

"BE THOU FOR THE PEOPLE TO GODWARD."

EXODUS. 18-19.

Christian Nation

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

Conducted by JOHN W. PRITCHARD, Tribune Building, N. Y.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1884, by John W. Pritchard, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

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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 this law, constitute a truly Christian Nation.

THE country had been debating the troublesome question, how to resume specie payment, and the more it was debated the farther away seemed the "consummation devoutly to be wished;" when one morning, with a single sweep of his pen, Horace Greeley solved the problem, and the country was astounded that it hadn't seen the great truth before. "The way to resume," he wrote, "is to resume." And the country resumed. And so by general consent the country seems determined to take the same path out of another difficulty. For months business has languished, and just how to secure a resumption of business does not seem to have occurred to the country until within the past week, when our illustrated papers suddenly blossomed with dazzling pictures of Prosperity seeking admission to our homes, of smiling Thrift starting the wheels of trade, and the daily press "brass-lunged and iron-tongued" echoes the glad sound. As aforetime, so to-day, "the way to resume is to resume." The New-Orleans Fair may have

had something to do with it, along with other causes, but there is and will be a strong suspicion in the minds of simple folk that the removal of the deadly clutch of party bitterness from the throat of Commerce has been the most effectual cause.

THE New-York *Independent* of December 25, in an editorial on the Pastoral Letter issued by the Plenary Council of the Roman Catholic church which convened recently in Baltimore, admits the "non-religious character" of our public school system, and says, "Catholics are very consistent in their opposition to public schools. This address does not condemn the state for not imparting religious instruction; it insists that it is not the function of the State so to do; but it earnestly contends for a Catholic training for every Catholic child, which means, of course, parochial schools. So far as our public education is concerned, there is but one alternative: Our system without religious instruction, or the English system of subventions to the various denominations." This is the logical sequence of the secular theory of civil government which the *Independent* has all along held and labored to teach. The Bible in the schools they have never worked for, even though it was to be read without note or comment. Still, because the infidel did not like it, the Bible is a sectarian book, and because it was not the Douay version, it was an infringement of the rights of the Papist. As if man had any rights, natural or acquired, which God did not give him, and as if God gave to any one a right to put his own Word away from the youth of a Christian country. But it would be strange if an infidel theory of government, logically carried out, did not make things suit the infidel.

THE Sabbath mail started in 1810, and was the letting in of waters; to-day we have the flood. Started as a means of obtaining quick and regular news concerning the pending war with England, it continued after the war was over. At first it was carried by the post-boys on the principal roads, but now all the principal railways in the country. "Where there is a demand for mail facilities," the Postmaster-

General has decided, "the Department knows no distinction in the days of the week." So the mail service on the Sabbath has grown with our growth both in numbers and immorality, until now a sermon in favor of Sabbath-breaking is preached each Sabbath to the myriad audience of the railway pulpit through country, village and city, all over our great land. The mail train on the Sabbath is Satan's minister preaching by acts. The minister of God in the gospel pulpit preaches by words, and the first preaches as effectually as the last. One says, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; the other, Never mind the Sabbath, there is no God to require its observance.

And not only does the mail train preach to all who hear its passage, but it brings the mail bags to the towns along its line and forces open the postoffices. Then there is the temptation to send letters on the Sabbath, which leads to Sunday writing; the temptation to receive letters, which leads to Sunday reading; and the Sunday papers, which tempts to the worst reading that is liable to come within the reach of the general public. Crowds gather about the office, the evil influence extends to innumerable homes, and the taste for the pure, simple and soul-searching services of the sanctuary is lost. Added to these legitimate results of the Sunday mail is the increased traffic on the railroads. In the wake of this mail car comes the passenger car, tempting to travel on the Lord's Day. After the mail train comes the freight train, tempting shippers to start their goods on Saturday. And all this, the influence of the trains on all who hear them, the influence of the open post-office on all who receive mail, and the influence of increased railway traffic, all, with their results, are justly laid to the charge of the Government of the United States, and after it, to the charge of the American people, who support it in this iniquity. The men engaged in it are United States citizens, employed by the United States and paid by the money of the United States. It is a national question, and one in which the whole nation is concerned. We cannot live as a nation without morality; we cannot be a moral nation without Christianity; we cannot be a Christian nation without

THE OLD ARM-CHAIR.

(WRITTEN FOR THE CHRISTIAN NATION).

A FLIGHT IN THE WINTER.

REV. J. C. M'FEETERS, BURRELL, PENN.

"This is papa's evening for a story," said little Harry, as the family gathered around the fireside.

A Bible story had been promised every Sabbath evening to the children; and a story about the people of God in the days of old on every Thursday evening. As the Sabbath melts away into the sweet hours of lamp-light enjoyment, a sacred story makes the young eyes sparkle, and the tender hearts tremulous with interest.

Yes, Harry, we will now relate our Thursday evening story. Listen to the winds that sweep around the house. The snow covers the fields. Frosts bite hard as if angry. The storm moans through the woods. The Winter is here, and the world looks dreary and desolate. We enjoy the warmth of the fire, and feel happy under the shelter of home. We will now tell how some of God's people were compelled at one time to leave their homes in the middle of winter and flee for their lives.

"I think they should not have run without first fighting," said Harry, with his ten-year old bravery, ever ready for self-defence.

"I hope they did not have to go till they found friends to take them in and keep them safe," spake Lily, who is younger and more easily melted into sympathy.

