

"BE THOU FOR THE PEOPLE TO GODWARD."

EXODUS. 18-19.

Christian Nation

A JOURNAL OF ENLIGHTENED STATESMANSHIP,
SOUND PUBLIC MORALS, CHOICE LITERATURE & GENERAL INFORMATION.

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—God, who is the source of all authority, has appointed our Lord Jesus Christ the Ruler of Nations. The Bible, God's revealed Will, contains law for Nations, and is the standard by which all moral issues in political life are to be decided. National acknowledgment of this authority, and obedience to the law, constitute a truly Christian Nation.

If you want your prayers answered, pray for what you need and can use for the good of others and to the glory of God. This was the way Solomon prayed, and his prayer was abundantly answered, and all minor blessings accompanied the answer. Thus doth the Bountiful One always reward a generous and large-hearted prayer.

THE date of the present number of the CHRISTIAN NATION is the one set apart by announcement of the Chairman of the National Prohibition party "as a day of fasting, humiliation and confession," and for "prayer to Almighty God that his aid may be given to measures which will result in the speedy putting away . . . of the traffic in alcoholic drinks," and of the guilt fastened upon us by the legal sanctioning thereof. As the CHRISTIAN NATION aims to be "For the people to Godward," and is convinced that this implies, among other duties, that of earnest advocacy of the national prohibition of the liquor-traffic, we feel like bespeaking for this Temperance Fast Day a full observance by every reader of this Journal, that the volume of prayer which shall

this day ascend to God may have in it the sound of our voices.

THE Rev. Dr. Newman Hall, of London, who is now enjoying a visit to this country, delivered an address in Brooklyn one evening recently on Sabbath-school work, and expressed himself as deeply impressed with the large and numerous Sabbath-schools in America, and the vastness of the Sabbath-school work which we are carrying on so grandly. The objection that Sabbath-schools are undermining the church and the home, by taking the place of both, is rarely heard now, and we hope the number of such objections will grow less and less until they can be represented by a cipher.

ST. JOHN insists that there is no great difference between Republicans and Democrats on the question of tariff. Well, to say the least of it, the following extract would seem to fully justify Mr. St. John's opinion. It is from a Democratic organ, the *New-York Times*:

ELMIRA, Oct. 20.—There was a large Democratic meeting at the Opera House this evening. Ex-Speaker Samuel J. Randall was the principal speaker. He dwelt on the internal revenue taxes, saying that he was in favor of wiping out every vestige of internal taxation. Free trade was ruin for any country. He favored a protective tariff for American manufacturers and workingmen. The surplus in the Treasury should be applied to paying the national debt. Give the Democrats a chance and the surplus would not be idle.

For Democratic read Republican, and for "ex-Speaker Samuel J. Randall" read "ex-Speaker James G. Blaine," and no other change would be necessary to make this acceptable reading to the hottest Republican in America.

THE story of the Flood as a barrier to belief in God's word—among people who refuse to believe anything they can't understand—is not "burned away," as E. P. Roe would say, but is literally washed away by the deluge of light which is poured upon it by the versatile pen of a well known contributor, the Rev. W. J. Coleman, in an article which we take from the pages of *Our Banner*, a magazine

published in Philadelphia. The story of the Flood remains in all its Scriptural integrity, but the poverty-stricken skeptic is still further impoverished by the satisfactory accounting for of another of the alleged "mistakes of Moses." Moses's reputation as a reliable historian receives strong testimony in Mr. Coleman's article. . . . But this reminds us that Mr. Moody referred to the Flood one evening recently in Dr. Cuyler's church. A man said to him once: "Why, Mr. Moody, you surely don't believe that story about the Flood, do you?" "Believe it?" said Mr. Moody, "of course I believe it. If I believe the New Testament, as you say you do, I can't help believing it; Jesus Christ has put his seal upon the story of the Flood. He said: 'For as in the days that were before the Flood, they . . . knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be' (Matt. 24:38-39).—Mr. Coleman's article will be found in another part of this number; it is instructive and intensely interesting.

