

Africo-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii, 32.

VOL. XLIX.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 1927.

NO. 23.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Well, we are in San Francisco, and it is a wonderful city. Many things attract the visitor's eye with intense interest. San Francisco is a city of 200,000, overlooking the placid waters of San Francisco Bay. It is a city of many activities and a city of much beauty—made so by nature. The Chinese and Japanese population is large which seemingly is about equally divided between the two races. A group of us is staying at the Chinese Y. M. C. A. which is a splendid modern building, operated by capable young Chinese men, of whom one of the Secretaries, who seems to be the leader, is a Presbyterian. We can say for these American Chinese that they are very quiet and gentlemanly in their conduct and deportment.

The colored population numbers only five thousand. You can go several miles and not see a colored person. We were quite a novelty in some sections, for by the starting at us by these people, it was evident that a group of colored people was a rare thing.

These American Orientals are business folks. Their shops and stores are no small gestures but large and well kept, with both American and foreign goods. A trip through Chinatown is worth while. Although the young foreigner is much Americanized, both male and female, yet one can see the old home traditions among the older people. Their foreign costume was much in evidence among the older people; while the "flapper and sheik" are right up to their American companions.

The Pre-Assembly Evangelistic Conference began May 24, under the direction of Dr. George G. Mahy, Secretary of the Division of Evangelism, and Dr. Wm. F. Klein, Field Secretary of Evangelistic Work. Devotional exercises were held by Dr. Stewart Nye Hutchison, of Pittsburgh, Pa. Dr. Mahy made an extensive report on the work of the division and this was followed by an open conference, at which time many took part. Several good speeches were made by others. After this, conference closed. Among the addresses was one on "Evangelism and Its Aids" by Dr. I. H. Russell, of Durham, N. C. Dr. Russell made a stirring address which made a wonderful impression upon the house. It is the consensus of opinion that his address was the best at this meeting. This is not the opinion of the colored brethren only but of the white. The morning conference was brought to a close with an address by Dr. Lewis B. Hillis, Philadelphia, on "Evangelism in our Colleges."

At the evening service a stirring praise service was conducted, led by Dr. Robert Scott Inglis, Newark, N. J. Another inspiring address on "Training Church Members in Intercession and Evangelism" was delivered by Dr. Klein. These services made a wonderful impression upon everybody present.

Wednesday morning found everybody ready to resume work in the conference. The devotional services were conducted by Dr. E. A. Van Nuys, San Francisco, Cal., the host of the Assembly. "The Evangelistic Work of Foreign Missions" was discussed by Dr. Francis S. Downs, New York, N. Y. The usual open conference was conducted with its usual good results. This two days' conference was brought to a close with a splendid address by Dr. Robert Freeman, Los Angeles, Calif.

It is needless to say that these men are in dead earnest. A 65,000 loss of members for one reason or another is cause to worry over for one year's de-

crease of members in our beloved Church.

The Assembly convened at 10:30 A. M., promptly with the Stated Clerk, Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, presiding. When the usual devotional exercises were over, Dr. W. O. Thompson, President of Ohio State University, the retiring Moderator, preached the opening sermon from II Corinthians, 5th chapter and the 18th and 19th verses, subject, "The Gospel of Reconciliation." An impressive

volves the so-called Modernist, Fundamentalist and Liberalist elements of the Church. Everybody anxiously awaits the final results.

The other and second absorbing topic before the Assembly was the Princeton Theological report. Dr. W. O. Thompson, President of Ohio State University, and Chairman of the Committee, made a comprehensive report, recommending that the Seminary be put under one control instead of the present plan and that the Committee continue its labors with the Committee increased from nine to eleven.



DR. J. L. HOLLOWELL, OUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORRESPONDENT.

communion service was engaged in by the one thousand commissioners, together with several hundred more visitors. During this time also the Assembly was saddened by the announcement of the death of Dr. Francis E. Clark, the famous and well-known Christian Endeavor leader.

What was expected to develop into a spirited contest for Moderator, failed to materialize. Men who were spoken of as nominees, such as Hon. J. Willson Smith, a prominent layman of Philadelphia, and the Rev. Dr. H. K. Walker, of Los Angeles, Calif., became the nominator and secondor of the most popular layman in the Church and the United States, the only layman in the world upon whom the degree of Doctor of Divinity has ever been bestowed, this having been done by the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Hon. Robert E. Speer, of New York City, was enthusiastically and unanimously chosen, after these speeches were made, as Moderator of the General Assembly for the year 1927-1928. An ovation was given to him to which the new Moderator graciously responded.

Dr. Ezra Allen Van Nuys, the Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, presented to the Moderator a specially made gavel of stone, gold and wood, all products of California. After felicitous words by the Moderator, Dr. Van Nuys then introduced his Honor, Mayor James Rolph, Jr., an Episcopalian vestryman of Scotch antecedents and Presbyterian affiliations, to the Assembly. Mayor Rolph extended a warm welcome to the Assembly. The Assembly also endorsed with resolutions the Near East Relief Work.

