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Convention**



**Financial Advertisers Association  
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# Why Should God Bless America?



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In the current war, as perhaps in all previous wars, we hear rulers on all sides asking God's favor, in some cases openly claiming to have such favor. In this country, scarcely a public meeting is held without singing "God Bless America". By what right does a warring nation ask God's favor? And by the same token, why should our nation feel a particular right to the favor of the Almighty? Just "Why should God bless America?" Why should we be blessed of God any more than Poland, or Britain, or China, or Germany? Have we any superior claim to racial quality, or intelligence, or moral excellency? Are we better than any other nations? Are we more deserving?

Surely God has blessed America for many years - and in many ways. Now it appears that we have arrived at an era when it becomes necessary for us to defend some of those blessings. We must remember that with blessings come responsibilities. If we are to ask God's favor it is imperative that we do our part, to merit that favor.

We are already launched upon an "all-out" program of National

Defense. We must see that it is not enough to emulate those who would give up butter for guns. A country ringed around with cannon can starve behind its walls of iron and steel, and it can starve with a hunger that goes far beyond the need for physical food. To build an America that will be strong and brave and free requires more than cannon, or airplanes, or military equipment of any kind. It requires a people devoted to the cause of "right makes might", and educated to make the best use of moral talents—convinced of the value of their heritage—grateful for their blessings.

One evening recently while visiting with a friend, I asked him what, in his opinion, shattered the French nation—France seemed to go down so fast. His immediate reply was two words: "Moral Laxity". Then he went on to explain that moral laxity produces a kind of softness which is suicidal for nations as for men. France was broken before the Nazi came, and she is paying a bitter price. We in America must learn before it is too late, before we too must pay in tears and blood and humiliation. My friend went on to

say further that propaganda and politics are trying to take the shame out of indolence, indigency, and even dishonesty. With my own ears I have heard men in high business and political offices say, "Anything is all right that you can get by with". That is moral laxity of the most damaging type. Young men, weak men irrespective of age, pick it up. As far as politics is concerned we need more statesmen who are not afraid of the next election. Unfortunately many of the concepts of present-day politics are at great variance with those of Christianity, with the highest ideals of our life.

It is apparently necessary but nevertheless regrettable that today so much of our wealth must be poured into machinery that can manufacture only one product—*death*. With that we must continue to develop the things that stand for *life*. We have much yet to defend, but still much more to gain. America's heritage is a rich one, a rich blessing, but rich as it is, its greatest share is not a portion of the earth, or the buildings erected on it, or is it our industrial equipment. Our great blessing lies not in *things*, but in *ideals*, — ideals given

expression by our forebears, the founders of this great republic. They were men and women of high moral courage and deep religious sympathies. They not only asked God to bless America, but they so lived that God wanted to bless America. They expressed their ideals in language that has long become familiar to us: such as “all men are created equal,” “all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,” “governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed”—all high aims. We today are still enjoying the fruits of blessings accruing from their noble efforts. That is one of the reasons why God has so graciously favored this nation. I am a strong admirer of the American pioneers. They must have been a chosen people of God, because their ideals were so high and noble and unselfish. It is profoundly important that we do not forget the rich heritage which their sacrifices have passed on to us. It will avail us nothing to defend our *land* and forget our *ideals*, the real reason why God has blessed America.

What then would appear to be our course? I can answer no better than in the words of a newspaper

columnist who is recently quoted in part:

“America needs a general disposition to rate the Ten Commandments as more important than any Eleven Radio Talks.”

“America needs a drive to convince the youth of America that the defense program would be helped immeasurably if they had the same intense love for the Constitution and the American system as the Nazi youth have for Hitler and the Nazi system.”

“America needs an extension of the drive to awaken voters to the high importance of selecting representatives, senators, and other public office-holders on a basis of character, courage, high purpose, and personal integrity; and not on a matchless record for muddle-headedness, a loud voice, a fair radio style, and an aversion to study.”

“America needs more faith in prayer than in telegrams to politicians, and a willingness to give at least as much time to church as to any double-feature movie.”

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“America needs a wider appreciation of the relative importance of an altar in the home as compared with a deluxe radio, a portable bar, and a rumpus room.”

These are the things that need to be emphasized.

It is most heartening to notice of late that some of our intellectuals and news editors are calling the nation back to God. They are declaring that here is the only way to save our *ideals*,— *the* heart wherein our nation lives. Our first concern is not for things, but for people. We must confess our national sins, as well as our personal sins, and ask forgiveness and guidance for the future. We can sing “God Bless America” until we are blue in the face, but we have no right to expect to be heard unless we do that which is expected of us. And all God expects is that we give Him cause to *want* to bless America.

*This article constituted Mr. Betz’s part in a service conducted entirely by the men of the First Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, Illinois.*