

# CHRISTIAN NATION

“RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION”

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY THANKSGIVING NUMBER.

Volume 51. Whole Number 1314

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*"O Royal Standard! Lift thou up thy glory in the sun!  
Lead on! Lead on! Thy blue shalt wave until the day is done."*

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF NATIONAL REFORM IN AMERICA.

By the Rev. T. H. Acheson, D.D.

A quarter of a century in any great social or national movement may differ materially from a preceding or succeeding period of equal length in the same movement. Sometimes apparent progress is slow, and sometimes it is rapid. Nothing startling has occurred in the National Reform movement since its inception. The work is yet in the academic stage. The seed is being sown. Such periods are necessary. They bear a vital relation to the final outcome. The past twenty-five years contain much National Reform work, many tokens of Divine favor, and many indications of progress. Our stone of remembrance can be set up with the inscription, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

### Workers.

Time would fail us, if we tried to call the roll of those who are worthy of mention as being more or less identified during this period with this great movement. Hon. Felix R. Brunot held the office of President of the National Reform Association from 1869 till 1897. Rev. Sylvester F. Scovel, D.D., LL.D., formerly President of Wooster University, Ohio, succeeded Mr. Brunot and is the highly esteemed President at the present time.

It is somewhat hazardous to mention names when others who are deserving must be omitted, but the history of the association in recent years reveals the following partial list: J. R. W. Sloane, A. M. Milligan, David McAllister, T. P. Stevenson, H. H. George, William Wishart, Andrew Alexander, Thomas E. Greacen, J. S. T. Milligan, David Gregg, J. M. Foster, Frances E. Willard, Chas. A. Blanchard, C. D. Trumbull, T. P. Robb, J. S. McKee, John McNaugher, J. T. McCrory, J. K. McClurkin, J. H. Prugh, D. S. Littell, R. G. Ferguson, D. C. Martin, E. R. Craven, Samuel Collins, W. J. Robinson, John D. Gill, D. B. Willson, R. J. George, R. C. Wylie, John A. Henderson, W. I. Wishart, William Parsons, J. S. Martin, J. D. Rankin, J. R. Dill, R. F. Coyle, J. F. Carson.

Revs. J. H. Lieper, William Weir, W. J. Coleman, J. P. Mills, M. A. Gault, J. M. Wylie, and others have acted as Secretaries in the field. The whole list is a worthy one, and we are not ashamed to call such a roll.

### Literature.

Here, again, we find our material too abundant. The extensive and comprehensive publications of the association, issued during many years and including many million pages, may be divided as to character into four classes: 1. Historical connection between Christianity and our national life. 2. The principles of political philosophy. 3. Literature concerning the Christian Amendment. 4. Discussion of special practical questions.

The "Christian Statesman," completing its forty-third volume, is the organ of the association. The "Manual of Christian Civil Government" (313 pages), by Dr. McAllister, which has been issued in at least five editions, is one of the most valuable publications of the organization. Dr. R. C. Wylie's remarkable work, "Sabbath Laws in the United States" (250 pages), was issued in an edition of 5,000 copies at great expense but a few years ago. Ten thousand copies (64 pages) of Dr. Wylie's pamphlet, "Our Educational System: Is It Christian or Secular?" were issued in recent years. The Report of the New York National Reform Convention (143 pages), in 1899, bound neatly in cloth, is a most helpful volume for students of political philosophy and reform.

Space utterly forbids any further detailed reference to the great variety and amount of literature published during the last quarter of a century. Christian Citizenship, The True Idea of the State, The Relation of Nations to Jesus Christ, The Moral Personality of the State, The Religious Defect of the Constitution, Our National Christianity and Fundamental Law, and many other themes, have been considered in special leaflets. Sometimes the issue of a pamphlet has been 5,000 copies, sometimes 10,000. Thirty-five thousand copies of "The National Reform Movement" were published. A few other items may be suggestive. Nearly 100,000 pages of printed matter, we are told, were sent out in preparation for the National Convention at Pittsburg, in 1901; and 27,000 in connection with a local convention at Philadelphia, in 1902. During the year ending April 30, 1908, the association, according to the Annual Report for that year, issued 2,736,000 pages of various documents; during the following year, 1,580,000 pages. The postage alone on literature sent out at one time was nearly \$1,000.

