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EDITORIAL NOTES.

One of the purest and most lasting forms of enjoyment comes to us as the result of our sympathy with the joys of others and our pleasure in their successes. Life will seem increasingly worth living if we walk in this widest and truest path of happiness, which is a willingness to rejoice with others.

When we consider how very little Christian men and women deny themselves for the sake of Christ, how little the love of Christ controls their life, how frequently they seem to forget the Lord who loved them and died for them, we cease to wonder why there are so few consecrated Christians in the Church of God today.

There is a profound truth in the exhortation of the Psalmist, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." A famous theologian used to put the same truth in this form: "A good lover is a good hater." If we love God, we must hate sin; if we love righteousness, we must hate unrighteousness. While the Christian loves God and His service with supreme delight, he hates the opposite with inextinguishable indignation. Dr. W. L. Watkinson once said: "Morality without passion is etiquette, not righteousness." His meaning is that there is little reality in our goodness until it stirs the soul to its very depths.

When Jesus saw the weariness and anxiety of His apostles as they followed Him through His ministry of teaching and healing, He said: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." The Saviour's call to solitude must come at some time to every one of us. Tennyson said: "Solitude is the mother country of the strong." It is an evidence of weakness in our spiritual life and growth when we are willing to shorten our times of solitude and fellowship with God. If we would be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," we must observe times of solitude in which we commune alone with God. Electricians tell us that storage batteries often "pick up" electricity if allowed to stand alone for a time.

In the celebration of the Lord's Supper, we are commanded to observe it in remembrance of Christ. It is, however, no commemoration of defeat, for our Lord gained His greatest victory and His most signal triumph in His death upon the Cross for the sins of men. It was through His vicarious atoning death that He bore our sins and carried our sorrows. It was through the Cross that He achieved for His people the great deliverance. In commanding His people throughout all ages to remember His death in this helpful sacrament, He is virtually saying: Commemorate My victory, My triumph over sin and death and hell. Do this that you may with faith and patience await My return. "For, as oft as you eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

Evidences of awakening interest in the prayer meeting are being received from various quarters of the Church. The new department devoted to the "Mid-week Prayer Meeting," conducted by Rev. John M. Vander Meulen, D. D., pastor of the Second Presby-

terian church, Louisville, Kentucky, has been received with great cordiality by the readers of the "Christian Observer." Evidently this department is supplying a real need in church work. Both pastors and people are making use of it to stimulate interest in the prayer meeting and to increase attendance upon it.

Sometimes providential reasons make it impossible for some church members to attend the prayer meeting service. Distance, demands of family life, illness, and other hindrances sometimes arise. It is our hope that the department for the "Mid-Week Prayer Meeting" may be used by those who are prevented by any providential reason from joining in the public mid-week service. Members of the family in the home can read aloud the comments on the subject as published in this special department of the "Christian Observer," can sing together a few appropriate songs or hymns, can read the suggested Scripture lesson and join together in prayer. On page 10 of this issue Rev. J. E. Wallace suggests the formation of a "Home Department Prayer Meeting" corresponding to the Home Department of the Sunday school. This has been used with success in Mr. Wallace's pastorate and may be adapted to suit the needs of pastors in other places. In this way even those who cannot attend the public prayer meeting are spending the same hour in meditation and prayer upon the same theme that occupies the minds of those who are together in one place, engaged in the prayer meeting service.

A "Catechism Campaign" has been inaugurated by the Sunday school of the Church of the Covenant, of Greensboro, North Carolina. A challenge was issued to the First church and to the Westminster church, of Greensboro, to a contest along two lines: First, as to which can furnish the largest percentage of membership who have recited the "Shorter Catechism;" second, as to which church shall win in a final public "match" to be held in one of the churches. The contest is to close April 1. The challenge has been accepted, and many of the members of all the Presbyterian churches in Greensboro are now busily at work memorizing the "Shorter Catechism." North Carolina led all the states in the number reported on the "Roll of Honor" for 1916, and published in the "Christian Observer" of January 10. We look for a still larger number on the "Honor Roll" next year from this splendid Presbyterian state. A campaign and contest similar to that conducted in Greensboro will prove inspiring and helpful in other places.

