

Christian Observer

VOL. 105.

LOUISVILLE, KY., APRIL 11, 1917.

NO. 15.

Christian Observer

Presbyterian Family Newspaper
ONE HUNDRED AND THREE YEARS
OF CONTINUOUS PUBLICATION.

Founded September 4th, 1813.

HARRY P. CONVERSE, Managing Editor.
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Published Every Wednesday by

CONVERSE & CO., (Incorporated.)

412 South Third Avenue, Louisville, Ky.

Remittance should be made by money order, or by registered letter or by draft on some of the large cities. When checks on local banks are sent ten cents should be added to cover cost of collection.

Address all communications intended for the Editorial Department to "The Christian Observer."

Address all business letters to Converse & Co.

For "Terms of Subscription," etc., see foot of page 20.

Entered at the Louisville Post Office as second class matter.

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

Character is not thrust upon us against our will. It is not merely an inheritance, although tendencies toward certain characteristics are undoubtedly passed from parent to child. Character is developed in the life through obedience to God's eternal laws. With many persons this development is made unconsciously. Each act, each thought, each aspiration, each dream of larger things has some power in the development of character. Even our mistakes and failures tend to develop character when we recognize them as failures and mistakes and vigorously seek to overcome them in our lives. But the greatest of all helps toward the development of character is the presence in the life of the Holy Spirit, and the help He gives us is the real secret of a strong and sturdy character.

Receipts for Christian Education and Ministerial Relief for the year ending March 31, 1917, amounted to \$285,465.57, an increase over the preceding year of \$167,862.07. This very large increase was due to the special campaign to increase the Endowment Fund for Ministerial Relief. During the year there was added to the endowment fund the sum of \$193,891.62. The number of beneficiaries of the Ministerial Relief Fund was very greatly increased last year and the urgent need of the candidates for the ministry made it necessary to overdraw the current account fund to the amount of \$12,500. This must be paid and the first quarterly payment of \$13,000 to ministers, widows and orphans on the roll of Ministerial Relief must be provided. April is the month assigned to this cause. The Executive Secretary presents a condensed statement of receipts on page 14.

Receipts for Assembly's Home Missions for the year ending March 31, 1917, show an increase over the previous year of \$16,982.03. The Executive Committee has been able to reduce its bank obligations to \$10,000. This would have been reduced more, but for the fact that a large number of special contributions were made which could not be used for this purpose. Total contributions were \$193,363.48; while in the preceding year they amounted to \$176,381.45. Rev. S. L. Morris, D. D., Executive Secretary of Home Missions, reports that there were 5,624 additions on profession of faith in Assembly's Home Mission fields, a gain of twenty-two per cent. over last year.

"Christian Stewardship" is the theme uppermost in the minds of the members of our Church at the present time. The General Assembly's Campaign Committee on Stewardship is conducting a contest, to close May 1, in which substantial rewards are offered to men, women and children for the best articles on any phase of Christian Stewardship. Rev. R. L. Walkup, of Jackson, Mississippi, Secretary of the Campaign Committee will furnish detailed information to any one who desires to enter the contest. The Committee is arranging for a ten days' summer school on Christian Stewardship to be held next summer at Montreat, North Carolina, led by the most competent instructors. Presbyteries and Synodical Auxiliaries are asked to arrange to

send the chairmen of their Systematic Beneficence committees to this summer school. It is hoped that they can arrange to pay the expenses of those who will attend as their representatives. These chairmen have done faithful work during the year, in most cases without any financial appropriation and with much personal sacrifice. If they have been faithful, they deserve the trip and will be helped by the opportunities offered in this summer school. If they have been negligent, they will need the instruction and inspiration that such a gathering will bring to them.

The Church owes a duty to provide copies of the Word of God for the thousands of men who are being called from their homes to defend the honor and integrity of their country against the unlawful, unwarranted and unrestricted warfare that Germany is waging in violation of all international law. The American Bible Society is gladly undertaking to furnish Testaments and Bibles to the soldiers and sailors of the United States wherever they may be needed. To meet this unusual demand the Society asks for at least \$20,000 additional from the Churches. Contributions should be sent to William Foulke, treasurer, Bible House, New York City.