WE saw it stated in a paper recently as one reason why the Prohibition party should be defeated, that it "suppressed" the name of Christ in its platform. The name of Christ is similarly "suppressed" in the Lord's Prayer. The Prohibition platform says: "Peace, prosperity and happiness can only come to the people when the laws of their national and state government are in accord with the Divine will." The Divine will is in part that Jesus Christ shall be accepted of men as their Prophet, Priest and King, and when the people and the laws are "in accord with the Divine will," Jesus Christ is accepted, whether his name be always formally pronounced or not. The eminent Christian scholar, Philip Schaff, D. D., sums all things up in this one sentence: "Let our theology and charity be as broad and as deep as God's truth and God's love." We suppose Dr. Schaff will now be rejected also for "suppressing" the name of Christ. On the Mount Christ said: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I pro-

WHAT OTHERS THINK.

SUPREME.

MARSHALL W. TAYLOR, D. D., NEW-ORLEANS, LA., EDITOR
SOUTHWESTERN "CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE."

Oh Thou, the Author and the Prince of Peace,
Head of the Church and Ruler of the Nations!
Both Church and State abundantly increase;
And their chief governmental convocations
Replenish with great wisdom and great patience;
Supreme! within their halls thyself preside,
And 'mid the storm of passions and temptations,
The vessels safely o'er the billows guide,
In Fellowship, distinct, defying wind and tide.

THE CHRISTIAN NATION WE OUGHT
TO BE.

THE REV. S. F. SCOVEL, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVER-
SITY OF WOOSTER, OHIO.

It would be time, now, to ask the question whether we are a Christian Nation *de jure*? We have admitted the world to our heritage, and we must prove it to be right as well as fact if they are to help us preserve the Christian character. It ill becomes us on any question of morals to cry with Bismarck "Beati possidentes." Possession may be nine points of some law but not of the moral law. Possession amounts to a strong presumption, but every reform of the world's history has been able to storm such presumptions and ride over them. Whatever is right is justifiable, and we must not shrink from any examination in an affair of fifty millions. For this discussion we are prepared, but from it we must turn now for want of space. Suffice it to say that our right to be a Christian nation is vindicated not only by our origin and our status, but by all the antecedent and general considerations which bear on the case. Whoever will look into Holy Scripture will find it full of the responsibility of nations to God, in which is necessarily included all we claim. The claim of a Christian life to a Christian organism is as just as it is clearly illustrated by every analogy of nature and of individual man. From the very idea and nature of government, as all great writers have defined them, it follows that such powers as it rightly claims can never be safely permitted exercise independent of God. When we consider how variously men answer the question, What is right? we discover an absolute necessity for that only common ground the world ever has stood upon or ever can stand upon—the authoritative Christian morality as the basis of all moral legislation. When we remember that "bayonets make an uneasy seat" for a government, *i. e.*, that conscience is a much better protective than brute force, we unhesitatingly declare that a moral ground for civil obedience there must be—and where can that be found but in the fundamental ideas of a Christian state? Looked at from the corner of Liberty of Conscience we discover that the reign of neither Erastianism on the one hand, or of Secularism on the other, is consistent with it, while the Christian position is, since it forces no man to pay tribute to the Temple, and does prevent the rapid incursions of a mad materialism under which all liberties speedily wither. The evident advantages of a national religion as defining our position, showing the just limits of liberty to all in-

comers, securing peace in a heterogeneous population, and maintaining the proper relations with God, are so striking that it must be visibly right to have them. And this whole list of considerations may be finished with the assurance that place and power for God among the nations of the earth is still to be secured by an undisguised adherence to the Christian foundations on which international morals (see Freeman and others) unquestionably rest. Were the discussion of these things at large possible, our right would seem to emerge so plainly that the question of *duty* would be eagerly pressed. In view of our origin, our status, and our right, what ought we to do about it?

