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Christian Observer

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June 17

FAMILY ALTAR NUMBER.

VOL. 105. LOUISVILLE, KY., FEBRUARY 21, 1917. NO. 8.

Christian Observer

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

Founded September 4th, 1813.

HARRY P. CONVERSE, Managing Editor.
REV. DAVID M. SWEETS, D. D., Editor.

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.

This issue of the "Christian Observer" is dedicated to the "Family Altar," with the earnest hope and prayer that God's people may be brought to recognize the vital importance of religion in the home. God has always dealt with the human race through the divine institution of the family. His covenant was made with parents not only for themselves but for their posterity. The children are included in all the promises which God makes to His people. On the day of Pentecost Peter said: "For the promise is unto you and to your children."

One of the significant and hopeful signs of the times is an increase of interest in home religion and the formation of movements such as the "Family Altar League." Our own General Assembly has approved the formation of such a league and it has published for the use of those who desire forms of suitable prayers for use in family worship a little book entitled, "The Family Altar," sold at the nominal price of twenty-five cents a copy.

The earliest altar in the history of the human race was a family altar. The patriarchs' homes were centers of religious worship. In all the ages God has given His blessing to the families where God is revered, honored and worshiped. The greatest need in the world today is the strengthening of the family altar where it has been already founded, the re-establishment of that altar where it has been broken down, and the erection of that altar where it has never been known before. Robert Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night" presents a picture that all the world admires, showing that the children, though they may become wayward, will not fail to keep in sacred memory the hours when the altar of the home was sanctified by parental prayers.

The story is told of a family in Virginia where the father and mother were devoted Christians and earnest believers in the power of prayer, and had had the joy of seeing all the children but one brought into the Kingdom of God. Many prayers had ascended from the family altar for this wayward boy, but both parents died without the joy of seeing him converted. Years passed and the old homestead was about to be torn down to make place for modern improvements. All the members of the family gathered once more in a family reunion around the family fireplace where father and mother had so often knelt with the family in prayer. One of the sons suggested that a final prayer should be offered in this sacred place for the conversion of the unsaved son, who was present with the other children. With reverent awe they knelt and poured out their prayers to the covenant-keeping God. While they were thus on their knees God's Spirit touched the heart of the one unconverted member of the family and the sacred memory of the pious

parents' prayers was used by the Holy Spirit to lead this only remaining child to repentance and faith. Though sometimes delayed, answers to earnest, faithful prayers of parents and members of the family will surely be given.

No more inspiring and helpful discussion of the subject of family religion can be found than a small booklet entitled, "Religion in the Home," by Rev. Walter W. Moore, D. D., LL.D., President of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, and ex-moderator of the General Assembly. This is a sermon preached before the General Assembly at Savannah, Georgia, May 20, 1909. It can be obtained from the Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Virginia, at three cents a copy, or \$2.50 a hundred postpaid.

The last General Assembly recommended that the feature of special and outstanding emphasis in the Assembly of 1917, which will convene in the South Highlands Presbyterian church, Birmingham, Alabama, May 17, shall be "Family Religion," and the Permanent Committee on Sabbath and Family Religion was instructed to prepare a suitable program on this subject. The Presbyteries were directed to appoint a Permanent Committee on the Sabbath and Family Religion, and the stated clerks of Presbyteries were directed to send the names of the chairmen of the committees to the chairman of the Assembly's Permanent Committee, Rev. Robert Hill, D. D., 2708 Laclede Avenue, Dallas, Texas.

After this issue had gone to press and a number of copies had been printed information was received of the death on February 17 of Rev. G. R. Buford, pastor of the Moore Memorial church, Atlanta, Georgia. The circumstances connected with Mr. Buford's death are particularly distressing. On entering a house in response to cries for help he was shot and instantly killed by a man who had recently been released from the State Hospital for the Insane. Mr. Buford graduated from the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Kentucky and for a time was in charge of the Preston Street mission of the First Presbyterian church, Louisville. Later he was assistant pastor of the Central Presbyterian church, Atlanta. A year ago he became pastor of the Moore Memorial church. Mr. Buford was a man peculiarly gifted in reaching the hearts of the people among whom he labored. It was characteristic of the man to hasten to the help of any one who was in distress. The sympathy of the entire Church will be with his bereaved family.