Freedom of religious belief throughout Russia has been proclaimed by the Provisional Government. Last week the Government repealed all laws actually in force limiting the rights of Russian citizens regarding creeds and religions. This is one of the most remarkable features of the Russian revolution. It will mean the liberation from religious persecution of all sects in Russia. It will affect particularly the Jews, against whom many volumes of restrictive laws have been aimed. Among the notorious restrictive laws in force in the past have been those limiting the percentage of Jewish children in a school, without regard to the percentage of population of Jews in that district; a law restricting the Jews to a segregated district known as "The Pale;" and a law barring Jews from practicing law and denying to them the right to engage in certain trades and arts.

The House of Romanoff, represented by the deposed Emperor Nicholas, of Russia, was largely responsible for the persecution of the Jews, because the Jews have always stood for revolution and progress. The Russian people generally have had great sympathy with the Jews, and the repeal of all laws limiting religious rights indicates that the Russian people at last are giving to Jews, as well as to all other religious bodies, the right to which all people are entitled—the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. The whole world will rejoice at this splendid result of the revolution in Russia. For many years the United States has sought without success to induce Russia to alleviate the condition of the persecuted Jews, to thousands of whom it has furnished a grateful asylum. God's providence is working in a marvelous way for the advancement of His own Kingdom among the nations of the world, through the unprecedented events of the world war during the past few months.

Four hundred and forty-four "Student Volunteers," not before reported, were added, during 1916, to the list of those who have reached their mission fields in foreign lands—a larger number than has been reported in any previous year. This is a remarkable record in view of world conditions and indicates a splendid, heroic spirit on the part of those who have volunteered.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting

BY REV. JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN, D. D.

SABBATH BLESSINGS.

Topic for Wednesday, April 18, 1917.

Suggested Scripture: Isaiah 58:5-14.

The Scripture chosen for this topic must be divided into two different though closely related parts.

I. Religious Formalism versus Altruism.

The first is Religious Formalism versus Altruism. This part extends from the fifth verse through the twelfth. It is very much in the thought of the ancient prophets and very characteristic of Isaiah in particular. It includes the keeping of the Sabbath, but is wider and extends to the whole question of the vanity of the ceremonial without the moral law. The prophets were in this regard the forerunners of Jesus who finally hit an empty ceremonialism a blow from which it has never recovered. The prophet promises the people in the name of Jehovah that, if they will turn away from mere meaningless, external fastings to lead lives of justice and mercy to their fellow-men, then three characteristic blessings from Jehovah will be theirs.

1. The first is divine guidance. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning," verse 8; "and Jehovah shall guide thee continually," verse 11. The Bible is full, from one end to the other, of the value of this blessing of divine guidance. Our lives are either unguided or guided lives. And the life that is unguided by God must surely come to grief in the end. We are not always conscious of God's guidance. It is a joyous thing for us when we are. But even when we are not we may still be guided by Him. Tennyson felt that there was such an unconscious guidance. And his faith was that at the end when he had "crossed the bar," he would see his "pilot face to face." Now such guidance, whether conscious to ourselves or unconscious, is conditioned on leading the life God wants us to. Jesus said to much the same intent that willingness to do God's will would result in knowledge of the doctrine.

2. The second blessing is healing. "And thy healing shall spring forth speedily," verse 8; "Jehovah will make strong thy bones," verse 11; "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Verse 12.

The Bible is also full of the need of men for healing. "Who healeth all thy diseases," is the beautiful expression of the one hundred and third Psalm. Jesus came as a healer of men's bodies and souls. And this healing is both for the individual and for the communal or civic life. "And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations," the Apocalypse tells us in the last chapter of the Bible, a thought that comes home to us now that the nations of the world are bleeding to death, with tremendous significance. It is a promise to the nation, even more than to the individual, for its abandonment of hypocritical profession and the substitution therefor of a conduct of genuine altruism, the practice of justice and mercy toward men.

3. And the third blessing is real glory. It is God's glory, the glory that begins in the solid trunk and sound roots of character and ends in the fruitage of joy both to one's self and to others. "Thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of Jehovah shall be thy reward," verse 8; "and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." What both individual men and nations need to know is that real glory, the glory that God gives and approves and that will last both in this world and the other, is not the glory of conquest but of character.

