comes simply from being born in a country with its people, community, traditions, and language. Express allegiance, however, is not demanded. You put yourself under express allegiance by making a promise, oath, or obligation. That is what you do when you say, “I pledge allegiance.” There is also a difference

between allegiance to one's country and allegiance to one's government.

Allegiance to Country vs. Government

It is wonderful when both are possible at the same time. However, when your government becomes unlawful and unconstitutional and seeks to destroy the country, your first allegiance, naturally, is to your country and not your government. John Locke, in his Second Treatise on Government, chapter 19, paragraph 222, said: "Whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people who are thereupon absolved from any further obedience." Thus, when government becomes tyrannical and oppressive and begins to steal from the people, it puts itself in a state of war against them, and the people are thereby absolved from any allegiance or obedience to that government.

To show how times have changed, in 1918 President Theodore Roosevelt said: "To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that we're to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonous to the American public." Can you imagine George Bush saying that today? "To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we're to stand by the President, right or wrong?" Remember what he said about the war in Iraq: "For us or against us?"

"To stand by the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public." That was the President of the United States who said that in 1918. If you have difficulty with this, I would suggest that you take my book on Romans 13, especially the second chapter on the covenantal nature of government, because I make this point exceedingly clear. Our allegiance is not due to a government that is reducing its citizens to slavery and subjecting them to tyranny. Let us go further: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America."

Analysis of 'the Flag'

What is a flag? It is a symbol, but what does it symbolize? Another legitimate question is this: Has the symbolization changed?

The word flag does not occur in our Bibles, but the words banner, standard, and ensign do. A banner, a standard, and an ensign are the same as a flag. Psalm 60:4 says to God, “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of thy truth.” God has given us a banner, a flag, that it may be displayed because of the truth.

One of my favorite verses is Isaiah 59:19. It has reference to the Holy Spirit: “So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” What is the Spirit of the Lord doing? He is lifting up a standard, a battle flag, against the enemy.

What is our flag really supposed to represent, biblically speaking? It is supposed to represent truth, righteousness, and a willingness to fight against ungodliness and wickedness.

Consider the phrase, “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.” If you are going to pledge allegiance to the United States of America, which United States are you pledging allegiance to? Are we pledging allegiance to the original United States formed under the Articles of Confederation and later the Constitution, or are we referring to the corporate United States that resides in the District of Columbia?

There is a difference. Prior to the War of Northern Aggression, Americans usually referred to “these United States.” After the war, it became “the United States.” Whereas before it was plural, it became singular in one sense of the word. Whereas before it was little “u” and little “s,” it became capital “U” and capital “S.”

If you say, “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America,” are you pledging allegiance to a symbol of freedom and to the organic states brought together under the Constitution? Or are you pledging allegiance to a centralized bureaucracy that resides in the District of Columbia? Which United States do you mean? I can

assure you I know which United States Francis Bellamy meant when he wrote it.

Can a symbol change its meaning? Yes. The symbol may remain the same, but the principles which it represents may change.

Most of you have never heard of Pastor Isaac Handy, a Baptist pastor who spent fifteen months in Fort Delaware, New Jersey, prison for a statement concerning the symbolism of the flag. Pastor Handy was a Southerner who had married a woman from New Jersey. Her parents, however, were Southern sympathizers. Pastor Handy and his wife went to New Jersey to visit her family, where a number of family members and friends had gathered. One of those invited was Reverend Mr. Gaylord, pastor of the Port Penn Church.

Because Pastor Handy was in the home of his in-laws, where most people were Southern sympathizers and spoke freely, something arose concerning the flag. Pastor Handy said that he could no longer venerate that flag as he once had; it was now nothing more than an old rag, no longer representing the Union or the principles in which he believed. Pastor Gaylord challenged him concerning the statement. Pastor Handy replied:

"I venerated that flag too, sir, when it represented the Constitution and proclaimed equal rights protecting alike the North and the South. But that, sir, is no longer the flag of the Union. It is not the old flag. The symbols are the same, but the principles have changed. What is the flag irrespective of its principles? It is simply a painted rag. That flag once represented high and noble principles. I venerated those principles, and I love the old Ensign because of the principles. But what means those stars and stripes today? Not certainly what they once meant."