To this we devote our remaining words.

1. We ought, first of all, most carefully to *conserve* what we have. The ringing charge of a glorified Saviour might be transferred from church to nation: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This is but duty toward our past. Oh, that there were more knowledge of that past among our youth and among our immigrants (the two classes which seem most in danger of forgetting it), and more of holy enthusiasm for it in our whole population. How full of high character and lofty aspirations and thrilling meaning for all the world esteems as of its best, is America's first century! Short—as national history goes—but significant. If a "year of Europe" be worth a "cycle of Cathay," by how much more is one of our years worth it? True conservatism is the condition of all safe progress. The French hated their past and cut loose from it and lost their present. Our past is to be loved and the loss of it will be greater loss still. We *know* our past, and that can be said of few nations under Heaven. The sentiments of "the men of '76" are all of record and abundantly illustrated by brilliant results. Dean Stanley, when among us, recognized this when he said our progenitors were not "enveloped in a cloud of fable." They had personality and a good deal of it. They were neither "Ossian's phantoms" nor "Greek-founders." Washington, Franklin, Adams, and the broad forest out of which these tall oaks grew, we know. And we know that they knew God and believed in him, and meant to govern and be governed "according to God," as their fathers did before them. We know that their best political inspiration was drawn from the Word of God. It was a creative epoch, and nothing is plainer than our duty to conserve what God put into it through them. Americans! "look to the rock whence ye were hewn," when the matters concerning our Christian position come up to be decided. Those characteristics which we manifest in common with Englishmen—"self-control, common sense, love of freedom and obedience to law"—grounds of a nobler fellowship than coaching and cockneyisms—are just those which we owe to our Christian past, (as they do,) and just those which Christian conservatism will carry into our future, and just those which the semi-atheism of Secularism will destroy. Our past allies us to the growth of English Liberty and to the Reformation free-

doms, both of which were religious in their origin. Our sacred deposit is liberty regulated by the "Author of Liberty." The two American ideas of the "Declaration" are never to be lost sight of. The sober element of a nation which is well nigh intoxicated with its unrivalled vintage of material prosperity, is appealed to for such a conservatism as will shield our real Palladium and preserve the soul and life of our material prosperity. If ever strong motives blended and bent their energy to common centre, they do so in the direction of this duty. We know what has been the healthful power of the Christian sons of our national life as at every exigency it has aided to unify and fortify the state. We can see enough already, to appal us with the vision of what must follow if this character be lost. We are fast finding out that the *real* problem of our future is nothing other than the moral homogeneity of the diverse elements of our population, and the resulting power peacefully to meet the knotty questions which grow out of differing standards of moral education. Would we keep away disaster and distress from our children we must conserve that which has been our safe-guard in seasons of terror and trial. Indeed the world at large may come in as a motive, for have we not helped to strip the world bare of *human authority*, whether of king or pope, and do we not owe it to them to show now what it is that can make free institutions able to withstand the worst foes of freedom—those who insist upon defining liberty to mean license and equality to mean anarchy. How shall we face the world we have been leading into liberty if we fail to keep that which has made our liberty attractive and so ruin ourselves and those who follow us? Give up the Christian features of our freedom and we become "blind leaders of the blind." Whether government shall be administered on Christian principles or not is now the world-wide question. Whether there be or can long be a Christian nation is seriously discussed by those who have witnessed the gradual decay of all forms of combination between Church and State [see writers in Political Encyclopaedia]. And while that question pends it also largely depends upon the steadfastness of our country to its unique and strong position of a nation religious for itself and free from the complications of a Church-state! Do you not see that there is nothing between the Erastianism of England (which is dying) and the Secularism of France (which is developing) except the Christianity (shall I say) of America? And if we cannot succeed in understanding, and appreciating and conserving such a position, having had such a noble beginning and such a flourishing experiment, then from whence may success be expected? And defeat in this means defeat of the world's hope of a stable moral unity as a guarantee of security for free institutions. A defeat here is for the world what a Waterloo was to Napoleon. And such a defeat cannot be without the keenest reproaches falling upon us. We were driven into this port in a storm—a gracious manœuvre of Providence—and we found the harbor and lived in it through a mar-