"On to Lexington!"—but not in a military sense—is now the cry of the laymen of the Southern Presbyterian Church. This slogan is sounded far and wide because of the fact that the Fifth General Convention of the Laymen's Missionary Movement of the Presbyterian Church in the United States will be held in Lexington, Kentucky, February 20-22. A "twin" convention will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 13-15. Each of these conventions will begin with an afternoon session on Tuesday and close with the evening session of Thursday. The theme of these two conventions will be, "America Must Not Fail"—a study in home missions. The theme of the 1915 convention was "For-

A good deal of the trouble of God's people ariseth from a mistake and misapprehension of God; they judge of God by the sense, not by His promise.—John Mason.

When God speaks He asks to be taken at His word—no more than that, but also no less. God's Word is never proposed as the basis of negotiations or discussion.—James Denney.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting

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

THE MEANING OF CONFESSION OF FAITH IN CHRIST.

Topic for Wednesday, January 31.

Suggested Scripture Reading: Matt. 10:32-33.

There are two sorts of confession that are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible; the one is confession of sin; the other is confession of Jesus. These two are of course related, but also they are different. For confession of Jesus is acknowledgment that one has sought and by faith has found the deliverance from sin and its consequences.

There are three prominent elements in conversion. The first is repentance; the second is faith in Christ; the third is confession of Him.

The leader of the meeting, may, if he choose, bring out these facts by assigning Scripture passages on all these matters to different members of his congregation to be read by them.

The passages relating to confession of Jesus are especially (beside the one suggested above) Luke 12:8; John 9:22; Romans 10:9; Phil. 2:11; and I John 4:2-3. These passages will bring out the fact that the insistence of the Bible on confession of Jesus is emphatic and absolute.

Now there are many who would like to escape this, who do not see the reason or value of confession of Jesus. They admit the importance of repentance and even of faith. "But why," say they, "should a man have to make an open confession of it all; why can't a man live a Christian life without that?"

This meeting should leave no one unconvinced in the matter. It should therefore bring out first, the subjective value of confession of Christ for the individual, and secondly, its objective value for the world.

I. The Value of Confession of Christ for the Individual.

Such a confession has first of all a subjective value. It is, like repentance and faith, a necessity of the soul. As such its significance is threefold.

1. **It is, First of all, a Test and Ratification of One's Sincerity and Earnestness.**—For if a man, who thinks he has accepted Christ, asks himself the reason why he does not want to confess Him, he will find that one reason is that he consciously or half-consciously wants to shirk the responsibilities of the Christian life. Every disciple of Christ knows that his open discipleship means the shouldering of certain responsibilities of life and worship and work in the Kingdom.

Such assumption of responsibility and service is the very thing by which a soul grows in the Christian life. No man is really a Christian who is a moral and religious loafer in the Kingdom, certainly not the Christian he ought to be. It argues, therefore, very poorly for his earnestness in the matter if he wants to begin his discipleship by being a shirker of the open responsibilities of discipleship. It is precisely this open confession of Christ that is Christ's means to help thrust him out into a life of Christian responsibility and service.

2. **It is, Secondly, a Test and Stimulus of His Courage.**—We probably do not emphasize enough the element of courage in the Christian life. The Bible lays a great deal of stress upon it. We are even told (Revelation 21:8) that among those shut out from the Kingdom of God will be the "fearful."

Dr. Louis Albert Banks tells us of an old navy officer who had been for years a shipmate of the late Rear-Admiral Sampson and relates this story of the Admiral: "I have never doubted Sampson's courage since the first cruise I made with him. We were wardroom officers together. The first night aboard ship, when the hour arrived for 'piping down' and we turned in, there were several officers sitting around the wardroom table indulging in some innocent merriment. I was taught to say my prayers before going to bed at night, but I confess I lacked the courage to kneel down in the presence of my shipmates and pray. It was warm weather, and our stateroom doors opened into the wardroom. Then it was Sampson displayed the moral courage which forever afterward impressed me. When he was ready to turn in, he knelt down by his berth and prayed. A stillness came over the wardroom immediately, and I concluded that if Sampson had the courage to say his prayers in the presence of his shipmates I could do so likewise, so I have never hesitated to pray before turning in."