The Laymen's Missionary Convention for the Southern Presbyterian Church is in session in Lexington, Kentucky, at the very time when this issue of the "Christian Observer" is placed in the hands of its subscribers. The theme for this convention is "Home Missions," and the watchword is "America Must Not Fail." If ever our people should be permeated with prayerful patriotism, it is now. The climax of the Lexington Convention will come on a national holiday, February 22, when we celebrate the birthday of the "Father

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35).

"Better is a dinner for herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. 15:17).

"And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

eration there were a faithful few who found everlasting life. Let us love, worship and serve Him who gives us every good thing.

Questions.

Why did the people follow Jesus? Why remain so long with Him?

What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? Why? What was offered to the Master as all they had to give?

How was the multitude fed? What spiritual truths are here seen?

Union Point, Ga.

Young People's Societies

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

SERVICE.

Topic for the Week Beginning March 4, 1917.

James 1:19-27.

(Consecration Meeting.)

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M. Feb. 26. God's demand. Mic. 6:6-8.
T. Feb. 27. Serving men. Mark 10:35-45.
W. Feb. 28. Undivided service. Luke 16:1-13.
T. Mar. 1. Serving a servant. I Kings 19:19-21.
F. Mar. 2. Serving Christ. Eph. 6:1-9.
S. Mar. 3. Reward of service. II Tim. 4:5-8.

This passage from James is a fine manual for service. James was an efficiency man. He believed in doing things. He believed in salvation by faith, but he liked to see faith shown by works. He urged humility as an essential qualification to service. He believed in trying to do things that ought to be done, rather than only those things one liked to do. James was a very practical man. He did not like theory unless it could be demonstrated.

James realized that the tongue was a great instrument for service, but that it could be put to a wrong use. He gives a clear warning against the dangers in the use of the tongue. A bachelor preacher friend of mine says that James is talking about a woman's tongue. But my opinion is that the male tongue is as dangerous as the female tongue.

Verse 27 gives not only a sort of definition, but is a very valuable suggestion. The program of service is to keep pure, and help the needy. Young Christians should early learn to make sharp and correct distinctions between right and wrong; between what ought and what ought not to be done; between mediate and immediate duties.

Service is the great word that makes for efficiency in the Christian life. Service is the great purpose of life, it is the highest ambition one can have in life. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Jesus' life was one of service. He said, "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

The proper kind of service is dependent upon the spirit in which it is performed. Sam Jones ridiculed the kind of Christians who would cut the buttons off before they gave them to the poor. One can do a little charity in such a helpful way that it counts for more than the value of the mere gift. A street car conductor needed an overcoat, and a friend offered to give it if I would take it to him. I told him to take it himself, that he would enjoy giving it. He was a good man and I knew that he would give it in the right way. He took it and returned with joy, because he had done a good deed.

We can understand Christ better when we have looked at life from His viewpoint. In really practicing Christ's principles we come to be like Him. He said, "My Father worketh, and I work," and we who love and believe in Him should work also.

Ambition is the main motive of some lives. They make everything turn to this account. Therefore their lives become self-centered, therefore selfish. And what a sad disappointment is mere earthly ambition! Much of it fails of accomplishment; but if it succeeded, how little the value we gain!

Desire for wealth is another main motive of many lives. Their eyes are constantly set on money; their plans all bend in this direction; nothing to them is attractive unless money is to be gained. They never think of how little money can buy. If one is dying, money cannot buy life. Money cannot buy health; it cannot buy learning; it cannot buy culture; it cannot buy position.