velously prosperous century and became morally as well as materially stronger, eliminating the evils of our own mistakes; and now we foolishly sacrifice all our own advantages and fearfully depress the world we have misled into confidence in our security. We should be traitors alike to the world and to future America if we did not conserve our religious position. Who that speaks the words "future America," does not tingle and glow with them. There is a smack of somewhat high in destiny and distinguished in achievement in them. All men look for greater things (or greater destructions) to come into view with the unveiling of this mysterious curtain than the world has ever seen. There it is! The "coming Nation!" Oh, who shall keep its keepers if God be cut-off—ignored—forgotten? We dare not put any present semi-popular clamor against the solemnity of our revered past and our shaded future—with its great promise and fearful possibilities. The popular will is good against a king, but not against the King of kings! God will not be mocked. Men are bound to obey Him in their political as well as in their social relations. We must conserve our Christian character because herein is our life. This religio-political question distances all others. It matters little what "protection" we have if we forfeit God's. It is of small consequence who is President, if so be God does not preside over him and us. Even all parties of "moral ideas" must appeal to Him. Morals are supreme, and they are the morals of 56,000,000! For the land's sake, which God will leave to desolation if its owners leave Him, we must not yield—be the forces never so many and their demands never so important. There are feeble and rash hands stretched out to grasp the reins of our chariot, and if we succeed in driving this car of liberty through the illuminated skies of the nineteenth century, true to its orbit and without wreck and ruin, it will be because some unseen power of moral gravitation holds us as a nation true to the God of our fathers. There is danger enough to arouse us. Said the "Veteran Observer," (E. D. Mansfield), as long ago as 1865 (and the situation has certainly not improved since then): "I have now traced the origin of our political ideas up to the idea of a Christian Democracy, in which power is exercised by the people, but derived from God. Since that period, the religious idea of government has weakened and the popular or democratic idea, strengthened. Will this continue? If it does what is to be the effect? A government or people of imperial power we shall be; but if it be true that there is a God whose moral government extends over the whole race of men, can we afford to forget it? *Can we afford to pass away, like other nations whose shadows only remain?*"

2. And if we are to conserve our Christian position we must make up our minds to *confess* it. And that in the clearest and strongest way. Resolutions of Congress are good, and the coin-motto of trust in God is good; but there must be something which cannot be gainsayed nor forgotten—an implanted and entwined acknowledgment in our Constitution