These good people were not able to defend themselves, and they had to travel far before they found lodging. They lived in Europe. In Italy there is a small district of country called Piedmont. It is very mountainous. The mountains run quite a distance in length. Between them lie beautiful valleys. In these valleys lived the people of whom we speak. Their country was grand. The mountains were rugged and high. On their summits snow glistened all the year round. Sparkling streams of ice-cold water rippled down the rocks. The gospel of Christ was brought to these valleys many centuries ago. The people were glad to receive the good news of salvation. They gave themselves to Christ; worshiped God; erected churches; observed the Sabbath; and were very pious in their humble homes. They dwelt in modest-looking houses; had little farms on the smooth flats, or on the rugged hillside: kept small flocks of sheep or herds of cattle. None of them got very rich, for they were for most part secluded from the world, and had little business with other countries.

"I wish I had lived on one of those high mountains," said Harry, who had a love for the romantic.

Many a little boy like you lived yonder, Harry; climbed up over the rocks piled in awful grandeur; helped his father gather in the harvest, while he watched the storm play off the mountain crest; walked to the little church, and heard the minister preach the gospel; sat at the fireside enjoying the amusements of the evening, with merry companions.

Had you been one of those little boys, you might have been very happy.

"What a good time they must have had," said Lily. "What a pity any person dared to trouble them!"

Yes, their good times were quickly turned into sorrow. Our story goes back more than two hundred years. The fall of 1654 found them prosperous. They gathered in their harvest; their barns were full; fuel was piled away; provisions were laid in for the family; all things were in readiness for the Winter. Yet a sadness hung upon the faces of the people.

"Why, what was the matter?" asked Lily.

They had heard of coming trouble. Dreadful rumors filled the air.

"Have you heard the latest reports from France?" said one neighbor to another as they met on the public road.

"I have heard till my heart is sick," was the reply. "They have been destroying the Protestants and their churches without mercy. Thanks to heaven for that mountain range between us and the cruel Romish church."

"But I fear," said the other, "they will not stop on the other side of the mountain. An army is coming toward us. It even now is halting at the base of the mountain. And we have been informed that our Prince has been commanded to make us accept Papacy, or leave the country. I fear there is mischief intended by yon army."

"If we must give up our religion or our homes, I believe the first duty is to muster our men, and stand in self-defence," was the reply.

"But we are not sufficient to drive back Rome and France. I tremble for the events of the coming winter."

Thus the pleasant days of autumn were gathering blackness over that little country. And groups of men meeting would talk of the frowning prospects with the undertone of fear.

The winter came. Snows fell as usual. The mountain sides and valleys were covered deep. The winds were howling. The frosts were piercing. The families were cozy in their homes, with the great fires to keep them warm. The stock were comfortable in their stabling with plenty of provender. On one of these crisp days, a few men were observed riding from village to village; they were in uniform, and appeared like officers. They stopped at a public house in each town and nailed up a paper, then hurried on.

"Surely their business must have been important," said Harry, "when they were out in the storms, and riding so fast."

They regarded it as important. They belonged to Gastraldo, the prince. That man had complied with the Pope's order, and gave notice to these people to abandon their religion or leave their homes. These papers contained the proclamation. The inhabitants were alarmed. They half guessed the meaning of the coming of the prince's deputies. And soon the news spread all through the community. They must comply with the instructions of the prince within three days. They must deny their Lord and faith, or arise and leave their homes. What a fearful trial.

They cannot wait till the Winter is past, but must go now. In the dead of Winter, for it was January, they must leave their homes and their flocks and take their children and aged, the feeble and sick, and search for shelter, not knowing where to find it.

"I would never have heeded that proclamation," said Harry.

But they were compelled to heed it, or take the terrible consequences.

A strong army was stationed not far away, to enforce the decree. They now discover that faith in Christ may cost a fearful price. This was one of the battles of faith. We can almost see Satan standing before these innocent people with a sword drawn, and telling them that he will destroy home and family, church and country, if they do not deny Jesus and dishonor God. They must either take the snow-covered road that leads out of their country; or the broad road that leads to eternal ruin. Harry, what think you was the best thing to do?

"I would have seized a gun in a hurry, if they had rode up to our house and told us to get out," answered the boy, with eyes flashing indignation.

But self-defence was not possible. These people were not armed. They sent at once an embassy to the prince, to sue for their homes and faith. The prince told them they must come to his terms. They went home with the distressing report. The people received the news with a good degree of fortitude. They resolved with one consent to serve the Lord, and profess Christ at every risk. And to do this they must at once either leave home or be destroyed.

The time for resolving what to do was briefly extended. But the days drew on to an end. The inhabitants of Piedmont determined to go. A fixed time was set for the journey. The morning came. The cold was dreadful. All were astir early. Worship was offered at the altar with tears; the home was bade its last farewell. Weeping mothers tried to protect their infants from the piercing blasts, by hiding them on their breasts. Fathers moved along together as a guard around their families. The doleful companies went on, leaving their dwellings and flocks out of sight in a short time. But they were not gone far till the smoke of those dwellings curled in the crisp air, or whirled in the stormy wind. The army of destroyers was let loose upon them, and before they were beyond the borders of their land, desolation covered it. Many were killed during their journey. Many more perished in the storms.

Here was a battle of faith. Some may think the people of God lost the victory. But they trusted in Christ, and obeyed God, and endured all things, and thus gained a victory over Satan and the world. The Christian is always victorious when he does what is right; never victorious, no matter what he gains if he does wrong.

"But I wish you would not close the story till you tell us what became of these noble people who served the Lord," said Harry.

We must wait, Harry, till another evening gives an opportunity. Sleep will soon be in order.