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

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## PRIZE FIGHTING

By Rev. Francis J. Grimke, D. D.

(Dr. Grimke is Pastor Emeritus of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian church, Washington, D. C.)

I listened last night over the radio to a glowing tribute paid to Joe Louis by some admirer. He said Joe was a credit to the Negro race, and is to be praised as a representative of clean sports.

I could not help asking myself the question, What kind of a man could this admirer be to regard prize fighting as sport, as a pastime, a means of diversion, of deriving pleasure in leisure moments.

Think of its brutality, of two human beings coming together for the purpose of knocking the other out, of beating into helplessness, into insensibility the other by administering to him the most terrific blows which one human being, trained to the highest efficiency can give to another. The blows are so terrific that the encounter lasts, usually, but a few minutes before one or the other is knocked out, is put out of commission.

Even on the basis of civilization, how can a human being find any pleasure in such performances; how can they meet his approval; how can he maintain his own self-respect and countenance such affairs?

And, when we go a step farther, and think not only of what it is to be civilized; but what it is when looked at in the light of the high and holy ideals and principles of the Christian religion, how still more abhorrent, still more reprehensible it becomes.

This radio speaker may regard prize fighting as sport, as a proper way to spend one's time, and Joe Louis as a credit to the Negro race; but, so far as I am concerned, he is neither justified in spending his time and energy in the way in which he is doing, nor is he a credit to the race in so doing.

The course which he has been pursuing has kept him before the public gaze, has filled his purse with money; but, so far as the race is concerned in its upward struggle, in his influence upon the young people of the race, he has been a constant source of demoralization. Others may think what they will, I see nothing to be specially proud of in being able to develop a bigger brute than some other race. And as long as Mr. Louis is content to play that part in the drama of life he is to be pitied, not to be congratulated; is to be pitied, not to be held up as an example to our young people.

The sooner he gets out of the ring, and gets to living a life that is worthy of a true man, anxious to make something of himself that befits a rational, immortal and responsible being created in the image of God, the better it will be for him, and for the race with which he is identified.

This gentleman, Mr. Joe Louis, occupies the front page of all Negro newspapers. He is kept by them ever in the limelight. More fuss is made over him than is made over all the teachers and preachers in all of the schools and churches. You would think that here you had really come across something of superlative and of enduring value; something that was really worth keeping in memory and that would be a lasting influence for good, enriching and ennobling the race in all the years to come.

The ability to bruise, batter, knock into insensibility some human being, and only as a pastime and as a means of piling up a fortune when placed in the balances by the final Judge and Arbitrator, count for what? How little sense we often show in the preferences that we make, in the things to which we attach importance. Shame on us, is the confession that we are often forced to make.

The atmosphere that surrounds the ring is a degrading one. The patrons of the ring are drawn largely from gam-

blers, crooks, thugs, denizens of the underworld, and what is known as the sporting element of society. A man can not long live in that kind of atmosphere without suffering in his moral make-up, without degenerating in character. He can not long maintain high ideals in an environment such as naturally surrounds the ring. From every standpoint, moral and religious, the ring is to be avoided. There is not one good thing that can be said in its favor. A man, therefore, who deliberately takes it up as a vocation and continues in it, is a fool.

I see it announced in the papers that it is the purpose of Mr. Louis to retire from the ring as soon as he accumulates a million dollars, showing that he himself hopes some day to get out of it. The fact is, he must get out of it, if he is to save himself from moral wreck, from debasement of character. I, for one, envy no prize fighter for the spoils that he has gathered at the expense of that which no amount of money can compensate him for. There are things that are of very much more value than money. And to be congratulated is the man who realizes that and plans his life accordingly.

A short while ago in our city, a colored man, having a family of his own dependent upon him, sacrificed his life to save the lives of two white children. The noble character of the act, the heroism displayed, was at once recognized by the press and the public generally. A handsome sum was raised for the family, and he was beautifully put away at the public expense.

