

CHRISTIAN NATION

"**RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION.**"

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CHINA'S IMPERATIVE CALL

TO US IN TURNING 400,000,000 FROM CONFUCIUS TO CHRIST

THE oldest and greatest nation in the world is undergoing the greatest and swiftest national development yet witnessed in world-history. No other nation has made such progress as China, during the past ten years and every year accelerates the changes now taking place.

The greatest constructive forces in the transformation of China have been the Christian missionaries, during the past hundred years. The recent Conference of missionaries at Shanghai, representing all Protestant forces in the Empire, appealed for a four-fold increase of missionaries for evangelistic work, together with a similar increase for educational and medical work.

We have a million and a half people committed to our Church in one district in China. Unless we reach them with the gospel, they are not likely to be reached at all.

Only twelve missionaries are at work among this vast multitude; a population greater than the whole of Philadelphia, where there are many hundreds of churches and many thousands of Christian workers.

Not only should the present work be supported, but greatly enlarged, both in the number of missionaries and in the equipment for their work. Sixty missionaries in that district would be only one missionary to every 25,000 of the people to be evangelized.

There are now a quarter of a million Chinese members of the Protestant Churches in China. This number is being increased with wonderful rapidity by great religious awakenings in different parts of the Empire, as well as by the steady increase of all the Churches. Ten thousand native Chinese Christians gave up their lives rather than deny their Lord, during the Boxer uprising, but many times that number have already risen up to fill their places. There is no place in the world where a life or a dollar will go further—invested for the Kingdom of God—than in the turning of the millions of China from Confucius to Christ.

Nadab and Abihu began their work of offering incense by using "strange fire." The tendency to "will-worship" seems to be spontaneous and accompanies the true worship of God all the way down through history.

The fact that the offence of Nadab and Abihu came so early is doubtless the reason why the punishment was so severe. The offence was prompt and so was the penalty. God sometimes shows in a very emphatic manner at the beginning of His dealing with men the principle which He means to carry out all the way through. Israel was judged and Achan was stoned for taking what belonged to the Lord at the very entrance of the promised land. The young man was put to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath shortly after the law was given on Sinai. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying to the Holy Ghost at the beginning of the apostolic Church. So Nadab and Abihu died not alone for themselves, but also for the warning of others who might be tempted to commit a like sin. That no one is now struck down for a like offence is no more evidence that a like fault is not being committed than the fact that no one is now stoned for Sabbath breaking is proof that the Sabbath is not being broken, or that no one is now struck down for lying is proof that no one is now failing to tell the truth in his religious profession. The outward warning is given in all these cases; after this the judgments are spiritual.

There was no necessity at all that Nadab and Abihu should offer "strange fire" to the Lord. In the last verse of the chapter before we read that "there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." God had provided the fire for the offering. Moreover, the fire sent of God was fire on the altar of sacrifice where atonement was made for the sins of Israel and consecration to God's service set forth by the burnt offering. It was most fitting that the incense which was the emblem of the worship of God by prayer and praise should be consumed by the fire from the altar of sacrifice. This was home fire, fire from heaven; it was the fire that God would accept.

There is no record that Adab and Abihu were forbidden to use strange fire. That a thing is not forbidden is all the reason that is or can be offered for certain elements now being used in the worship of God, but this is no reason for their use. The same argument could have been presented for the "strange fire"; it was not forbidden. Many argue with regard to the matter and manner of the worship of God in our own time in a way that would have justified these sons of Aaron in what they did. The fact that the "strange fire" was not forbidden did not hold back the flame of death that came out from the presence of God and slew these presumptuous priests.

The fire that God had provided was there and ready for use. He did not leave any part of His worship unprovided for and no one could use anything else than what He had provided without slighting His provision and His will. Nadab and Abihu for some reason preferred the "strange fire" to what God had sent for this use. So do all worshippers who put something else in the place of what God has provided for His worship. They were following their own will rather than His and somehow that had a charm and an attraction for them. They thought that God did not need to be so particular. The result showed their error and their folly.