"Now when I look upon a United States flag, I think I see written upon its broad folds, abolition, coercion, downtrodden constitution, oppression, tyranny. Those are not my principles and I have no respect for any flag representing such enormities." Pastor Gaylord reported Pastor Handy and testified against him. On July 20, 1863, Handy was sentenced to fifteen months in a federal prison because he would not venerate the flag. Why would he not venerate it? He said the symbol was the same, but the principles had changed.

Do you realize we have the same symbol today? We have had that same symbol for many years, but the symbol no longer stands for what it used to stand. Symbols may remain the same while the principles change. The principles that a symbol represents may change dramatically. I will guarantee that most of you who hear my voice do not even know the original meaning of the United States flag. I am going to tell you the real nature of the United States flag in the words of General and President George Washington.

Here is what George Washington said: “We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her. And the white stripes shall go down in prosperity, representing liberty.” According to George Washington, the flag truly represents liberty under God: the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, and the white separating it, meaning liberty; we have separated from them under the stars, under heaven, under God, and we have liberty.

Let me put it very pointedly. The flag did not represent, nor has it ever represented, a sovereign government that simply took the place of the king and ruled over the states. When you pledge allegiance to the flag, you have to ask yourself: What are the principles for which that symbol now stands? “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands.” Most of you know the story that when Ben Franklin stepped out of the Constitutional Convention, someone asked him, “What kind of government have you given unto us?” His answer was, “A republic, if you can keep it.” A republic, if you can keep it.

Analysis of 'the Republic'

There is a difference between the republic that our founding fathers created and the republic that motivated, inspired, and moved Bellamy to write the pledge. Our founding fathers established a republic, and Francis Bellamy used the word republic, but he did not mean by it what our founding fathers meant. The French Republic, achieved through the French Revolution, has absolutely nothing in common with the American Republic guaranteed to us in the United States Constitution.

Article 4, Section 4, Paragraph 1 of the United States Constitution states: "The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a Republican form of government." If you look up the word republic in most dictionaries, you are most likely to find this definition: A republic is a government of elected representatives.

That may be true, but it is not all the truth, and it is a deliberate deception. In a governmental sense, a republic is a government in which sovereignly held authority is held by and granted by the people, and the rule of government is according to law.

The Declaration of Independence states that the purpose of government is to protect the rights of the people, and that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. The first element in a republican form of government is that power is derived from the people. The second is that government operates within and under the control of law. In other words, a republic, an inner republic, the people are the masters and the government is the servant. The people are on top and the government is on the bottom. The people are the head and the government is the tail.

The Constitution of the United States is a grant of authority from we the people to form a government. The government thus formed was a limited government operating on authority granted from we the people. In every sense, it meets the earlier historical definition of republic. The Constitution is the grant of authority from we the people for the government to act.

The Constitution is the law of the people for the control of government. It was never meant to bind the states or the people; it was meant to bind the federal government. When we say “republic,” our founding fathers meant that the power is derived from the people. When the people give the government that law, the only thing the government can do is act according to that law and under that law. Period.

There is a difference between a republic and a democracy, and our politicians apparently do not understand the distinction. There is a vast difference. James Madison is known as the father of the Constitution because he was secretary at the Constitutional

Convention and took all the notes. If anybody should know, it should be James Madison.

Here is what he said in Federalist Paper number 10: “Hence, it is such that democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention, have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property, have been in general as short in their lives as they've been as violent in their deaths.” Did James Madison say that we have given Americans a democracy? No. He said democracies are known for stealing the rights and property of the people. What is happening in our democracy today? We have changed our Constitutional Republic to a democracy.

That is why Supreme Court judges can rule in an eminent domain. Cities and towns can do whatever they want to do. We have no property; it is all theirs. That is why you pay a tax to use their property. You pay the rent. James Madison says you cannot have freedom in a democracy.

