

CHRISTIAN NATION

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION."

NEW YORK, JANUARY 8, 1902.

The Praise of God.

By Prof. D. B. Willson.

The holiday season fills the Sabbath School room, and the question comes up, What help is being given to the children by the exercises, what spiritual help? A contributor to the "Presbyterian Banner"—Rev. Robert M. Donaldson—raised the question last summer, Is our Sunday School Music Worshipful? We give some extracts:

"Many Sunday school songs are unscriptural in sentiment, have neither grammatical structure nor poetic inspiration, and the music is worse than the words. In some of them, if Christ is named at all, it is an afterthought; if Calvary is mentioned, it is much as the classic bard invokes the aid of high Olympus. Many are dedicated to wife, child or friend, bearing on its own face that it was personal in its conception rather than spiritual. Some churches esteem their hymn-book as they would a program, and pay for it by filling all blank pages and covers with local advertising."

"There is as much heresy in the catchy air, the too-off recurring syncopated time, the char-

acterless 'rag-time' music, and in the vain repetition of meaningless words as there is in the most sensational preaching in any pulpit where the name of Christ is studiously avoided, and the gospel of Christ relegated to the shades. Curiously enough, it is oftentimes those who pride themselves on their fidelity to the Bible and its orthodox interpretations who lend themselves most easily to the dissemination of this pernicious stuff which is written and published for revenue only."

"Nor can we offer acceptable praise to God if the musical periods are used merely for introductory exercises, or for vocal gymnastics, or for filling in the time while officers and teachers are getting ready for something else. If it is really praise we are offering to God, we ought to show as much courtesy to him as we do to others when we communicate with them."

"I have examined, page by page, line by line, word by word, measure by measure, three recent books of this nature. They are being pushed

The Guest.

By Mabel Earle.

One answered, on the day when Christ went by,
"Lord, I am rich; pause not for such as I.
My work, my home, my strength, my frugal
store,

The sun and rain—what need have I of more?
Go to the stnful, who have need of Thee,
Go to the poor, but tarry not for me.
What is there Thou shouldst do for such as I?"
And He went by.

Long years thereafter, by a palace door,
The footsteps of the Master paused once more,
From whence the old voice answered piteously,
"Lord, I am poor, my house unfit for Thee;
Nor peace nor pleasures bless my p incely
board,

Nor love nor health: what could I give thee,
Lord?

Lord, I am poor, unworthy, stained with sin."
Ye: He went in.

—Outlook.

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most energetically at Sunday school and Christian Endeavor conventions as specifically adapted for such services. In scores of stanzas grammatical form was woefully absent. In many songs no mention was made of Father, Son or Spirit. Statements were made for which no proof-texts are forthcoming. Some were addressed to the 'holy star,' or the 'shining gates,' or the 'heavenly robes,' or some other object which has no worshipful proprieties, nor is it necessarily associated with religious experience."

The article thus concludes:

"If the above principles are fundamental, we conclude that we must emphasize more specifically the devotional element in our Sunday school music. We must quit lining the pockets of irresponsible publishers and composers (?) with the Lord's gold, in exchange for the musical 'gold bricks' which they work off on a gullible people. And we ought to honor our own Church in the general, if not exclusive, use of a hymnology which has an honorable parentage, a hallowed history and a spiritual fruitage."

How much more forcible the article would be, if rising above the human compositions, the writer had directed attention to the Songs of the Spirit, Colossians 3:16, that Psalter which Herder in his work on Belles Letters named as the *hymn book for all times*. This indeed has "an honorable parentage, a hallowed history, and a spiritual fruitage."

Anarchism and Herbert Spencer.

By Prof. J. M. Coleman.

The discussion in regard to anarchism, as it has appeared in its various forms of expression from the daily paper to the President's message, has passed through a somewhat hysterical stage. It seems to take for granted that some new crisis has come in the world of thought and action, and that public safety demands that drastic measures be taken for the annihilation of the anarchists and of anarchism. Before it is decided to cut him off from the earth it might be well to see who he is and where he is to be found so that means may be used commensurate with the task, for it may appear that a large number of people, many of them of considerable standing, would be involved in the proposed destruction.

For many years Herbert Spencer was, perhaps, the most influential among the English philosophers. His teachings are the essential doctrines of anarchism, and all his followers are logical anarchists. To make this evident one need only compare the writings of an anarchist thinker, such as Bakounine, with those of the great English individualist.

It gives us a fair conception of the relation of the two systems if we compare their ideas of God, of government and of law. The anarchist argues that there is no God whose will controls the world of men and matter. Reversing Robespierre's sentiment, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," Bakounine says: "If God existed it would be necessary to abolish him." "If God is, then man is a slave; now, man can

and must be free; then, God does not exist." The anarchist holds that there is no will above that of the individual else man is a slave. Over against this, Herbert Spencer maintains that God is the unknowable, and between Spencer's absentee God and none at all there is little choice.