Is this not a lesson for our times?

Christian Principles

**"Ye Are My Witnesses,
Saith The Lord."**

Purity of Doctrine and Worship. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Political Loyalty to Christ the King. "Kiss the Son."

The Separated Life. "Wherefore, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

The Open Life. "In secret have I said nothing."

The Covenanted Life. "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."

The New Metrical Version of the Psalms.

BY REV. J. M. FOSTER.

A copy of the latest version of the Psalms "adopted on Sept. 22, 1909, by the joint committee of American and Canadian Churches on a uniform version of the Psalms in meter to be submitted to the Churches represented in that committee," came to us from the office of Mr. J. S. Tibby a few days ago. It is safe to say, that it is the best version that could be agreed upon by such a committee. And it is just to say, that it is a painstaking, scholarly and sincere effort to produce a faithful and useful English version of the divinely appointed manual of praise. But in reading its lines page after page, I cannot dismiss the conviction that compared to the Scotch version, there is a rugged, sturdy, towering grandeur and sublimity in the latter that is wanting in the former. Having committed the Psalter in our boyhood and having drunk in the spirit of the sweet singer of Israel as voiced by the Scotch bard who was so wonderfully enrapport with the Psalmist, the reading of this new version suggests the Saviour's contrast between old wine in old bottles and new wine in old bottles. "And no man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, the old is better." It is not our purpose to advance the personal equation, for our individual preferences are not important. The work of this committee will be tried at the bar of public opinion and it will stand or fall according as it meets the

wants of those who believe in offering to God as a sacrifice only the inspired Psalter. Forty years ago the United Presbyterian Church substituted their Psalter for the Scotch Version. But it did not last. There was more dissatisfaction with the Psalter than there had been with the Scotch Version. And they were in such haste to get another, that they could not wait for this present cosmopolitan committee to finish its work, but appointed a committee of their own, which completed the work and the interdenominational committee adopted it, with a few alterations. And it would not require one to be a seer to predict that this last work will not allay the spirit of unrest and produce a joyful concord between the sentiment of praise and the medium through which it is expressed—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

There are a few items in the way of criticism which we desire to note:

1. *Some of the Psalms are rather paraphrased than translated.* For example in the LX, LXXXIII, LXXXVII, and CVIII, the Gentile nations are specified in the Hebrew text. But in the New Version Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, Zalmunna, Sisera, Jabin and Edom, Moab, Midian, Gebal, Amelek, Ammon, Philistia, Tyre, Kishon, Endor, disappear. Now it seems to me, that when this is done, we surrender our contention for a faithful and true translation of the original tongues in which the Bible was given to us by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. We have no more right to take such liberty in translating the book of Psalms into English poetry than we have in translating the same book into English prose. This is not translating the Psalms, it is paraphrasing them. And that is precisely what Dr. Watts did with all the Psalms. And if we are justified in making imitations of a few of the Psalms, there is no valid objection to Dr. Watts' work. We have started on the road that leads to that man's imitation of the Psalter. To this we object with all earnestness. Against it we lift our solemn protest.

2. *The "Selections" are an unwarranted mutilation of the Psalms.* What would be said of the translators of the New Version of the Bible, had they taken the liberty to select the parts of chapters that they deemed most suitable to be read in the school room, and had introduced these parts of chapters, each selection following the full chapter from which it was taken and marked "Select school reading" into the text of the Book! Why, the whole Christian world would have cried out against such a presumptuous tampering with the divinely inspired Book. Well, by what process of reasoning will it be made to appear that the Book of Psalms is less sacred than the other sixty-five books of the Bible. And if dividing chapters and adding a select part for a special purpose is unwarranted and presumptuous tampering with the text by the translators of the Bible, then dividing a Psalm and adding a part for musical purposes is an

unjustifiable tampering with the Psalter by the translators.