II. The Holy Day versus the Holiday.

The second part of this Scripture lesson deals more particularly with the Sabbath and its blessings. It includes verses 13 and 14. The first thing to be remarked about the Sabbath is the importance attached to it here as elsewhere in Scripture. While the prophet has apparently been discounting the observances of fasting, he does not want to be understood as in any way minimizing the observance of the Sabbath. In fact he makes this stand out. For just as before he has been emphasizing morality, the duties and principles of the second table of the commandments, so now he means to emphasize religion, the duties and principles of the first table of the commandments, our duties to God.

And among these the Sabbath is central. Most people do not like to have it said of them that religion or religiousness is missing in their make-up. They feel that to be not religious is to be not wholly a man. But no man and no people are apt to continue to be religious in any active, positive sense when once they begin to give up the religious character and observance of the Sabbath.

But the second thing to be remarked is that, if the Sabbath is important in Scripture, it is equally

important that the observance of it should be right. Else it will fail of bringing the blessing after all. There are two extremes against which Scripture warns us in our observance of the Sabbath. One extreme is to make it mostly a day of negations. That is what the Pharisees did. They apparently made more of what was not permitted on the Sabbath day than of its privileges. The other extreme is to turn it into a mere holiday. It was intended by God not as a day of pleasure, if by that one means the lower levels of pleasure. It was intended as the center and core of religion.

But if the Sabbath be observed normally as a day when we are given time and opportunity to cultivate the higher instincts, especially the religious instincts of our nature, on the one hand, and to bring to God our meed of praise and gratitude, on the other, then the prophet promises two specific blessings from it.

1. The first is joy. "Then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah," verse 14. So the Sabbath will indeed become a day of pleasure, but of the higher pleasures not of the lower. As Mr. Beattys has said in a very helpful little book on "Should Smith go to Church?" "The modern pagan ignores the finest things of his inheritance, living in the lower parts of his being. It is as though one were to inherit a magnificent palace and were to close the art galleries and the libraries and live only in the dining room and the kitchen spending one's time there exclusively in feeding the body. Happy the man who is a fine fellow and a good business man; but alas! if he be only that! Happy he who prospers in material and temporal things; but alas! if he be dwarfed and shrivelled in things spiritual! To be a millionaire in things physical and temporal and a pauper in things spiritual is enough to make the angels weep. Has Smith ever stopped, in his easy indifferent life of pursuing pleasure on the Lord's day, to consider what harm he is doing himself by ignoring the claims of religion on him, and by holding himself aloof from the house of the Lord? He has within him powers he has never used. Never yet has he walked the high places of his life. Never yet has he approached the summit of his being. Never yet has he caught the full vision of what he might become."

And I might add: Never yet has he had any conception of the higher, the highest joys of life. The promise of this Scripture is that if he will pursue religion, especially the religion of the Sabbath day, he will grow into and know these highest joys: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah."

2. And the second blessing is power. "I will make thee to ride on the high places of the earth," verse 14. The Sabbath was meant by God to give men not only joy but power. It was meant by its physical rest to continue and increase to them their physical power. It was meant also to give them mental power. Nothing will so much develop mental power in a man as to bring his mind into contact with great truths. Nothing will perhaps so deplete his mind of power as to keep it on little things. That is why the Sabbath, if observed as God meant it to be, will give men power; if observed in its trivial perversions will have the very opposite effects. And that it should develop moral and spiritual power in a man is so obvious as to need no discussion. All its God-given accompaniments of worship and church are calculated to do just that.

And what is true of the individual is true of the nation, which is made up of individuals. It is no mere arbitrary accompaniment that the nation which is God fearing and Sabbath keeping should "ride upon the high places of the earth." It is the natural and logical result. A nation's greatest asset is the character of its people. Religion is necessary to character. And the Sabbath is necessary to religion. If Germany had continued in the spirit of Luther and its reformers it would be far surer of "a place in the sun" today than it can expect through its military arm or even its boasted culture. And that is true of every other nation as well.

Louisville, Ky.

WHAT TO BRING TO THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR MEETING.