This may shock you, but this is directly from the United States Army Training Manual from 1928:

“Democracy of the masses. Authority derived through mass meetings or any form of direct expression. Results in mobocracy. Attitude toward property is communistic, negating property rights. Attitude toward law is that the will of the majority shall regulate, whether it be based upon deliberation or governed by passion, prejudice, and impulse, without restraint or regard to consequences. Results in demagoguism, license, agitation, discontent, and anarchy.”

Our constitutional fathers were familiar with the differences between a republic and a democracy, and between an autocracy and a democracy. When they gave us a republic, they did so with certain fixed principles in mind. They defined a republic, as already given, and it is very distinct from a democracy. Repeatedly, they said they had given us a republic.

The Constitution of the United States guarantees to every state a republican form of government. How can the federal government guarantee that to every state? Because each state in the Union that met at the Constitutional Convention and agreed to form the federal

government was a sovereign, independent state. The federal government, therefore, is an association of small republics, and it was to guarantee that each one would continue as a republican form of government.

Do you remember when Robert E. Lee refused command of the Union Army and resigned his commission in 1861? He told the commanding general of the army, Winfield Scott, that he was refusing command and resigning his commission. Why? Because he said, "I cannot raise my sword against my own country." What was his country? Virginia. What was his state? Virginia. Winfield Scott understood, because Virginia was his country, his state, and his republic.

The United States government, or federal government, was set up to mirror the republican form of government in the states. Every state would be ruled by the consent of the people, by a law, and by a constitution; that constitution would even bind down the state governments. That is why we did it to the federal government, to bind them down.

Analysis of 'One Nation' and 'Under God'

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God." One nation. The truth is, we do not understand terms the way our forefathers did. One of the first things we need to learn to do is define our terms. Think of the word nation. What does it mean? If you are going to swear allegiance to the nation, what are you swearing allegiance to?

Let me give you a definition from Black's Law Dictionary. "A people or aggregation of men existing in the form of an organized jural society, usually inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth, speaking the same language, using the same customs, possessing historic continuity, and distinguished from other like groups by their racial origin and characteristics, and generally, but not necessarily, living under the same government and sovereignty."

Consider that definition. The first definition of a nation is a group of people living under an organized jural society—that is, having a law—usually inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth. You speak the

same language, share the same customs, have a historic continuity, and are distinct from other racial groups. You normally live under the same government. We understand that.

But listen to the second definition: “In American constitutional law, the word state is applied to the several members of the American Union while the word nation is applied to the whole body of people embraced within the jurisdiction of the federal government.” Embraced within the jurisdiction of the federal government. My, how times have changed. Originally, the government created by the states was to be the servant of the states. The states were the masters, and the government was the servant. Now the bottom rail is on top, and our nation is described as the whole body of people within the jurisdiction of the federal government.

Is it right to pledge allegiance to usurped or stolen authority? How did the federal government get where it is today? It stole authority that was never given to it by the states or by the people. Certainly, we should be loyal to our country, our people, and our way of life—but not to a usurped authority that denies everything for which the people stand.

Kirk Tofte, a financial manager in Des Moines, Iowa, wrote this: “Nationalism is the worship of a nation state. As a civil religion, it is a false faith. It represents chasing after idols. When nationalism is used to mask militarism and imperialism, it is worse than a false faith. It is the gravest of sins that can only be forgiven by a truly loving God.”

What is he saying about today? Nationalism is a mask for militarism and imperialism. One does not need to bow down to a graven idol in order to be an idolater. Idolatry begins in the mind and often stays there. Unbiblical and ungodly thinking and wrong attitudes are just as idolatrous as bowing down to graven images.

He said, “one nation under God.” What is meant by the phrase “under God”? Remember, that phrase was not put in until 1954. If “under God” means under God’s sovereign authority and law, I would concede that is exactly where we need to be as people and as a country.

