

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

VOL. LIII

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 1931.

NO. 10.

## THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

By Rev. W. L. Metz, D. D.

(Paper read at the Presbyterian Workers' Conference.)

Grammarians tell us that, as to form, we have three sentences: simple, compound, and complex. They say that a simple sentence is one that contains but one subject and one predicate, and either or both may be compound.

They say that a compound sentence is a sentence composed of two or more independent clauses; and that a complex sentence is composed of an independent clause, and of one or more dependent clauses.

In the first, the subject and predicate or subjects and predicates are not independent of one another, but entirely dependent upon one another for purport: while, on the contrary, a compound sentence, though it may be closely connected in thought, makes complete sense in each clause expressed. But a complex sentence is quite different. It is a picture of various and sometimes intricate parts; but with one part that stands out by itself with a meaning conveyed irrespective of any subordinate clause for the idea it sets forth.

But, as you know, I am not here to give any special or general treatise on any generally accepted or disputed or unsettled points in English grammar. My sole idea is to try to make an analogy between the church and the community and an independent clause in a complex sentence and its dependent clause, the church being the independent clause while the community well serves the analogy as a subordinate, or dependent clause.

Notwithstanding the church is a constituent part of the community with which it is connected, if it is built upon the teaching of the Man of Galilee, the solid Rock, it does not depend upon the community to shape its divine and righteous destiny; but the community depends upon the church; and I mean by church the entire Christian group in any community; and I mean by community, any body of persons having common rights, interests and privileges in the same locality. And these claims must needs be safeguarded by nothing more nor less than moral and religious forces, from the very fact man seems to forget the Creator and follow and worship the creature in the days of prosperity, and often in advanced learning without Christian training. Men often abuse their privileges and neglect their interests when they are beneficiaries of God's showers of blessings, and heirs of wealth expressed in inconceivable figures. This is true of individuals; and it is no less true of a community composed of individuals whose environments, temperaments, and that coming down through posterity widely differ. And those differences in training, shaped largely by environment, and which often overbalances our temperaments and faculties, are approaching shadows of dissensions that, at times, threaten the very existence of a community.

### Social Existence

There have been times—and they seem upon us now like the Philistines upon Samson—when the social existence of communities was threatened to be undermined and overthrown. But most fortunate for mankind, God did not create man to be left alone as an empty vessel; but He created him a superior being and breathed into him a spark of inherent divinity that he might find himself and become wise unto those godly principles that save the community. This spark of inherent divinity spiritually illumined the heart, mind and soul of David, and he preached

the claims and power of the church, the ransomed church of God:

"The law of the Lord is perfect; converting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

"Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

It is this small spark of God in man, as it shone and spoke from David, which brings the church into power to save a community from social disintegration and all that such entails in moral and social lapse. This matchless power of the church causes the wandering and depraved to evade God and ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" or the one in social ascendancy: "Who is my neighbor?" It places the Levite, the proud priest, in the light of God's countenance that the world may see him passing by the helpless on the congested, dangerous, Jericho national highway.

It is the church in the community, when its social existence is in the balance, that exposes with "Thus saith the Lord," or "thou shalt not" the insidious influences eating and destroying the vitals of the social life of the community.

Another Look into a Complex Sentence

Strip the subordinate clause of its subordinate clause or clauses, he these subordinates ever so classical and epigrammatical, the independent clause makes complete sense without them. On the other hand, cut out the independent clause and leave the subordinate clause or clauses with all their appropriate, rhetorical frills and they convey nothing definite. Likewise the church; it can use the community if the community will be used. It can inspire a community if a community subordinates itself to the church wholeheartedly. But when the community attempts to function in all its social activities without the guidance and oversight of the church it becomes a valley of suspicion with redeeming qualities too far from God for human reliance.

It is a fact that the church inspire the community to ideals that make a nation outstanding among world powers. Today America makes her boast of her wealth, her institutions, her natural resources, invincibility in arms. She has been made a commercial magnet by monetary power, brain, safe decisions, and grim determination. Other worlds are looking and tending this way. When a man or a group of men want to get rich quick they come to America. If men are very desirous of rising among men of statesmanship, they come to America.

But who inspired this country in her making? What group inspired this country to lofty and godly ideals? Surely it was not by the common group of the communities! men who could not appreciate their inherent rights, and would abuse them at the slightest opportunity. It is evident the ideals of this country were not held up and preached by mammon. Mammon; worldly gain; greed for riches; the Syrian god of riches, is self-centered, and his ideals tend toward the earth for self-gratification. But the inspiration came from the

church as it functioned in men who were real churchmen with a vision, and who set the torch to the battle field of the Revolutionary war from Cowpens, Spartanburg Co., S. C., to Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.

This inspiration came from men who gave lasting shape to opinion that gripped men, and made sentiment that ruled the constituents of a coming commonwealth, America.