Power is another dominating influence in life. Power is dangerous, because it is intoxicating. Sometimes one would sacrifice everything to gain power. The world has wondered at the insatiable thirst for power displayed by Napoleon. He sacrificed the love of his heart and the wife of his youth to gain power. Many another, less prominent in life, has made similar sacrifices. It is said that Socrates demanded double payment from a talkative youth, because he had to teach him two sciences, how to hold his tongue, and how to speak. Christ teaches both these, and still another, how to act.

One of the Roman coins bears the design of an ox standing between a plow and an altar, and it is therefore ready for either service or sacrifice. This is exactly the proper Christian spirit. Absolute

submission is a great lesson for every Christian to learn. The happiest frame of mind is entire dependence upon the providence of God. We need to remember that God's providence is permanent. He is always the same, "yesterday, today and forever."

Dallas, Texas.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting

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

WHAT IS IT TO MAGNIFY GOD?

Topic for Wednesday, February 28, 1917.

Suggested Scripture Reading: Psalm 57:5-11.

This topic sounds like an echo of the answer to the first question in the Shorter Catechism. Accordingly the leader of the meeting should have different members of the mid-week congregation read the proof texts under this, and such other passages as he may want to add, such as Eph. 6:6-7.

The discussion should make clear how broad and deep is that answer.

I. Glorifying God Includes More Than Worship.

It includes life. No doubt worship is a high form of magnifying God if it be done aright. It is that to which this Psalm emphatically points. The capacity for it seems wanting in some people. Probably they have lost it through neglect of the talent. But when it is gone, something very high and human is lacking in them. The feeling of it is strong in all the greatest characters of the world. And the tragedy of the loss of it is well illustrated in Henry Van Dyke's story of "The Lost Word." Too much emphasis can not be put on the duty and the beauty of going regularly every Sabbath day to the temple, erected by human love and gratitude to the praise of God, to worship Him there. And together with that ought to go the emphasis on the element of praise and worship in our private devotions. It is outstanding, too, how much stress is laid in the Psalms on the part that music plays in all this. No man who does not join in with such worship, and to whom it does not grow more congenial with the years, is magnifying God as he should, whatever else he may be doing. But when all is said, then it is true that neither here nor in Heaven is that all that is included in glorifying God.

There are at least two ways in which workmen on a building might glorify the master builder. They might go about speaking his praises, either to him or to others or to both. But, on the other hand, they might "do their bit" on the building he had planned and projected, so conscientiously, so skillfully, so appreciatively of the whole and of him, that it would become like a monument to him in stone.

There are two ways in which the children in a family might glorify their mother. They might be full of spoken appreciation of her both to her and to others. Or they might be so observant of her teaching and wishes and ideals, that they would become an ornament to the community, a blessing to society wherever they went. So men would say of them, as they do actually say of the Booth children, for example, "What a mother they must have had."

So glorifying God includes life as well as worship. God has a plan in the world and a project and a will. God, too, has a family. And no magnifying of Him is complete unless it includes both these halves, of worship and of life.

II. It Includes All of Life.

Nothing is excluded from this.

(a) It Embraces the Most Commonplace Details.—Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That would include a reasonable measure of table manners. No man can eat like an animal and, as a man, glorify God. It would include the amount we eat. God has a will in that, too. No man can through gluttony bring indigestion on himself and glorify God in that. No man can go on eating all the high-priced things he would like, while Lazarus starves at his doorstep, and be glorifying God in that. What the European nations at war are trying to impress on their people is that their eating and drinking is a real and essential part of magnifying their country. It is always, in war and peace, a real and essential part of glorifying God. And as such it is only an illustration of all other commonplaces of life.

(b) It Embraces Our Daily Secular Vocations.—God is not only the author of moral laws. He is the author of all the laws that govern in the world of nature and science, of beauty and art, of good business and finance, of good government and statesmanship. For a business man to magnify God is not only to be a moral and righteous man in business but to be an efficient man as well. Wherever he has failed of tact or good judgment or industry and push, there, by so much, he has failed to glorify God. The doctor who handles his case skillfully, the surgeon who performs a highly successful operation, the medical scientist who discovers some new treatment and cure for disease, is glorifying God.