1. Bring your own Bible; every working man prefers his own tools.
2. Bring the topic—in your memory, not on the card.
3. Bring some matured thought on the theme—from your Bible study.
4. Bring the best illustration or application of the theme you have found in your reading or research.
5. Bring some wish, aspiration, sense of need—sated appetites are the hardest to cater to.
6. Bring your attention; a wandering mind never wanders to God.
7. Bring your sympathies; give more than you expect to get, and you will get more than you expect.
8. Bring your smiles and cheerful looks and emphasize the beauty of holiness.
9. Bring your friend or a stranger. How easy to increase the attendance by a few personal invitations.
10. Bring a large expectation, and God will fill it.—Ex.

Young People's Societies

BY REV. WM. M. ANDERSON, D. D.

HOW LYING UNDERMINES CHARACTER.

Topic for the Week Beginning April 22, 1917.

Lev. 19:11, 12: Prov. 6:16-19.

DAILY READINGS.

M., Apr. 16. The first lies. Gen. 3:4, 12.
T., Apr. 17. Cain's lie a subterfuge. Gen. 4:9.
W., Apr. 18. Leads to deception. Matt. 2:1-8.
Th., Apr. 19. Leads to meanness. Luke 20:20-26.
F., Apr. 20. Lying fears man, dares God. Acts 5:1-11.
S., Apr. 21. Where lying ends. Rev. 21:8.

"Ye shall not steal neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by My Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God: I am the Lord."

"These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Truth consists of facts, all past facts, all present facts, all possible facts. Truth is the atmosphere of life, the atmosphere in which God lives.

Truth is a unit, it is one, undivided, and indivisible. It contains no error, does not mix with error, and cannot live with error. It is the enemy of error, and is opposed to lies of every form and kind.

Lying is a mistatement of facts, a concealing of facts, a denying of facts. As truth binds up and gives life, so lying tears apart and destroys life. Lying is dynamite in business, anarchy in social life, and sunders friendships. It was through lying that Hell entered earth, and because of lying ambitious angels were driven out of Heaven. It was lying that caught the first pair guilty in Eden, and lying has been one of the greatest sins of the race. The little boy was nearer right than he knew, who when asked by his Sunday school teacher, "What is a lie?" said, "A lie is an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and a very present help in the day of trouble."

A liar is one whose character is rotten at the core. If one is known to be a liar no one believes him, and he has severed every tie that might bind him to another. He is known as a deceiver, and capable of any and all kinds of meanness. He fears lest he will be caught up with by men, but he continually dares God. Persistent lying destroys the moral sense, and like a hidden fire destroys the inner life. Lying grows on one, the first lie calls for another to hide, for a third, and on and on.

A liar will also steal, in fact he will break any law in the whole code. Cain the first murderer was a great liar. Either of these sins showed him to be a very bad man at heart. The curse of God was set upon him after he lied in telling God he did not know where his brother was, and was not his brother's keeper. You will observe in the Scripture above that "the Lord hates a lying tongue."

In Rev. 21:8 we are told where lying ends: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Lying is an evident symptom of a most dreadful disease, a wicked heart poisoned with sin. It should be watched in ourselves and others. Especially should we watch it in younger people. Remember the tongue is always the instrument of the heart, and white lies are lies, and little lies are lies, and everything that is not the truth is a lie.

Faith is a basic fact in religion and it is called confidence in business; but lying is destructive of both. If you lie to men in business they soon lose confidence in you, and if you lie to God He will punish you.

Lying is one of the greatest temptations known to man. Lying is hateful to God. Jesus says that Satan is the father of liars and prompts lies. It is startling and instructive to notice some of those charged with lying in the Scriptures. Among others these are mentioned: The devil, Cain, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph's brethren, the Gibeonites, Samson, Saul, Michal, David, the prophet of Beth-el, Gehazi, Job's friends, the Ninevites, Peter, Ananias, and the Cretians.

Think.

Ought one ever to save one's self with a lie? Why?

What punishment comes upon the liar?

Why is lying merely a symptom of general falseness?

Quotations.

An untrue man is a moral murderer, his mouth the deadly weapon, and his neighbor the victim.—"Sunday Teachers' Treasury."

A liar is sooner caught than a cripple.—Italian Proverb.

Wisdom and truth are immortal; cunning and deception, after glittering for a moment, pass away forever.—Robert Hall.

Lie not, neither to thyself, nor men, nor God. Let mouth and heart be one—beat and speak together, and make both felt in action. It is for cowards to lie.—George Herbert.

Dallas, Texas.