An article from the Commercial Appeal in Memphis, Tennessee, concerning Francis Bellamy and his great-grandson, says that descendants of the man who authored the Pledge of Allegiance believe he probably would not mind removal of the words “under God,” because he would not have wanted them added in the first place. Scott Bellamy, who owns a sandwich shop in a Memphis suburb, said his great-grandfather, Francis Bellamy, a socialist editor and Baptist minister, had clear reasons behind every word of the original pledge he wrote in 1892. Francis Bellamy protested even the addition of “the United States of America” on Flag Day in 1924, believing the pledge as he wrote it did not need changing. “If he didn’t want the United States of America in the pledge, he wouldn’t have wanted under God either,” Scott Bellamy said.

A Federal Appeals Court in California found that reciting the pledge at public schools was unconstitutional because the words “under God,” inserted by Congress in 1954, amounted to a government endorsement of religion. The ruling ignited a storm of criticism and was put on hold. Shortly before his death in 1931, Francis Bellamy wrote a letter to his ten-year-old grandson’s father, explaining that in 1892 he was an associate editor of the Youth’s Companion Magazine and had been chosen to prepare an official program celebrating the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in America.

The descendants of Francis Bellamy therefore said they did not want “under God” in the pledge, because their father did not want it there. John Behr, who wrote the centennial history of the Pledge of Allegiance from 1892 to 1992, presents this question to Mr. Behr: “What would have been the opinions of Rev. Francis Bellamy, the author of the Pledge, and James Madison, father of the United States Constitution, about the June 26, 2002 9th U.S.

John Behr is probably the foremost living authority on the pledge. What would Francis Bellamy think of a Ninth Circuit Court ruling that “under God” is unconstitutional? Behr answers:

“Reverend Francis Bellamy, 1855 to 1931, probably would be happy with this decision. When Bellamy wrote the pledge in August 1892, he never considered placing the words ‘under God’ in his original version of the Pledge of Allegiance. In 1954, David Bellamy,

his son, sent a message to Congress politely stating that his father would not like the addition by Congress." His granddaughter and great-granddaughter have made similar statements.

Francis Bellamy was probably a Christian deist. He did not believe in the virgin birth, the resurrection, or the ascension of Jesus Christ. He stopped attending church during his retirement in Florida. His father, Rev. David Bellamy, was more orthodox. In 1847, David Bellamy founded Calvary Baptist Church, now located at 123rd West 57th Street in New York City, next door to the New York Bible School, John Behr.

Francis Bellamy would not want "under God" in the pledge because he did not believe in the virgin birth, resurrection, or ascension of Jesus Christ. He was a deist and an unbeliever. He thought there might be a God somewhere, but that God had simply wound up the clock of the universe and let everything run down. There was no intervention by God, no miracles, and no concern.

Certainly no Christian, and hopefully no Southerner, would have any problem acknowledging the sovereignty, supremacy, and ultimacy of the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. But the problem with the statement, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God," is this: Which God? Whose God? If we are indeed under God—the one true and living God—as a people, what does that mean?

It means we are to obey His law, keep His word, and honor His statutes. However, we have become so accustomed to saying words that we do not even understand what they mean. And I have news for you: every Muslim could repeat that phrase, "under God," and there would be no problem. A Hindu could repeat it, and there would be no problem. If I am going to acknowledge that I am under God, I want everyone to know that the God I am talking about is the God and Father of Jesus Christ, the only true and living God.

Analysis of 'Indivisible'

Listen to what he says. We are just analyzing the pledge: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the

Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible." One of my main contentions with the pledge is this word, indivisible, because it is a denial of history, fact, and plain truth. Francis Bellamy said, "That phrase encompassed our struggle for independence and for indivisibility, which the Civil War was required to fully prove."

Might does not make right. The fact that the South lost the war of northern aggression does not change the truth, history, or facts. The truth is that every state acceded to the Constitution, and every state reserved to itself the right to secede from the Constitution.

When George III made peace with the American colonies in 1783 at the Treaty of Paris, he did not make peace with a United States government. The treaty says, "His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States"—then names the thirteen states—"to be free and independent states." George III made peace with thirteen independent sovereign states.