King George III recognized this fact, I believe, more than any other man under the protection of his kingdom; for he said, when the Thirteen Colonies were discussing their intention and plans to remove Great Britain's heel from their necks and become an independent country, that the colonies would be safe and satisfied to remain under the crown of England, "if those Presbyterian parsons over there would keep quiet."

Some historians regale the world with the fact that the Revolutionary war was waged and fought by the Presbyterian Church. And it was a righteous war, a glorious war; for any people who will fight for the freedom of their bodies and for an environment where intellect, sensibility, and will may function to the extent of capacity are members of the ransomed church of God and saved by grace to sin no more.

Dr. Witherspoon, who inspired and kept up the morale, as a signer of the Declaration of Independence in a hall of statesmen, was the Presbyterian Church in that body of statesmen, to guide the American community about to be the United States of America. He was there to guide their expressed opinions and to challenge their questionable decisions when the safety of their liberty was in the balance.

When American slavery was discussed and debated from the cradle of juvenility to the crutch of senility in the legislative halls of America by some of the greatest statesmen this country has hitherto produced, men's opinions varied with their great interests almost daily. At times it seemed as if American slavery was to be perpetuated. The community subordinated the church. The church became entirely passive and was acted upon by the community and accepted the doctrine that slavery was a divine institution; and that the church had neither acquired nor inherent right to interfere with slavery or anything that savored of the body politic.

In a colonial cemetery in Edisto Island, one reads this inscription chiseled in a fine, costly granite monument erected to the memory of a wealthy slave owner: "I do hereby will and bequeath all my slaves to the church; or if they are sold; or make any money as the result of their labors, the money is to be used to support the church."

The subordinate clause of the complex sentence has really become the principal clause; and the principal clause is now trying to serve as a subordinate clause: a clumsy arrangement whose meaning is equally as clumsy and is reflexive of complete subtraction of humanity.

This situation in America thrived for nearly two hundred and fifty years to the shame of men in the South as well as to men in the large group in the North. Bishop Cook of the South was mobbed in Bethel Methodist Episcopal church, on Calhoun Street in Charleston, S. C., because he was opposed to slavery. During these days the principal clause (the church) was taking her rightful place in the community in Charleston; and the subordinate clause, (the community) was fast falling—a house built upon the sand—to its place fixed according to God's eternal verities.

In those days of piteous cries in the rice fields of the Atlantic Southern coast, a passerby would ask with great surprise: "What meaneth this Southern young planter by sending his slave to a school in Charleston for free Negroes?"

"What meaneth the coming young master by teaching a few of the slave boys and girls to read and write against the iron will and without the knowledge of his father? Why did the community of Charleston send Dr. John Gardeau from Zion Presbyterian church in Charleston for Negroes to Columbia Theological Seminary in Columbia?" They saw this Presbyterian giant, in his day, on the abolitionist's road to shake hands with Henry Ward Beecher.

I am sure historians will admit that the abolishment of slavery in America was largely, if not altogether, through men who were outstanding in the church. And in 1861, in Augusta, Ga., the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., settled the matter as a church. Other religious bodies followed; and the war was waged between the North and South. And now we have a Northern Church and a Southern Church.

But this was another glorious war in America. And all the wars in this country known to historians were glorious wars, fought by the Church in sentiment; and sentiment rules the world.

But the Church won because the war was not an inglorious war. The Church in all the glorious wars shall conquer, though it die.

The church, as a great moral and spiritual force, in a community, breathes into the community a standard of behavior for ranking that, when accepted and applied, enriches the community life along many lines of essential activities in the making of an attractive, substantial, desirable community. The application of the church's standard of behavior in a community, even though the community be unable to boast of silver and gold, makes paradise regained; but the failure to apply the standard of the behavior of the church in the community makes the community paradise lost.

The church's standard of behavior in the community, when applied, makes the pauper proud to steal and to wink at the behavior of the wicked. But he elects to withstand adversities and plead the promise upheld by the church: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

This high standard of the church, when accepted and applied, changes the community's standard of thinking about life as to what can be made of it. In many communities, one can see at first glance that the church's standard of behavior has never found an effective entrance into the life of the community. The people have no vision of Christian manliness. They are just a jolly set living with no hope of reaching out into the near distant future. They are praying for their daily bread for this day only. They express the sentiment and idea of life expressed in these lines:

"We just arrived in town tonight  
Our story for to tell.  
We don't care if we can not fight,  
Our razors suit as well.

"We practise on our heels and toes,  
As we dance and shout about;  
We ain't always welcome where we goes,  
We're the happiest folks about.

"Just watch the movement of our skin,  
As we dance and shout about;

(Continued on page 4)

## KNOX LETTER

### THE SCRIBE VISITS BARBER SEMINARY

From the beautifully lighted cross which gleamed out a welcome for me as I approached the Margaret Barber Seminary, Anniston, Alabama, Monday evening, February 16th, to the final farewells on Friday evening, February 20th, everything and everybody seemed to add something of welcome to that entire atmosphere of welcome which permeated the whole school.