One of the three most absorbing topics of the Assembly, namely, the special Committee or Commission appointed in 1925 to seek to harmonize warring factions in the Church, made its report through its Chairman, Dr. Henry C. Swearingen, of Minnesota. Under the rules the discussion of the report was set for May 30. This report attracted the close attention of everybody, since it in-

Dr. Thompson, together with others, defended the report. Dr. Laird, with others, opposed it. An amendment was offered to continue the committee for a year longer in its work before a final decision. The amendment was tabled and the original recommendation adopted. Two other recommendations remain to be taken up May 30. It was a high day of oratory and thought. Men spoke, perhaps, as they had never spoken before, and all in good humor. This is a good lesson to a number of our Presbyteries and Synods.

The next important item of absorbing interest to the Assembly was the new Pension Plan. Passing over the reports of the officials of the Ministerial Relief and Sustentation Work, the Laymen's report, headed by Hon. Will Hays, a ruling elder of national reputation, was made by him.

Mr. Hays stood high already in the eyes of the Church, but when he came forward not only with a final report of the completion of the fifteen million dollars having been raised, but also with a wonderful speech, which captivated everybody, the estimation of his worth and esteem went several degrees higher as he stood pleading for the worn out preachers and their wives who live on such small salaries. He pleaded with tears in his eyes and with an earnestness that bespoke his sincerity. This business was the climax of the morning session and it was fitting that the Assembly sang: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." A greater demonstration has never been accorded a body of laymen and its chairman than was given to Mr. Hays. No preacher pleaded for this cause. It was all done by laymen. Only as far South as Washington were reports read as to raising this sum to help pension underpaid men and women of our great Church. What an indictment against colored Synods! The door is still open, however. Let us get out and from under this blot on our Church record. The plan goes into effect October 1, 1927.

Rev. S. Q. Mitchell had the honor of opening the Assembly with prayer, Saturday morning.

Several of the colored commissioners were elected by their sections on important committees. We were offered for secretary of our section against a white brother, but he won. Well, somebody had to be the scapegoat.

The Madam C. J. Walker Home for Working Girls is a worthy institution of San Francisco. It is a home beautifully arranged and kept by a set of consecrated colored ladies, which cost \$4,400 and not a dollar debt on it. The officers of this home are Mrs. Tulip Jones, President, and Mrs. E. L. Congo, Vice-President.

It is significant that most of the originators of this movement are Southerners. Under-score that. Most business enterprises in all large Northern cities among our group have Southern originators. The question was asked (and it is debatable) why are native Western and Northern Negroes slow in opening up business enterprises? The answer was, that he feels that he segregates himself in this manner. Think it out.

A trip through Chinatown is worth while. Here you will find a group who have not only segregated themselves but also in doing so have built up a community and made money. Think that over. The Chinese is engaged in all the branches of merchandise that his American brother is. From an Eastern and Southern point of view, we only come into contact with him as a laundryman, except in isolated cases. Your idea will be greatly changed after a trip through his district.

Let no one think that we believe in segregation, but we do like the idea of groups doing business.

The colored commissioners were entertained with a dinner at the Hotel Clinton, May 28. This dinner was arranged by Dr. J. M. Gaston, the much beloved Secretary of the Division of Colored People's Work. The commissioners and their friends did not have time to express themselves with speeches, but, nevertheless, the dinner was highly appreciated. Mrs. W. T. Larimer, Secretary of the Women's Department, was also present at this dinner.

Another luncheon was served to the commissioners at the Madam C. J. Walker Home through the courtesy of Mrs. Lamar, a wealthy white lady, who has shown considerable interest in the work.

In reporting for the Committee on the Laymen's Pension Plan, Hon. Will Hays made two outstanding statements among all the other things he said. (1) "The first \$50,000 contributed to the Pension Plan was by a Baptist, the last contributed, a contribution of \$50,000, was given by a Catholic." (2) "The Church is divine in its origin and eternal in its operations." What about No. 1?

Johnson C. Smith Quintet is making musical history for the University and the race. The Hotel Clinton, Westminster Presbyterian church and the Civic Auditorium have been favored with their presence.

Rev. John W. Lee, of Philadelphia, spoke Sunday morning at the Third Baptist church, being assisted in these services by Drs. I. H. Russell, J. L. Hollowell and Rev. P. J. A. Cox. Dr. I. H. Russell acceptably served the church at night.

Sunday many popular meetings were held. Mrs. G. W. Long, of Cheraw, S. C., appeared

on the program of the Sunday school department and made a fine impression. We have not been able to attend any of the meetings of the Biennial, but from all reports our group are giving a fine account of themselves.

Rev. Ralph B. Nesbit, missionary to India, in his address Sunday afternoon, made a very striking statement concerning the opinion of the natives in regard to the oft-repeated statement of the "white man's burden." The native says, "It is the white man's burden, but the colored races have been bearing it." That is applicable not only in India, but everywhere.