### Conventions.

It would be impossible, if desirable, to mention all the conventions held by the association during the past twenty-five years; but the following places will be suggestive of the territory covered by the organization in its work: Pittsburg, Columbus, St. Louis, Boston, Birmingham, Ala.; Denver, Colorado Springs, Topeka, Los Angeles, Lincoln, Harriman, Tenn.; Lawrence, Wichita, Washington, Iowa; Oskaloosa, Beaver Falls, Santa Ana, Elsinore, Cal.; Oakland, Wilmington, Del.; Dover, New Castle, Harrisburg, Monmouth. Some of these were local conventions, some State conventions and two at least were national conventions; at Pittsburg, in 1901, and St. Louis, in 1902. In some instances a large number of addresses preceded these general meetings.

The following was one of the resolutions adopted at the National Convention held in 1901 in the Second Presbyterian church, Pittsburg: "We gladly recognize the many excellent features of our National Constitution, but those excellencies should not blind

us to its defects. We, therefore, in the spirit of true patriotism, point out a grave defect in the absence of all religious acknowledgments, and in accordance with the principles of political science, the injunctions of God's Word and the necessity for a constitutional basis for Christian laws and usages, propose that the National Constitution be so amended as to acknowledge Almighty God as the source of all power and authority, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler of Nations, and His revealed will as of supreme authority in civil affairs, thus placing all the Christian laws, usages and customs of our government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land."

The Winona Institute is one of the permanent and most interesting institutions of the National Reform Association. The organization now owns a building at Winona Lake, and for several seasons a most successful assembly has been conducted under the supervision of Rev. J. S. Martin. A very large number of addresses were delivered at the recent institute.

### Benefactions.

The expenses of the association during the past twenty-five years have been met by the friends of the cause. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has contributed much during that time. Possibly the receipts during the period mentioned have equaled \$125,000 or \$150,000. Much of this has come in small amounts; and the small contributions of those in humble circumstances are just as worthy as the larger gifts of wealthier men. Some large contributions, however, have at times specially cheered the workers and have helped to emphasize the value of the cause. Some of these may antedate the twenty-five years under special consideration. Mr. John Alexander gave at one time a thousand dollars as a thank offering. Mr. Thomas E. Greacen and family on one occasion gave a thousand dollars; Mrs. Dr. S. A. Sterrett, a thousand dollars; Mr. Felix R. Brunot, by bequest, a thousand; Mr. Andrew Alexander, one thousand, besides other liberal sums; and five hundred more was given by Mr. Greacen. At least one gift of five hundred was received within five years, and not many days ago a lady helped this branch of God's work by contributing three hundred dollars.

### Results Obtained.

What has been the outcome? This is a natural question; but it is not the measure of our obligation. Results may be long delayed. They are not always easily seen and tabulated when they do exist. And we must also be content to sow. But there have been results, many of them, in the field of National Reform. Thank God, He has not left His people without practical encouragement! Moreover, why can we not include much of what has already been mentioned as results achieved? It was work done—useful work—and it will bear fruit. Some of it has borne fruit already.

Many colleges and other institutions have been addressed by our representatives. Dr. David McAllister went to the first conference of Protestant missionaries on the island of Cuba, and his address was given a prominent place on the last evening of the conference. Dr. R. C. Wylie years ago attended for the association different state constitutional conventions. Dr. J. M. Wylie was active in the formative period of the State of Oklahoma. Three of our representatives appeared and spoke before the Commissioners on Uniform Laws at their meeting in Denver in 1901. The efforts of the association apparently did not a little in helping to bring about a modification of the adverse decision some years ago by the Nebraska Supreme Court on the question of the Bible in the schools. The association aided in the exclusion of Brigham H. Roberts from Congress. The inauguration of the movement to make the second Sabbath of September the day of prayer for public schools, concurred in by different prominent bodies, is a most significant part of the association's work. During the year ending May 31, 1902, an open letter was sent to four thousand members of state legislatures asking their support for a divorce bill. In 1903 Drs. Stevenson and Henderson, by appointment, attended and participated in a hearing before a Law and Order Committee of the Pennsylvania Legislature, in defense of the Sabbath. The association has gone to Congress with the Christian Amendment, and is going now. Two hearings, both worthy of note, were held before committees of Congress.

One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the growth of National Reform sentiment. Objections to it are not nearly so frequent as they formerly were. The secular theory is losing ground, especially among Christian thinkers. In many months of work over a wide area the writer did not meet more than two or three ministers who expressed opposition to the work of National Reform. This growth in sentiment is the work of God; but one of the most forceful agencies that He has been pleased to employ in its formation is the National Reform organization. May God bless most abundantly its work during the next twenty-five years, and the work of all other organizations, institutions and people who wish the Lord Jesus Christ to be enthroned in the civil affairs of our land!

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