It was my privilege to conduct special religious services for five days—February 16th to 20th—for the students of Barber Seminary, and, as a guest of the school, observed them go about their daily routine. First, I was impressed with the family atmosphere which pervaded the school. I had constantly to remind myself that I was in a boarding school and not a large private family. The friendliest feeling ran through the student body and faculty. Then, if the school seemed to be a large family living harmoniously together, certainly it was easy to see and feel that Christ was the head of that home, the unseen but not unobserved Guest in the dining hall, class room, dormitory as well as in the religious meetings.

Dr. and Mrs. Hosack are sincere, social-minded Christian people who make you feel their welcome. The faculty impressed me as being human, helpful, kindly people with a deep sense of the responsibility resting upon them. Their attitude towards the students seemed to be cordial and natural, as the older members towards younger members of the family.

Singularly enough, the young ladies of the Westminster Guild back home at Shiloh church were studying "Barber Seminary" for their National Missions Study in "All in the Family" the very week I was at Barber, so this, perhaps, made my observation of the Barber students more intense.

It has been said that each school has a personality. Barber may be pictured as a mother absorbed in her children and interested in their welfare. She leaves no means untried to the end that each child may receive the best preparation in life. Nor is this interest on the part of the mother school in vain. The students reflect in their department all the ideals held before them by the school.

Each Barber girl graciously wears her marks of quiet dignity and self-respect which distinguish her as a Barber student anywhere.

All of the students are identified with the church save one who promised to unite with the church next summer.

My last impression was one of profound reverence as the members of the entire student body rededicated themselves to Christ.

### "THE SCRIBE."

### LEVERE YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST TENNESSEE MEET

The second meeting of the Young People's League of Le Vere Presbytery was held Sunday afternoon, February 22nd, at 3:00 o'clock in the East Vine Avenue Presbyterian church, Knoxville, Tenn. There were in attendance one hundred elected delegates among the young people and two hundred honorary delegates. This is rather encouraging when we recall the fact that this League is just three months old.

The meeting opened with a beautiful worship service built around the theme: "My Church, Built and Established by the Martyrs," led by Mr. Wilbur Sims, Vice-President of the League. The entire service was

in the hands of the young people and they conducted it in a very creditable way.

The worship message "Augustine's Quest for Truth," was delivered by Rev. James A. McDaniel, of Knoxville. This was a most appropriate and inspiring message.

At the end of the service of worship the leader turned the meeting over to the League President, Miss Mabel Kirksey, who presided at the business session. During this time some important matters were brought to the attention of the League and plans laid for the future of the organization.

After which the President introduced the topic for discussion: "Know Your Church and How It Works." The whole discussion was centered around the point: How It Works at Home. The following young people are to be commended for the fine manner in which they led in the open forum: Mr. James Alexander, Miss Mary Gillespie and Miss Charlotte Peters.

The President then introduced Rev. A. H. George who was scheduled to address the young people on the subject: "In Quest of the Best;" but due to the lateness of the hour Rev. George gave his time over to Dr. A. B. McCoy, of Atlanta, Ga., who was the guest speaker. Dr. McCoy, in a few choice words and with his fine, optimistic spirit gripped the young people as he does all of his audiences.

It was a rare privilege to have along with other well wishers, both Dr. McCoy and Rev. George, two staunch friends of youth. Rev. George is making a large contribution to the League movement in this section.

At the close of the discussion period we were led to the church dining room where an attractive and delicious menu had been carefully prepared by the young people of East Vine church under the direction of Mrs. Downer and others.

After the fellowship dinner a very brief and impressive consecration service, conducted by Rev. A. H. George, brought the League meeting to an end.

We are deeply grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Downer, their splendid group of young people and the members of East Vine Avenue church for the fine spirit and unique manner in which they entertained the Young People's League.

ETHEL E. GOINES.

### CEDAR GROVE CHURCH NOTES

By Miss Hattie A. Russell

Last Sunday, our pastor, Dr. L. J. Melton, delivered a helpful message from the theme, "Jesus, the Sinners' Friend." His text was taken from Luke the 7th chapter, 37-38 verses.

Our Sunday school has taken on new zeal under the leadership of Mr. J. C. Lytle. The attendance is good each Sunday.

The Ladies' Missionary Society closed out a Talent Rally on last Sunday which was quite a success. On Friday evening of this week the ladies will give a weiner roast at the home of Mr. Jay Phifer. All are cordially invited.

Miss Mary Sue Forney and Mrs. Dora Brewer were the week-end guests of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Forney.

Miss Louise Russell, a student of Logan High School, Concord, spent the week-end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Russell.

Miss Anna J. Barnett, of Barber-Scotia College, spent the week-end with her mother, who has been shut in for several weeks on account of illness.

"God's in His heaven,  
All's right with the world."