The act of a man like that is something to be praised, to be proud of. But I fall utterly (I may be very obtuse) to see anything particularly praiseworthy, or of which the colored race should be proud in Joe being able with his fist to assert his superiority over another big brute. As a race be proud, yes, proud as Lucifer, but let it be for things that are worth being proud of—moral and spiritual qualities, heroic virtues. What are men like Samson and Goliath of Gath compared to men like Samuel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Elijah and Daniel, great moral heroes.

At last, Joe Louis has been knocked out by (Max Schmeling. And I, for one, am heartily glad of it; glad, especially, if it takes him out of the spotlight,—out from the front page of all Negro newspapers, and the adoration of Negroes, both old and young all over the country. As long as he remains in the front of the stage, he will be an influence for evil, vitiating the taste of the race, especially the younger members of it, setting up before them a false standard by which to estimate true worth, the enduring value of moral and spiritual qualities, instead of developing muscular strength and skill by which to bruise and batter into helplessness others, as a means of making a living, as a means of earning a competency, of keeping in the public gaze.

Let us hope from this defeat he will come to his senses and begin to think of life in higher and better terms; and that the race also will think of its future in higher and better terms than fostering among its young the spirit of pugilism, a mere display of superior brute force. The idol of a race ought to be something more than a big brute.

Jesus in speaking of himself said: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." And the Apostle Paul speaks of himself as hungry, naked; and John the Baptist we know was clothed with camel's hair, and that his meat was locust and

wild honey. Yet, here is a man, the idol of the Negro race, announcing that when he has accumulated a million dollars he will retire from the ring, will get out of the brutal business of beating up his fellowmen, of using his fists in knocking them out, of inflicting upon them the keenest suffering. His ambition, not to be a great and good man, but a millionaire. And it is in this brutal way that he has selected for reaching the goal.

Truly, we are not only a child race, but a race but little removed from the savage, if Joe Louis is the ideal that we wish to lift up before our young people.

How any one who claims to be civilized, to say nothing of being a Christian, can look with favor upon, or take pleasure in prize-fighting, with all its brutality, I am unable to understand. That the Lord Jesus Christ who took little children in His arms, and said, Forbid them not to come unto me; and who represented himself as the Good Shepherd, ready to lay down his life for the sheep,—Jesus, the tender, loving, beautiful, sympathizing Jesus; Jesus who uttered the parable of the Good Samaritan and lived out its spirit, could look with any degree of approval upon such a brutal affair as a prize fight, is unthinkable. And yet, let it be said with shame, there are thousands of professing Christians who attend such exhibitions of brutality, and give their approval to them. Is it to be wondered at that things are as bad as they are, that the trend morally is steadily downward? What kind of examples are Christians setting to the world? Shame on such Christians. They are a reproach to the sacred name of Christ.

I have just finished reading the sickening account of the bloody encounter between Louis and Schmeling. Round after round, bruising and battering each other. How each must have suffered; how Louis, especially, who was certainly beaten up unmercifully by Schmeling. Poor fellow! You couldn't help feeling sorry for him as you saw him lying bleeding and helpless on the floor.

And then this thought came to me: what a fool a man must be to be willing to expose himself to that kind of brutal treatment merely for the sake of making money, and for the sake of cheap notoriety. Fool, did I say? Yes, fool, and doubly a fool, who puts such little value upon himself, upon his own self-respect, and so high a value upon what? Upon what Shakespeare had in mind, when he said, "Who steals my purse steals trash." And that, after all, is what filthy lucre means in the last analysis as compared with what Shakespeare speaks of as "His good name, his moral qualities, the things that endure, and that are always worth having."

Instead of encouraging, in the young people of the race, a spirit of pugilism, the desire to develop muscle and skill in order to win fame and money, I would seek to beget in them the nobler spirit inculcated in H. A. Walter's noble lines:

"I would be true, for there are those who trust me;  
I would pure, for there are those who care;  
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;  
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.  
I would look up—and laugh—and love—and lift."

The farther we get away from the ring, from pugilism, from all such brutality, the better it will be for the race.