3. *There are changes made which involve other parts of God's Word.* In meeting the Jewish objectors to His claims to be the Messiah, our Lord quoted the 110th Psalm, "The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." If David call the Messiah his Lord, how can He be his son? The form of the text was essential to the Saviour's argument. But this New Version, in the anxiety of the translators to introduce the New Testament *Christ*, has taken from the first line the title *Lord* and substituted *Messiah* of the Hebrew or *Christ* of the Greek, both meaning the Anointed One. That is unjustifiable. In the second Psalm, the official titles are retained. In the 7's version, the Son is Christ, the King, the Anointed, and in the L. M. version the Son is the Messiah, the Christ and the King. That is as it should be.

The argument which Paul makes for the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week in Hebrews IV. is based upon a quotation from Psalm XCV. But neither the L. M. version nor the 8's and 7's version would be recognized as the original from which the apostle quoted. "To-day, if ye His voice will hear, harden not your heart, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work."

We are profoundly convinced that the old Scotch Version is safer, saner and better than the *New Metrical Version*.

Boston, Mass.

Idolizing the Ballot.

BY THE LATE REV. J. R. W. SLOANE, D.D.

The Rev. M. A. Gault says: In an old copy of the *Christian Statesman* we find an article from the pen of Prof. J. R. W. Sloane which was written on the political situation during the Presidential campaign of 1888. It is such a good expression of the present situation, that we send you the following extract:

"The real misfortune is, that the two old political parties cannot deal with reform questions; but what is worse, they shut the mouths and tie the hands of those who would deal with them. As in days gone by, no man could wield any influence against slavery, so long as he was of the rank and file of either of the two old pro-slavery parties. The mistake is, we idolize the ballot. We invest it with the attribute of omnipotence. It is one of the objects of our idolatrous worship; and yet, as a factor in moral reforms its value is reduced to zero. What is a vote worth, as to any moral reform when it must be cast at the dictation of brewers, distillers, saloon-keepers, and Romanists? It is astonishing that

men who love God and righteousness, and whose hearts beat in sympathy with all great and good objects, do not realize the degradation, and break the chains of so debasing a servitude. But they ask, holding up their hands in blank despair, if we do not use the ballot, what weapon have we left? The people ought by this time to realize that moral ideas and principles are the great reformatory forces. They should remember that the current carries the driftwood, and not the driftwood the current. Great reform questions must first be settled by the people. Then some political party, when it feels that the ground has been made safe enough for it to stand upon, will step forward and adopt them in its platform, and then afterwards claim that they have done all the work. Thus the Republican party now claims to have abolished slavery, whereas it was never an anti-slavery party in any true sense of that term. As a party it never got beyond its first childish step, viz., to limit slavery to the territory it already occupied. It was not long before the opening of the war, that Mr. Beecher said, 'May my right arm fall from my shoulder if I attempt to interfere with slavery where it now exists.' The fact is the non-voting Garrisonians were the only Abolition party. They rallied to the cry, 'Immediate, universal, unconditional emancipation.' On this ground they kept up the agitation. It was wittily and truly said, 'The Republican party tries to keep within cursing distance of the Abolitionists;' and because the South said, 'Where Garrison is to-day, the Republican party will be to-morrow,' they undertook the dissolution of the Union. * * * Let us not be understood as discouraging any honest attempt to bring up the great political parties to a higher plane of morality. If any still think this possible, let them do all they can to accomplish it. If we were at liberty to tender any advice to those who believe in the potency of the ballot, it would be to vote always as they pray, and to refuse, absolutely refuse obedience to any party which advocates bad principles, or puts up bad men, we mean morally, as well as politically bad, as candidates for office. * * * If Christian men are to make their power felt at the polls, they must cease to be charmed by the terms Republican and Democrat, and refuse to give their suffrage to any man who is a profane swearer, Sabbath breaker, tippler, gambler, debauchee (and permit us to add Romanist or Unitarian). A Christian man had much better tear up his ballot and throw it on the street, than use it for the advancement of any of these foes of God, and violators of His law."

