

PREPARE YOURSELVES.

HOW OUR EDUCATED YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN CAN FIND EMPLOYMENT.

BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

During the past year the large number of colored men and women, especially in the Northern and Western States, who are seeking positions, has led me to look somewhat into their condition. In the first place, the number of bright and promising young Negro men and women graduating from the grammar and high schools and also colleges is surprisingly large. Naturally, after these young people graduate they seek something to do that is in keeping with the cost and character of their education. Every one of them could be used in the school room in the South if there was money in the South with which to pay them, but at present there is little more in that section to be used for school teaching. The same problem of how to find a way to use one's education is pressing upon the men and women who graduate from Southern schools and colleges.

To help point the way out of this perplexity is the object of this communication. There is a place where every one can use his education if he will prepare himself for that thing which the world wants done and is able and willing to pay for. The trouble with too many young colored men and women is that they have not fitted themselves for the occupations which are at the command of the race and which the race most needs help in.

Let me illustrate what I mean: A few years ago a young colored man went through the grammar and high school of his town and then he entered an agricultural college in the West where he took a thorough course in scientific and practical agriculture. When he graduated, three positions in the South at an annual salary of more than a thousand dollars were offered him. He did not have to spend a day looking for a position; the position sought him.

Two years ago another young colored man finished the college course at a certain institution and afterwards entered the agricultural department of Cornell University from which he graduated last June. In this case, three months before he graduated, at least two positions were offered him. He is now receiving a good salary as instructor in agriculture at a school in North Carolina.

Why is it that these two men were literally sought out and grabbed up as it were? Simply because they had prepared themselves to lead along the lines of the needs of the race. The logic of it all is clear. Eighty-five per cent of the colored people in the South live by agriculture and they need help in the direction of their life work.

Some six years ago a young man finished the course in architecture at the Institute of Technology in Boston. When he received his diploma, he had the choice of three positions. The logic of this is also clear. As a race we need homes. During the next fifty years we are going to be a race of house, factory and store builders.

I know but few colored women who have thoroughly fitted themselves to teach or do scientific and

practical cooking and domestic economy, and their services are always in demand. We need not search for the reason of this success of these few. The whole question of the proper preparation and serving of food is one that is being revolutionized throughout the country and the Negro needs leaders and teachers in this special department.

The whole question of textile manufacturing and the making and fitting of clothing is largely a new one in the South and the race must have leaders along this line also.

In short, in the laying of the foundation of any race the needs are largely along the three cardinal lines that I have mentioned: Food, Shelter, Clothing. In order to be more helpful to the young men and women who are being educated I will be more specific. Any young man or woman who prepares himself or herself thoroughly in any one of these lines will not be long in securing a position at a good salary: Agriculture, Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Dairying, Stock Raising, Poultry Raising, Architecture, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mining Engineering, Brickmasonry, Carpentry, House Decorating, House Contracting, Cooking, Dressmaking, Millinery, Textile Manufacturing, Tailoring, etc. The fitting of one's self along any one of these lines will either enable him to find a place, or, what is better, to make a place. There is the whole field of electrical engineering that has come into existence within the last twenty years in the South that might have been in the Negro's hands if the men to fill the positions could have been found.

In saying all this I am not depreciating the preparation for the ministry, for teaching and other professional pursuits, but just in proportion as our young men will equip themselves in these trades I have mentioned will the ministers, the teachers, the lawyers, doctors and men in politics succeed because there will be a more substantial foundation to the race from which the professional classes may draw support. The Church can never prosper until its membership has material prosperity.

How I wish that some of the hundreds of educated young people now in government clerkship service, holding places that are entirely too small for the size of their brains, might prepare to help the race along some of these lines. Some one has said that a man is either too small or too large for his job. In Washington City there are more men in the latter position than any other place I know. Too many of our brightest young men are led astray by the mere temptation to hold a government position. There is nothing so delusive. When an individual has a trade or special occupation or business from which he is sure of getting support he can afford to take these clerkships or other public positions; but the man, whether black or white, who secures a political position without some business for his foundation is likely to find himself out of an employment at that period in his life when it is too late to lay the foundation of a business career; thus his last condition was worse than the first. In these statements I would urge every man and woman

to thoroughly prepare in his academic course for what he desires to specialize in. This preparation should be of the highest and most thorough character. The specialization may be carried on while one is receiving his literary training or afterwards as the individual chooses.

In many cases, I find our young people living in the same city where training in the subjects that I have mentioned may be received for the mere asking and still few take advantage of the opportunity. At the Hampton Institute, in Virginia, for example, under the magnificent leadership of Dr. Frissell, such improvements have been made within the last few years that all the opportunities of which I speak may be taken advantage of at almost no cost. Will not the young people think of these conditions? If so, I believe that proper action will follow and lasting good will come to the race. Let a larger proportion of the Negro youth be guided for a number of years in their education, in the course which I have tried to suggest, and no power on earth can prevent our rising as a race and eventually holding the highest position as statesmen, in the professions, in the fields of letters and fine arts. But the foundation must be laid in the material and industrial forces emphasized in this article.