Prize fighting should be classed with cock-fighting, dog-fighting, bull-fighting, the gladiatorial contests that took place in the Coliseum at Rome during the darkest period of the empire when morals had sunk to the lowest depths. There is where it belongs, and where it will ultimately be put when Christian ideals and principles are in the ascendancy.

When Mr. Louis started out, it was said that his object was to earn money to educate himself, which, of course, is a laudable ambition. But has he not made money enough already to educate himself and to care for himself and family comfortably the rest of his days? Now, however, that he has become famous and his pockets bulging out with money; now that he has the taste of glory and the prospect of piling up more treasures, the thought of educating himself seems to have sunk into the background and is likely to remain in the background as long as there is a dollar in sight. When the lust of glory and the lust of gold take possession of you, it is well nigh impossible to free yourself. If Mr. Louis really wants to educate himself, now is the time to get out of the brutal business of prize-fighting, and enter some school and begin fitting himself for an honorable career and a life of usefulness.

## NURSES TO HOLD NATION-WIDE CONVENTION

New York, July—(ANP)—The 29th annual meeting of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses will be held at the Y. M. C. A. in New York City, August 18th-21st, inclusive. An interesting and constructive program has been arranged by Miss Margaret Creth, Chairman of the Program Committee. The program for the student section gives promise of the best meeting since the organization of the student section two years ago. All student delegates will be the guests of the Lincoln School for Nurses and will be housed in the beautiful nurses' home.

Since the last Convention in New Orleans last August, the NACGN has held four regional conferences. The first was for nurses of the Southern region and was held at Tuskegee in January; the second, for the Southeast region, was held in Durham the latter part of January; the third, for nurses of the Northern and Eastern regions, was in Washington in February; and the fourth, in Chicago in April, for nurses of the Middle West. The National President and the Executive Secretary attended each of the regional meetings. The meetings were largely attended and were significantly effective in meeting some of the local problems of the nurses.

Miss Mabel K. Stauper, Executive Sec., has carried on the work at headquarters and made some important field trips in the interest of the group.

An outstanding accomplishment of the year was the developing and execution of plans to assist the United States Public Health Service in establishing a public health nursing course at the Medical College of Virginia, where 75 Negro nurses are being trained for positions in the public health field. This course was developed under the Social Security Act.

Several State nursing associations have been organized during the year, and approximately 100 nurses have been placed in positions.

There are 5,000 Negro graduate nurses in this country and the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses came into being to serve their needs. The Association has maintained headquarters at 50 West 50th Street, New York City, for the past two years.

In addition to contributions from nurses, the NACGN has been the recipient of substantial financial gifts from the National Health Circle for Colored People, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, Mrs. Chester C. Bolton, and Mrs. Leonard Elmhert. The Association is making a public appeal for contributions in order that it may continue to render a much needed service to our people as a group, and to the nation at large.

## THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE IN WASHINGTON

By H. E. C. Bryant, In The Charlotte News

In the event of a Republican victory in November more than 100,000 men and women now employed here by the government would have to start back home early next year. The number of office holders in Washington has reached an all-time record. If the New Dealers are returned by the people a large majority of those now on the payroll will remain there for four more years.

The collapse of 1929 and the depression that followed forced many proud men and women to seek meal tickets from Uncle Sam, some of them joining the office-holding group, and others going directly to the relief roll. Thousands of these would gladly return to private life but they are afraid they could not keep the wolf from the door. Others who have no pride but are out for what they can get will die hard on the government; if the Republicans oust the Democrats they will remain here, and eke out an existence the best they can.