—all the better confession because made in our majority and with the scars of experience upon us. Such a confession would be no idle formula, but the deliberate conviction of the millions. It will be a national "credo" in the best sense. Grateful, like the Declaration paragraphs, and submissive like them, and filled with a sense of dependence upon God and of responsibility to Him. Such a frank utterance, reached as all amendments to the Constitution are, by the way of large discussion and a popular verdict, would be a flavor penetrating every particle of the instrument which shall contain it. It would be a principle to help determine questions of practice. It would be a banner advertising all concerned and respected by all. It would be a constant appeal to Him whom we acknowledge and to all in us which was related to Him. It would be an instant prayer and a perpetual promise. It would create a sort of atmosphere in which every breath of the life growing from the Constitution would be drawn. It would be for "glory and for beauty"—the helmet to our armor, the "shew bread" of perpetual adoration in our Temple, the ever visible act of prostration and submission to God, the declaration of faith, of fealty and of purpose. We have both the right and duty to such a national confession, or much that we already hold and value must be given up. We can have no more *right* to be *quasi*-Christian than to be really Christian. What we have is an argument unanswerable for the acknowledgment in question. If it be intolerant in a state to say it has a God, we are intolerant now in having one without saying it. Do any say: "If this is a Christian government, the confessing if it is useless: if it is *not*, the attempt to confess it will only provoke opposition and jeopard what we have." We answer—If this is a Christian government then confessing it is only honest, as the withholding of it is meanness and ingratitude and hypocrisy. If in the attempt to confess it, we should discover that this is *not* a Christian government, then the sooner the truth is known the better! We are doing now, if the latter alternative is true, what we have no right to do and ought therefore to stop doing. An Atheist has as distinct objections to handling a coin with "In God we trust" on it (and indeed Bradford was objecting to it yesterday—the morning papers say—in the Free Thinkers' Convention) as he has to living under a Constitution that has God's image and superscription on it. If we have a right to put our trust in God on our coin, we have a right to put it in our Constitution. If government has no moral character and God has nothing to do with it, then we must come down from our *quasi*-Christian elevation and say so; if government has a religious substratum and God endows man with the "inalienable rights" which government can only protect; if power originates with God and is to be exercised by men according to His will, etc.—then, what, in the name of all common sense and common honesty, can the reason be for not saying so? The complexion of things grows daily more serious at this point. The present situation is open to

all sorts of misunderstandings; contrary decisions even in our courts of law are given about it; the claim is boldly made that we are "in no sense" Christian: satisfaction is impossible, and meanwhile the moral interests on which the decision bears are clamorous for settlements in various directions, and immoralities are shielded and the Bible's leaven is often taken away from the children of the masses in our common-schools; and the pressure of material interests is betraying us here and there into toleration of evils that might be lessened. I say that such a situation demands that a decision should be made. "An end of all controversy" is diligently to be sought in an "oath" of absolute allegiance to God. The organized opposition, even, ought to produce the spirit of open confession. Aggressive Atheism is best met by simple but sincere profession of our faith.

3. But one thing more remains. We ought to conserve, and confess, and then to CONFORM to our Christian character. After creed, conduct! Action is the best argument. It agrees, also, with every step of our national life to strengthen that which is really in us, but has come into controversy and seems to some weak and uncertain. Always we have gone out of doubt by forward movement:

(a) From colony to confederation—1776-1781.

(b) From confederation to Constitution—1781-1788-9.

(c) From secession theories to confirmed nationality—1789-1865.

Trouble made us aware in each case of the necessity for advancement in principle and the confirming of that advance by proper changes in our fundamental law, and the conforming to the decision made, which in each case was a matter of time and intense endeavor. This is what we ask for and all we ask for. Let there be a manly and strong interrogation of our origin and our vital constitution, and the just and firm answer as to what is found there and the frank confession and the faithful conforming to what is avowed. We may well conserve, confess and conform so healing and life-giving a thing. It will bring us closer to that which has ever been man's greatest benefactor, the best security of person and property; the producer of all the liberty of conscience there is in the world, and the only successful counter agent to the manifold undercurrents of mischief and irritation to which a complex civilization gives birth.

We may well conform to the "God of our fathers," for he is no "Ogre," nor yet a "Neor," nor a treacherous "Jupiter," nor an inane creature of any sicklied human philosophy; but a God of truth and holiness and love. And the nearer we draw him to our political life, the better for our politics and for us and our children after us. The system of morals which we formally adopt for our public life when we acknowledge God, is the system that has given us all the happiness we now have, and which, better understood and practised, will bring us "days of Heaven upon the earth." It is

God-fearing,
Reverence-teaching,
Parent-honoring,
Life-consecrating,
Purity-preserving,
Property-securing,
Truth-telling.

It has in it no "respect of persons nor taking of bribes." It is meant for all men and is the same to rich and poor. Let us conform to it for the gratitude we owe the God of our past; and for the safety it will bring us from the God of our future. Thus we shall be: The Christian Nation We Ought to Be.