(c) It Embraces the Tragedies of Life.—In the parish of which the father of the present writer was pastor there was an uneducated farmer who became afflicted with a cancer on his cheek. It had passed beyond possibility of cure before the nature of it was discovered. In a long illness covering over two years he was tortured by it in a way too horrible to describe. Yet never once did he murmur. He would point to the flowers and birds outside of the window and remark that these were glorifying God. And at last he said: "I no longer pray to get well; I have even ceased to pray that God may relieve me of my pain. I only pray that He may be glorified in my suffering."

(d) But it Embraces Especially those Deeds and Conducts of Life that May be Called Moral.—The self-sacrificing heroism of the patriot, the altruism of the philanthropist, the purity and zeal of the reformer, the loyalty and devotion of a husband to a wife, the respect of children for their parents, the righteousness of a statesman, the honesty of a business man, all such qualities and deeds are pre-eminently the ones through which God is magnified.

III. Conscious Versus Unconscious Glorifying of God.

But the third point on which we must insist is the value of conscious and intentional as over against unconscious and unintentional glorifying of God. Paul is an example of what we mean. If one should ask what was the ruling passion of Paul, one might be tempted at first blush to say, his passion for humanity. But in Paul this was so blended with his passion to glorify God in Christ as to become a part of the latter, which must be regarded as his ruling and overruling passion.

And that is still more outstanding in the example of Jesus. He had an infinite passion for humanity. But He let it be manifest throughout that this was only subordinate to, and a part of, His greater passion to glorify God. He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work." And on the eve of the close of His great redemptive work He prayed: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." That was what He meant by His last word on the Cross: "It is finished," and "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

This is what is often wanting in much of the so called "social service" work of our age. It professes the passion for humanity. And, in so far, it often glorifies God. But it fails of the highest because the passion, of which this should be only a part, is no conscious part of it. Nay, just because the good is often an enemy of the best, when it makes this passion for humanity a substitute for the passion for the will of God, it often not only falls short of the glory of God but actually detracts from this.

It is so with the moral man who, in his pride over his morality, feels independent of the need of a Saviour. How far such a man fails of the spirit of humility in a man like Paul or Livingstone or Robert E. Lee! The morality and passion for humanity in these men has not been equalled by any moralist. But, in addition to all that, they had also the spirit of humility and reverence that comes only when all this has been merged and is inspired by the greater passion, the passion to glorify God.

And it is such conscious and intentional glorifying of God that is the prerogative and privilege and duty of man. The mountains and the seas, the birds and the flowers, the stars and the skies, all glorify God. But they do it unconsciously, without their own volition or intention. It is given only to man, of all earth's creatures, to do this of his own volition and intention. Therefore, if he does not do this in this way, he fails of his high endowment. In a very true way, therefore, it may be said of him, that, while all these glorify God, he does not unless he does it in the conscious way which they cannot.

Every man who goes through life without conscious and intentional purpose to do God's will and, in loving gratitude and devotion, to praise God through his life is falling short of the glory of God. Let him do his work in the secular affairs of life as efficiently and successfully as he can, but let him become more and more conscious that in all this there is a will of God to do and an aid of God to seek. Let him do his service for humanity as devotedly as he can. But let him not forget that his Father above ought to mean more to him even than his brothers below and that his highest inspiration in it all will come just in proportion as this becomes a part, and the over-ruling part, of his altruism.

And this is, finally, one of the values of worship of God on the Sabbath and in the closet. This will serve to make a man more conscious of the great end of his life, "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

Louisville, Ky.

You do not test the resources of God until you try the impossible.—F. B. Meyer.

An essential for reaching the unsaved in the home land is the Bible—that great instrument of civilization.—Mrs. Atchison.