Rev. G. C. Beanland, missionary to West Africa, said in his address that "civilization without the gospel of Jesus Christ is a menace to Africa." Africa has a population of 160,000,000 souls, with a large proportion of these still under the influence of Mohammedanism. The speaker related an instance when a whole tribe went over to that religion because no one was available to send to them. The Foreign Missionary Board has come to a wise decision to admit our people as missionaries seemingly at the right time when the laborers are few. Many of us are glad to know that the Presbyterian Church is not a passing notice in Africa, but instead, the biggest church in membership in the world is located there.

The only organized Presbyterian church in the State of California of colored people is in Los Angeles. There is a good possibility of a fine organization in San Diego under the leadership of Rev. V. McPherson. By the way, Rev. Mr. McPherson has taken unto himself a former Charlotte girl, Mrs. Sarah Alexander.

Rev. A. A. Hector carried out concretely the teaching of the Master. He served at the morning service at the San Quentin penitentiary. Rev. A. Wilson assisted him in these services.

One thing can be said of the colored Baptists here. They have been hospitable in caring for all who have been entrusted to their hands.

Dr. I. H. Russell met a white brother from the South the other day who ran true to form. After he had captivated that large crowd at the evangelistic meeting and everybody was expressing their delight at his address, this good brother came forward also to offer congratulations. He wanted to know where he was from. The information was given him. He then wanted to know by what name he was called, to which Dr. Russell said, "Henry." "Well," the good brother said, "You won't mind me calling you 'Uncle Henry'?" Permission was granted him and his good white friend has felt at home ever since.

Of special interest to the Church at large, every one would like to have information about Overtures "A" and "B."

Overture "A."

"Shall the Form of Government, Chapter 9 Sec. 6, be amended by the addition of the words, 'Upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ,' upon presentation of satisfactory certificate of church membership, or in the absence of such certificate upon the part of persons coming from other churches, upon re-affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, so as to read as follows: 'The church session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation for which purpose they have power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of

(Continued on page 2)

SPINGARN MEDAL FOR 1927 GOES TO ANTHONY OVERTON.

A Pioneer in Life Insurance Organization for Negroes

New York, June 3.—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 69 Fifth Avenue, today announced that the Spingarn Medal Award Committee had met in its offices yesterday and awarded the Spingarn Medal for 1927 to Anthony Overton, of Chicago, President of the Victory Life Insurance Company, President of the Douglass National Bank of Chicago, and manufacturer.

The Medal is awarded to Mr. Overton "because of his success in a long business career and for the crowning achievement of securing the admission of the Victory Life Insurance Company as the first Negro organization permitted to do business under the rigid requirements of the State of New York."

This is the thirteenth award of the Spingarn Medal which goes annually to the United States citizen of African descent deemed to have most significantly distinguished himself or herself in some honorable field of endeavor.

The members of the Committee on Award of the Spingarn Medal are: Bishop John Hurst, Chairman; Dr. John Hope, President of Morehouse College; Colonel Theodore Roosevelt; Oswald Garrison Villard, Editor of The Nation; Dr. J. H. Dillard, Director of the Jeanes and Slater Funds; and Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, Editor of The Crisis. Col. Roosevelt and Dr. Dillard were unable to attend the meeting but expressed their preferences in writing. The Medal will be presented by Zona Gale, the novelist, at the 18th Annual Conference in Indianapolis, June 22 to 28, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Mr. Overton was born in Monroe, La., in 1865, was educated in Washburn College and received the degree of LL. B. from the University of Kansas in 1888, being admitted to the bar in the same year. Mr. Overton was Judge of the Municipal Court in Shawnee County, Kansas, from 1888 to 1889. In 1898 he established the Overton Hygienic Co., manufacturing baking powder, extracts and toilet preparations, of which he is still President. The plant was removed to Chicago in 1911. He is now President of the Douglass National Bank and the Victory Life Insurance Company, which he organized in 1923, and a member of numerous fraternal bodies.

Since its organization the Victory Life Insurance Company has loaned more than \$233,000 to Negro property owners, only one loan exceeding \$15,000, the bulk of the loans being for sums under \$5,000. In April of this year the company had close to \$5,000,000 of insurance in force in ten States outside of Illinois. The company is developing Negro actuaries and prepared its own valuations and all statements for the years 1925 and 1926 in its own office.

FASHION'S BIG TOLL

(From The Youth's Companion)

"It used to take two sheep to clothe one woman" says a humorous British observer. "Now, I understand, it takes only one silk worm." But the cotton and woolen industries are not the only ones that are in difficulties through the vagaries of feminine fashion. Bobbed hair has put most of the African ostrich farms out of business, for ostrich plumes do not go with close-fitting hats that the bobbed and shingled hosts affect.

It is a pity that so many people get church membership confused with religion.—Rev. R. L. Smith.