### Hard To Resist

The gay and giddy life in the national capital is hard to resist. North Carolina has her share of government jobs. The New Deal has proved a blessing to many families that were up against it good and hard. Some of the Tar Heels have been of real service to the President and his assistants. Others are just time servers and pap-suckers; a few make trouble day and night; it is their nature, and they can not help it, but their antics render it difficult for their influential friends who have to rescue them now and then. One of the most unfortunate types is the fellow who thinks that he can do the job much better than his superior, and in certain instances he could, but promotions in the government service are not altogether on merit. A North Carolinian here now is tramping from office to office to relocate himself. He was a little too big and active for the job he did have. The town is full of his kind. In 1918, when President Wilson came in, a Southern lawyer of some standing came here and applied for a place in the department of justice, but his estimate of himself was far above that placed upon him by others, and he finally slid down the scale of fame until he became an elevator conductor at the capitol. After that he was as tender as a boil; he did not allow any one to refer to him as an up and down lift man but held out that he was better fitted for a judgeship or something akin to that. The person who remains here is the one who does his task well if it be nothing more important than master of the District of Columbia pound.

That Washington is a fascinating place to work and live no one conversant with life here doubts. A fellow with good eyes sees things and if his ears are keen he hears a great deal that is worthwhile. One accustomed to this city of magnificent distances just can not tear himself away. But if he becomes an ex-office holder, and the tide is against him, he had better trek to the old home. The late John S. Henderson, of Salisbury, one of the ablest men North Carolina ever sent to Congress after quitting here, once remarked that an ex-Congressman was like an old discarded hat on the shelf, musty and forgotten. Having spent ten years here, he returned to the State and rebuilt his splendid law practice, and became a member of the State legislature. He did wise not to stick around Washington.

### Sadness And Distress

A change of fortune here brings sadness and distress to many. It is pathetic to see the

widow of a Congressman, who, by his position, has given her social prestige try to maintain her place after he has departed. Social position here comes largely from official position. That may not be right but it is true. A great many men and women detest social recognition that comes this way, but others climb for it.

Therefore when the political wheel starts to run in reverse a vast number of men and women here suffer. It is no wonder that the American Institute of Public Opinion caused nervousness here. Happy-go-lucky Democrats had been inquiring: "Who was that chap the Republicans nominated at Cleveland? Where is he?"

Now, it is: "What is that American Institute of Public Opinion? What does it know about the situation?"

The poor benighted farmer! He does not know which way to turn. Those who live in North Carolina and have plenty of potatoes, beans, sorghum, milk, butter, eggs and the like, and an occasional shower of rain, schools to which they can send their children, and a church to which they can send their wives, are better off than they think. Their ancestors managed to get on some way without the assistance of a federal Department of Agriculture, which was established in 1889, but now with it and its brilliant secretary and his 38,000 assistants they are about ruined. There seems to be more destructive insects than ever before, and worse weather.

Twenty odd years ago some brain trust in a Republican administration had a pipe dream that the arid regions of the West could be converted into prosperous farms by the so-called "dry-farming" method. The young Department of Agriculture urged people to go west and grow up in the rainless areas. Today, a plan to bring them back out of the God-forsaken country is being set on foot. The moving soil tiller is sent from one place to another. The dry land farming propaganda issued by Uncle Sam's experts would fill many volumes. But the man who has plenty of water for himself, his stock and his crop is very fortunate. Two things, water and good company, are essential to happiness. In traveling eastern North Carolina years ago I heard the story of little town that did not appeal to some people. A New England Yankee, journeying through the State, met a native of the community on the train, and asked him what sort of a place it was.

"Fine," said the native, "except for water and society; both are bad."

Dryly the traveler remarked: "Well, that is all that ails hell."

The effort of the Department of Agriculture reminds one of the old Negro who went to a neighborhood church to join his white neighbors in a prayer for rain during a long dry spell. He sat on the outer edge of the crowd, on his old mule, and acquiesced in every petition that was sent up. But, late that afternoon, after a heavy rain storm, accompanied by hail, had come and damaged his crops he was in a doubtful frame of mind. As he walked through his fields, appraising the loss, one of his highly respected white neighbors rode up and inquired: "Well, Uncle John, what do you think of it?"

"Yes, sir, boss, I wus des thinkin' dat if you you take de Lawd up one side and' down tother, He do 'bout as much harm as he do good."

"A man is an animal who will patiently fish five hours without a bite, but will raise Cain if supper is five minutes late."