

A LIVING SACRIFICE

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."
Romans 12:1.

A Living Sacrifice is the theme for the current Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions. It reminds us of the fact that every Christian must decide what kind of a life he shall live. We are faced with two alternatives. One is that of a life of self-choosing, self-indulgence, and self-pleasing. The other is that of a life absolutely yielded to Christ, where His will alone is sought and complied with, and where self-will is crucified and self-pleasing is renounced. The latter proves to be the only life of true liberty and joy.

Since there is no compulsion except that of love, we are constrained to yield our lives to Christ on the grounds of love and gratitude. Out of gratitude to God, we should present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him, for the purpose of doing His blessed will. Dedication is the only reasonable and worthy response we can make to Him Who gave His all for us. We are His by creation, He made us; we are His by redemption, He died for us; we are His by preservation, He supports and preserves us.

"Present your bodies." It is to be an act. The verb "present" is in the aorist tense with its significance of an instantaneous act, done now, once and for all, never to be repeated. Secondly, the presentation is a dedicatory act. The presentation of yourself to God is a definite, intelligent, and loving act. It is something that you do of your own free will.

Why should every Christian present his or her body to the Lord? Because of what Christ has done for him, because of what Christ desires to do in him, and because of what the Lord wants to do through him. The Christian is urged to present his body to the Lord. It belongs to Him. He made it and loaned it to you for your lifetime, but it is His. He gives you every beat of your heart and every breath of your lungs. Since He saved you, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christ wants to live through your body, to work with your hands, and to speak with your tongue.

In connection with the theme "A Living Sacrifice," five topics are being used in the prayer services of this week, namely, "My Life," "My Prayer," "My Home," "My Money," and "My All." The one for consideration today is "My Home." The suggested Scripture is First Samuel 1:20-28.

We would do well to think about the home. It is such an important institution. Our prized values are definitely dependent upon it. Its enduring worth is dependent, not upon its location, size, furnishings, number of children, or the income of the family, but upon the love that is within its walls, and the outreach of that love. Where there is love, the members of the family joyfully and willingly work together.

The home is under a heavy strain today. Evil and secular influences are working on its life from every side like termites so that a Christian home is build and maintained with difficulty. Certainly it is a good time for Christian people to think about the home.

The welfare of the home is exceedingly important. The home is the fountain to which may be traced whatever is wrong in the individual, the community, and the nation. If the fountain is impure, the stream will be impure. Society is just as bad or as good as the home life of the people.

There is a divine ideal for the home. Marriage is of divine origin. We must see the home life as it is, if we are to have any share in making our homes what they ought to be. Specialization has removed many functions from the home until its unity is being endangered. A teacher made this observation: "When I was a young teacher, the church

took care of the child's spirit, the home of his manners and morals, and the school of his intellect; but now the whole care of the child is dumped on the school even to his eyes and teeth." In our day when poor parents work and rich parents play, the school is being magnified at the expense of the home and the child. School efficiency can never be a substitute for the home.

To the child, the home is the first training-ground of life, the place where the foundation of religion, character, ethics, and morals is laid. It is at the mother's knee where the infant learns to lisp the name of Christ. Childhood impressions are lasting, and memories of a happy Christian home have been, and can be, a guide through difficulties in later life, even down to old age. Where the Christian atmosphere prevails, the whole household is aware of its blessings.

Through the church instruction and guidance can be given with reference to the meaning of marriage and the home. All of us should dedicate ourselves to the task of building Christian homes.

The home is a mission station. It is a place for unselfish love. Love should reign supreme in the home. When it does, it is apparent even to casual observers. Parents should love each other and exalt each other before their children. Children must be taught to love their parents and to love each other. Children must be taught how to be saved, how to pray, how to study the Bible, how to be loyal to the church, and how to be missionary.

Let us pray for the homes and families of our missionaries. They have the same opportunities, challenges, and anxieties that people do in their homeland. The children have adjustments to make in foreign lands; educational problems; then leave family and return to the United States for high school and college education. Margaret Fund to receive \$50,000 from Lottie Moon offering this year.