The second article of the Articles of Confederation clearly states: "Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States." Thus, when the Articles of Confederation was written, every state was free, sovereign, and independent. Virginia, acceding to the Constitution on June 25, 1788, said, "We're going to ratify the Constitution, but here's the reservation."

Virginia declared that the powers granted under the Constitution, being derived from the people of the United States, might be resumed by them whenever those powers were perverted to their injury or oppression, and that every power not granted remained with them at their will. In other words, Virginia would ratify the Constitution while insisting that tyranny and oppression gave the people an absolute right to take back what they had given the federal government.

New York, ratifying on July 26, 1788, likewise declared that the powers of government might be resumed by the people whenever necessary to their happiness. It too affirmed the right to reclaim those powers whenever the people deemed it necessary.

When the Constitution was being ratified, only eleven of the original thirteen states had ratified it. North Carolina and Rhode Island did not ratify it immediately; indeed, more than a year passed before they did so.

No war was fought against Rhode Island and North Carolina to save the Union. What the majority of states did did not affect the other states. We could not say, “Eleven out of thirteen voted for it, so the other two have to accept it.” Every state was free, sovereign, and independent. More than a year later, when North Carolina and Rhode Island ratified the Constitution, Rhode Island included this reservation: “We, the delegates of the people of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations duly elected, do declare and make known that the powers of government may be resumed by the people whensoever it shall become necessary to their happiness.”

Here are three states that dogmatically asserted the right to secede. Every state had that right, and every state believed it had that right, or it would never have ratified the Constitution to begin with. Thus, when one says, “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible,” one is pledging allegiance to a lie, because the plain fact of history is that originally it was divisible. If you have the right to accede, you also have the right to secede.

It is not my intention to deal today with the biblical doctrine of secession. I have done that before. But you can say “indivisible” all you want; the truth is that our nation is divided in a multitude of ways—economically, politically, culturally, linguistically, and ethnically. There is no way in the world that we have an indivisible nation today. It is not true historically, and it is certainly not true practically.

Analysis of 'Liberty and Justice for All'

Then the pledge says, “with liberty and justice for all.” Bellamy’s idea of liberty and justice for all is found in the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Amendments of the Constitution. When he said those words, he really wanted to use his French Revolution slogan, “liberty, equality, and fraternity,” but was unable to do so. If you depend on the Fourteenth Amendment for your justice, excuse my

English, but you ain't got any. The same thing is true of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Amendments.

Francis Bellamy, as a Christian socialist—that is what he called himself—favored, along with many liberal thinkers and writers of his day, a socialistic centralized federal government rather than traditional conservative Christianity and the local-government concepts of the South. He and his cousins, especially Edward Bellamy, became heroes of John Dewey and others who advocated progressive revelation or progressive education. In a hundred years, this has produced a morally corrupt, anti-Christian, multicultural, secular public-school system that now openly opposes Christianity, parents, and morality. That is a fact.

By the way, when you say, "with liberty and justice for all," may I point out that there is no liberty and no justice apart from God and His law? What does the Bible say in 2 Corinthians 3:17? "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." What did our Lord say in John 8:36? "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

But without Him, there is no liberty, no freedom, and no justice. You cannot have justice apart from God and His law. You want to know another thing wrong with our country? The judicial system.

When you let murderers, rapists, and kidnappers go, and when you do not execute those whom God demands to be put to death, God has it fixed so that either the murderer is put to death or society dies—one or the other. You cannot have justice apart from God and His law.

Am I going to get mad at you because you recite the pledge? No, I'm not going to get mad at you. But I think that if you're going to recite the pledge, you ought to know what you mean and what Francis Bellamy meant. You had better determine what meaning and what concepts you are going to give to those words. You may exercise your liberty to say the pledge, or you may exercise your liberty not to say the pledge. But you had better understand the aim and intent of that pledge. Francis Bellamy did not hide it.