Bible Readers' Corner.

BY THE REV. T. H. ACHESON, D. D.

It is important in reading the Bible to be not only intensive in our efforts but extensive; *i. e.*, not only directing our attention to single verses and thoughts but also trying to grasp the scope of a paragraph, a chapter, or several chapters that are bound together historically or doctrinally. For this reason it is well to read at times quite a number of verses at one sitting; and the readings assigned in the folder we are following cover a fair amount of ground. The paragraphing of the American Revised Version is helpful.

Our morning readings on the folder begin with Genesis. This word means origin, beginning. The book of Genesis starts where the world must start: with God! God is the great source of matter, of life, of spirit, of action. The first verse of this Book of books asserts simply and sublimely: "In the beginning God." No attempt is made to prove first the existence of God and then to show who and what He is, but we are merely told: "In the beginning God." The assertion of the necessary and all-sufficient cause of all things is placed right at the first, and the whole book that follows goes to prove and illustrate it. How this one verse sets the question of the creation and the mystery of the universe at rest! In these few words are implied the being, the personality, the power, the wisdom, the eternity of God.

Truly Genesis is a book of beginnings! It tells us of the beginning of the world; the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, stars. It tells of the beginning of history, the beginning of man, the origin of body and soul. It sets before us the beginning of time: "In the beginning." It tells us the origin of the family, of the Church, of the State. It tells us of the beginning of sin, of strife, of war. It tells us of the beginning of redemption, and the origin of God's chosen people. It will be well to keep these things in mind as we read together this book. It tells us of worship, of sacrifice, of covenant.

We might also have said that we find in this first chapter of Genesis the beginning of light, and the origin of vegetable matter. God brings into being grass, herbs, fruit, trees. We see the beginning of animal life, birds, sea-monsters, cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth. Some one has said: "All which we see in the starry heavens above us, in the plants, animals, minerals on the earth beneath us, is the unfolding, step by step, of this divine eternal plan."

In this book we are told of the beginning of God's providence for this world. We behold God's provision for Adam and Eve, His acceptance of Abel, His punishment of Cain, His wrath against sin in the Deluge, His protection of Noah, the call of Abraham, the birth of Ishmael, the appearance of Jehovah-Christ at Mamre and elsewhere, the overthrow of Sodom, the offering of Isaac, the ladder at Bethel, the wrestling at Jabbok in the night, the sale of Joseph, the famine, etc. What a wonderful book, an instructive, fascinating book, we have before us during the first part of our morning readings!

The brightest point of light in all this Book of Genesis is the fifteenth verse of the third chapter. When our first parents had yielded to sin and Satan and taken the forbidden fruit, mankind fell. That was the world's darkest hour. But God, who is rich in mercy, gives here the promise of the coming Deliverer when He says that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. The star of hope appears in the sky. And we see the beginning of redemption in this book. Jesus assumes the mediatorial reins, we understand, at the fall, and we catch different glimpses of Him as He guides the affairs of the world. He is working for the salvation of man and for the Kingdom of God.

Cards for monthly reports of our daily readings are almost essential that we shall remain organized and effective in our work. The American Baptist Publication Society (Philadelphia and Chicago) will furnish a small card about two inches square for such purposes at a very small price. This card contains a blank for the month, the reader's name, the name of the society, and the congregation, and also blanks for thirty-one days. An X is placed in each small square when the reading it done on the date specified, and an O is inserted when you read the assigned portions after the regular date. At the end of the month this card, fully marked, is handed in to the Committee and a new card received for the following month. If our work were more fully developed, and the printing had not already been quite expensive, we might have had such cards ready for distribution by our own committee that prepared the folder.

Pittsburgh, Pa.