God has placed us in a world wherein it takes more moral courage to be a Christian than not to be one. Who has not felt his coward soul shrink and sometimes refuse to rebuke the word of profanity or filthy jest or blasphemous unbelief uttered in his presence? Who has not even felt that same soul, under just the mere pressure of its moral cowardice, tempted to yield to things for which otherwise one had no special desire and which one felt to be out of line with his conscience. It isn't merely that cowardice is itself un-Christian, though that is emphatically true, but that it is also the open door to all sorts of other sin and deterioration.

If young Sampson had yielded to the cowardice

of not daring to say his prayers in the presence of his shipmates, by and by he wouldn't have dared refuse when they wanted to lead him into positive temptation and vice. Do not we all know that a large percentage of young men and women who go wrong start just because they have not the moral nerve and grit to refuse their companions and to withstand the laugh and the sneer?

It is a poor and dangerous thing, therefore, to begin the Christian life with a moral cowardice. What Christ demands of them is that for the sake of their own souls they shall have the nerve to checkmate all that in advance, by publicly professing Him and so beginning at once to develop a morally braver soul.

3. It is, Thirdly, a Test and Solidifier of Faith.

—For the third reason why a man, who thinks he is willing to accept Christ, is still not willing to confess Him, is because he is afraid he will backslide, and afraid of the private or public humiliation of that. So he says when he is pressed for an open decision: "I'll just try this thing by myself for awhile, quietly. And then if I succeed in sticking to it, I'll come out in the open and confess Christ."

And, of course, the time never comes that he does stick to it, for there never has been anything to stick to. He has never had a whole-hearted faith in Christ or he would have trusted this matter of backsliding to Him, too, and accepted His way of becoming a Christian, which includes an open confession. The only way to decide a great moral and spiritual question like this is fully and strongly to burn the bridges behind one and take the adventure of faith.

And so it is that confession of Christ is a test to a man's own soul of how genuine his faith in Christ is, a solidifier of that faith, if it is too half-hearted and timid to land him in the Kingdom in the only way in which a man is ever really landed there, on both feet.

II. The Value of Confession of Christ for the World.

It is The Only Way to Save the World.—And if a person claims to be a disciple of Jesus and is not interested in saving the world he had better re-examine his claim. Jesus said to His disciples, "And ye shall be My witnesses." The very context and occasion of the text was His sending out of His disciples through the towns and villages of Palestine.

Now Jesus is perpetually on trial before the world. He is as much so in this age as in any, before the bar of men's souls. Will He win His case with them? Well, that will depend on whether His followers will witness for Him or not. It doesn't depend on the preachers. These are, so to speak, His lawyers in the case. But men are not going to be convinced by the lawyers if the witnesses are wanting. And when we see and hear so much preaching and so little witnessing we are reminded of the colored man on trial who, when the judge appointed two lawyers to defend him, said: "Your honor, if it's jes' the same to you I would like to trade one of them lawyers for a witness." What Jesus needs before the bar of lost human souls today is not more lawyers but more witnesses. They and they alone can make good His case. Souls are not won in any community till Christ's disciples begin witnessing for Him.

Therein lies the secret of the success of the propaganda of "Christian Science." Its theology and philosophy is crude and so full of inconsistencies that it is destined to collapse at last by its own weakness. But it has, in spite of all that, attained a distinguished temporary success just because it has so whole-heartedly adopted this method of Jesus.

That is what makes their weekly prayer meetings a success, especially from the standpoint of attendance. They are testimony meetings. Most of the testimonies are not very lofty at that. For they are not only very self-centered but centered on the welfare of the lower part of themselves, namely their bodies. But with whatever weakness and illusion they may be mixed, they are testimonies. And that is the divine method.

Let any body of Christian people throw aside their false notions of formalism and dignity and moral cowardice at their mid-week service and resolve themselves into a testimony meeting of the people instead of a lecture by the pastor with a few formal prayers thrown in, and it will be evident how soon this meeting will become a popular and a vital one in the life of the church. That is where a revival must start, in a confession of Christ by His disciples.