Applications and Conclusion

He said point blank that he wanted to elevate the state. He wanted a socialistic fascist-controlled government that dictated every area of our lives. Our founding fathers never envisioned the kind of republic Francis Bellamy envisioned. Their definition of republic and his definition of republic are two totally different things. This was one of the issues of the War of Northern Aggression. The South had one interpretation of a republic and of the Constitution, while the North had a completely different interpretation of a republican constitution. Do you realize that the problem we are having today with a gargantuan government is the same problem? We have different ideas as to what a republic really, truly is. Certainly, government can become a god.

Not in truth and reality. But when you and I begin to ascribe to government power and authority over and above that and beyond that which the Word of God gives, that is indeed idolatry. And God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And when you look to government instead of God, you are an idolater, pure and simple. You know what our Lord said? And by the way, I hope you know that as Christians, our first, our full and our final allegiance must be to Jesus Christ. Our Lord said in Matthew 10, verse 37, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." We may owe a duty to man and to government, but first and full and final allegiance is only owed to the one true, the living God. Ray Boltz wrote these words.

Many of you have heard this song many times. "I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb." Here are the words: "I have heard how Christians long ago were brought before a tyrant's throne, and they were told that he would spare their lives if they would renounce the name of Christ. But one by one they chose to die. The Son of God they would not deny, like a great angelic choir sings.

I can almost hear their voices ring. I pledge allegiance to the Lamb with all my strength, with all I am. I will seek to honor His commands. I pledge allegiance to the Lamb."

"Now the years have come and the years have gone, but the cause of Jesus still goes on. And now our time has come to count the cost, to reject this world, to embrace the cross, and one by one let us live our lives for the One who died to give us life. Till the trumpet sounds on the final day, let us proudly stand and boldly say, I pledge allegiance to the Lamb with all my strength, with all I am."

"I will seek to honor His commands. I pledge allegiance to the Lamb, to the Lamb who bore my pain, who took my place, who wore my shame. I will seek to honor His commands. I pledge allegiance to the Lamb." If we give our allegiance to Christ, I can assure you we will not be wrong. If you have your duty to God down first, your duty to man will automatically fall in place. But if you put man first, you're going to be wrong.

every which way you turn. We must remember, as Christians, our first, full, and final allegiance is to Jesus Christ. Why? He's God of gods and King of kings and Lord of lords, and as Scripture says, He only is worthy of all honor and all praise and all glory. Let's pray. Father, we ask today that you help us, give us understanding, quicken our minds. May we be able to think things through and to think them through biblically and scripturally. Give us grace, Lord, to serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear and to put Thee first in every area of our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray, Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: The Pledge-History & Problems-1
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Chapter 2: The Pledge-History & Problems-2
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Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

Acknowledgment of God and Prayer or Scripture p. 12

Allegiance to Country vs. Government p. 28

Analysis of 'Allegiance' p. 26

Analysis of 'I Pledge' p. 24

Analysis of 'Indivisible' p. 37

Analysis of 'Liberty and Justice for All' p. 39

Analysis of 'One Nation' and 'Under God' p. 34

Analysis of 'the Flag' p. 29

Analysis of 'the Republic' p. 31

Applications and Conclusion p. 41

C

Conclusion and Prayer p. 20

H

Historical Context of Loyalty Oaths p. 23

I

Indifferent Matters and Serious Questions p. 8

Introduction and Scripture Reading p. 5

N

National vs. Federal Government p. 16

R

Review of Previous Week p. 21

S

State Education and Idolatry p. 17

T

The Aim p. 13

The Aim: National Socialism p. 14

The Author of the Pledge p. 9
The Author: Francis Bellamy p. 9
The Pledge and Patriotism p. 6
The Pledge of Allegiance Analyzed p. 23
The Pledge-History & Problems-1 p. 5
The Pledge-History & Problems-2 p. 21
The Pledge: History and Problems p. 5

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 38 p. 24

Exodus

Exodus 20 p. 21

Psalm

Psalm 60:4 p. 29

Isaiah

Isaiah 59:19 p. 29

Matthew

Matthew 10 p. 41

John

John 8:36 p. 40

Romans

Romans 13 p. 28

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 3:17 p. 40

Ephesians

Ephesians 1:13 p. 25, p. 26

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