In regard to the nature of law, the systems are in cordial agreement. Through men and matter there run certain universal, inevitable laws. They are the constitution of man and the universe. Unmodified by any controlling will, these laws are absolute and men have no alternative but to conform to them or perish. As both systems are materialistic, these universal laws are physical in kind. Immortal spirit there is none either above the earth or in it. Spencer argues that man's law of progress is the "survival of the fittest," and while the anarchist is more optimistic in regard to the nature of man, both agree that competition is the only natural law among men. Interference with the working of this law can result only in disaster. This leads us to consider the third point, the government. In making the state only a physical organism, Spencer denied that it had any mind, and, consequently, any will. As government is the expression of the will of the state, and as the state had no will, there is no place for government. He says that governments exist to-day as an incident of evil conditions, such as war and other like crimes against society, but as these pass away governments shall likewise cease to exist. "Be it or be it not true," says Spencer, "that man is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, it is unquestionably true that government is begotten of aggression and by aggression."

This expresses the faith of the anarchist. He is opposed to government because he claims that it produces disorder. There is no will above the will of the individual, so that any attempt to govern is the attempt of one individual or a number of them combined to impose their individual will on others. If Herbert Spencer is right in his position, so is the anarchist. It is worth remembering that we are dealing with a philosophy of social life, and not simply with a few criminals.

The Modified Oath.

ANNOTATIONS ON ITEM THIRD OF REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF DISCIPLINE—MINUTES OF 1901.
PAGE 156.

By Rev. J. McCracken.

A full deliverance is asked on the question:

"Is it consistent with our principle of dissent for members of the Covenanter Church to hold office under the United States Government, when the oath of office is modified so as not to bind to anything immoral in the Constitution or laws, and when there is nothing immoral in the duties of the office?"

The question admits that it is inconsistent for a Reformed Presbyterian to take the oath, as now administered, and by law required. The oath of office, whether state or federal, contains a sworn pledge of true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. Reformed Presbyterians protest against and condemn the Constitution of the United States, because it

contains no recognition of God, or of Christ, and no acknowledgment of allegiance to Christ the King, and, for this reason, refuse to swear allegiance to it, or to vote, or hold office under it. But the question suggests that it may be modified, sterilized and disinfected. By whom? By Congress? Possibly. Certainly by a constitutional amendment. Meantime Congress could pass a law eliminating the oath of allegiance from the oath of office, at least until the Supreme Court should decide on the constitutionality of such a purgative law.

But this is evidently not the case before the mind of the Memorialists. Their case is the supposed act of some subordinate administrative officer, some judge of elections or inspector, who may be induced to modify the oath. Will such modification have any legal value? What conceivable power has a judge of elections, or justice of the peace, or notary public, over this law, more than he has over any other law? I know officers of government do deal fast and loose with law. Instance, Tammany and the proposal of the new Mayor and City Attorney of New York; but they do not pretend to alter, amend or modify the form; they only disregard the law and connive at its violation.

But suppose the officer-elect is sworn in by an emasculated oath; what kind of officer will he be? Truly not the kind intended by the lawmakers. He is just a usurper, maybe a very good kind of a usurper, well-meaning and faithful to his ideals; but he is not a legally qualified officer of state, and has no legal right to the office into which he has intruded. In fact, he is the very man the legislature designed to keep out of office when it passed the law.

The same fallacy is found in the argument drawn from Synod's action on the soldiers' oath. Synod (Minutes 1863, p. 227) declared the soldiers' oath objectionable, and refused to approve of it. Synod appointed a committee to obtain from the *proper authorities* another form. This committee was instructed to confer with the President, as the Commander-in-Chief of the armies. The committee reported that they found that drafted men were enrolled without an oath, and, as in their judgment the proposed modification was mainly for their relief, nothing was done. This action of Synod does not give any warrant for the conclusion arrived at in the report of the committee. It did not occur to any one then to suggest that the oath might be modified by an enrolling officer. Synod instructed its committee to ask the modification from the President.

The uniform practice of the Church and the deliverances of Synod agree in condemning the sitting on juries when the usual oath was required. When the question was before Synod in 1888, it was stated that the presiding judge had power to modify the oath, and he could order the omission of the objectionable phrases. For this reason, Synod suggested a form that was wholly unobjectionable, and gave liberty to sit on juries when this oath was taken, with the accompanying protest. In this action we find no warrant for swearing an oath of office, modified by a person who has no authority except to administer the full oath as prescribed in the law.

The fallacy hidden in the question is equally concealed in the answer, and vitiates its conclusion. In some states formerly no oaths were required of School Directors. In New York and Michigan even aliens were School Directors. When the law was made in Ohio requiring an oath of allegiance from School Directors the Covenanters in Logan County declined the office. So far as I know, the Covenanters do not take any kind of oaths to get into office. They are not anxious to be smuggled into office.

Birmingham, Mich.