For it is not enough that men should perform this act once at the beginning of their Christian lives. That is not the command that Jesus laid upon His disciples. Like repentance and faith, confession is to be a repeated and constant thing in a Christian's life. He can not be spiritually blessed without it. God has so arranged His method of salvation that the welfare and happiness of a man's individual soul in spiritual things is bound up with his endeavor to save the world by witnessing for Christ.

Louisville, Ky.

Adversity is the trial of principle. Without it a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not.

—Fielding.

Young People's Societies

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

VISIONS AND TASKS.

Prayer Meeting Topic

For the Week Beginning February 4, 1917.

Joel 2:28-29; II Chron. 34:1-7.

DAILY READINGS.

M., Jan. 29. Soul-winning. Dan. 12:1-3.
T., Jan. 30. Spreading the Kingdom. 1 Cor. 2:1-9.
W., Jan. 31. More givers. 2 Cor. 9:1-15.
T., Feb. 1. Deeper spiritual life. Eph. 3:13-21.
F., Feb. 2. Cleansing our cities. John 2:13-25.
S., Feb. 3. Working for peace. Matt. 5:9.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit."

The prophecy of Joel has indeed come true in these later days. The sons and daughters of the Church today are having visions of larger work and undertaking greater tasks. The prophecy is not yet fulfilled, for the work needs a larger number of young people with still larger visions, determined to accomplish still larger tasks. It is a good thing to be a dreamer, if dreaming is but a testing and preparatory period. All visions should result in larger conceptions of practical tasks. Joseph was a dreamer, but he became a world famous ruler. Daniel was a dreamer, but he became a world famous statesman. Isaiah was a dreamer, but he became a great Gospel prophet.

The next passage is an illustration of the first. Josiah was a strong youth and an instrument for God in leading the people in ways of righteousness. He stood against the idolatry of the times and broke down the altars of Baalam throughout the land. What he did resulted in a great revival. They found out the law and wisdom of following it, and God's blessing came in abundant measure upon the people.

A great example is a permanent influence to the people. Circles of power are continually arising and widening around it. Youth is the time for young people to seek after God; for they are not only saved from a life of sin, but saved to a life of service. A boy or girl saved in youth forms decided religious habits and becomes a positive influence in life.

Sin is a definite reality and must be dealt with definitely. You can no more cure a sinful habit by superficial, temporary means, than you can cure and plug an aching tooth successfully with putty. Sin can no more be cured by superficial methods than a cancer can be removed by a piece of court-plaster. Josiah had a great vision of a purified land freed from sin, and he proceeded to accomplish his task in definite, effective measures.

If one is right with God, one can influence and set to right other things and other people. Each one should consider for himself first of all his own relationship to God. Reformers should be reformed before they begin reforming. All true reformers have been reformed men with deep, definite, permanent convictions. Martin Luther was so valuable as a reformer because he had passed through a severe reforming process and had in his heart a great vision of the Church purified from the gross evils of his time.

If the young life of the Church would submit itself to the guidance of God's Spirit, He will give visions and assign tasks. He is the Executor of the Church, the guide of its larger work, but He can only work with willing hearts and minds. Wonderful work has been accomplished by the Christian Endeavor Society since its organization, but all that has been done reveals what should be done and what can be done.

Quotations.

I have been permitted during my ministry to receive nearly one thousand persons into the church on confession of their faith, and not one dozen of these had outgrown their fiftieth year.—Theodore L. Cuyler.

No boy is prepared for rough climbing unless he is well shod with Christian principles.—Anon.

You will not be able to do so much good in Heaven as you can on earth, for they all know God up there, but men here need our witness.—Spurgeon.

All our actions take

Their hues from the complexion of the heart,
As landscapes their variety from light.

—W. T. Bacon.

Endeavor Grace.

Our society work is not well done unless it is gracefully done. To work grudgingly and sulkily is to displease our gracious Lord.

A happy face in the prayer meetings is a considerable contribution to the meetings.

Social grace has as fine a field in the committee meetings as in the socials.

An ungracious Christian is as poor an advertisement of Christianity as muddy windows of a department store.

Dallas, Texas.