Tuskegee, Ala.

MR. DANCY EXPLAINS.

[The following clipping, which explains itself, was taken from the *Charlotte (N. C.) Observer* of recent date.]

To the Editor of the OBSERVER: My attention was attracted this morning in perusing the Sunday issue of your paper, to a dispatch, sent out from Rochester, N. Y., purporting to be a correct report of the action of a Negro Conference held in that city. The sentiment supposed to have been expressed was, however, the act of an individual rather than of the Conference. Editor T. Thomas Fortune expressed his own views with regard to mixed marriages, and not those of the Conference. In its statement to the country the Conference positively refused to mention either that subject or the subject of mixed schools, as the wiser heads there are content to let well enough alone, and not to agitate matters from which no earthly good can come, but much unnecessary friction. Editor Fortune, finding himself out of harmony with the expressed wishes of the Conference resigned the presidency, and Bishop A. Walters was unanimously elected. The statement was corrected before the Conference members left Rochester, but was not for some reason sent out. I took occasion to state publicly before the Conference my own views for maintaining my race identity, and sustaining our system of schools as conducted in this State, which I declared the best State in the Union. In an interview I expressed the same sentiment. In my Douglass eulogy I took good pains not to assail unfairly the section which produced him. I make this statement in justice to all concerned.

Very respectfully,
John C. Dancy.

Wilmington, N. C., Sept. 19, '98.

CHARLOTTE (N. C.) DISTRICT.

BY REV. H. L. SIMMONS, P. E.

We have four churches in Charlotte. Clinton Chapel, Rev. D. C. Covington, pastor. He has served this charge the past two years and is succeeding nicely. He has kept peace and harmony in his church and has high spiritual interests. The accessions to the church during his pastorate are considerable. The financial condition is fair.

Little Rock church, pastored by Rev. H. B. Moss, is doing nicely. The spiritual and financial condition of this church will compare favorably with any church in the district. He is much loved by his people.

Grace church, Rev. George C. Clement, pastor, is in good condition. He is a young man of true devotion and high attainments and will succeed wherever sent.

Biddleville circuit, Rev. D. E. Best, pastor, in some respects is leading the district. He and his good people at Biddleville during this year purchased and have paid for the brick to build a new church. They are now putting them on the ground. He is one of our aged men, with great experience and is a good preacher.

Center Grove circuit, Rev. S. M. Pharr, pastor, is progressing nicely. He has conducted very successful revival meetings in his charge this year and had many accessions. He is a good man and is much loved.

China Grove church, Rev. J. W. Smith, D. D., pastor, is doing well. He and his good people during the early Spring purchased an eight-acre tract of land adjoining the church lot. Having paid the first installment they are nearly ready to pay the next and last, and will do so this week. This is indeed a great purchase. He is a champion Editor, a great preacher, and will be a good bishop in 1900. His people love him much. They know a good thing when they see it.

Moore's Sanctuary, Rev. W. L. Alexander is serving the third term here and is giving general satisfaction. He has had most excellent revival meetings during the year with many accessions.

Rev. S. W. Jackson in charge of Jonahville circuit, is laboring hard in revival meetings and is succeeding nicely. He promises to bring up all Connectional claims to Conference.

Pineville circuit, Rev. M. Caldwell, pastor, is doing better perhaps than for some time. A few years ago J. T. Gibbons, who was pastoring this church, being under bad repute, was forced to give it up. On leaving, he sowed discord and drew several of the members off; hence, the organization of a Presbyterian church was the result; but the Presbyterians I am told would not have him. Since the split the church has not been so strong numerically as before, but under the pastorate of Rev. S. W. Jackson, who succeeded Gibbons, the church has gradually improved until now under Rev. Caldwell who is a success wherever he goes.

Rev. P. J. Holmes, in charge of Rockwell church, is proving to be the right man in the right place. He has just closed up a revival in which he had more than a hundred conversions and seventy-odd acces-

sions. He will make a good report at Conference.

Rev. Wm. Massey, pastoring Mowing Glade circuit, is carrying his work before him. His people are elated over him and seem to think he is the greatest preacher they ever had. We expect a good report from him at Conference. He is building a new church at one point.

Rev. H. B. Bennett, pastor of Weeping Willow circuit, is doing very nicely. He is a man of high aspiration in the Church and is a great adventurer. We expect a good report from him at Conference.

Rev. Wm. Little has charge of St. John's mission. He is struggling hard to pay off a debt for a church lot, and to build in the near future.

Rev. J. J. Hunter has the mission work—new Bethel. His prospect is fair for success in the future.

We are giving all possible encouragement to pastors and people to have a good report at the annual Conference. Since the days of Abner Hill, our Zion in Charlotte and surrounding regions every few years has a conflict with some disgruntled, self-opinionated preacher who goes out of the Church sowing discord and doing all he can to make the people disloyal and dictatorial; so much as to lose that high respect due to the gospel minister. Preachers make the people what they are largely—for good or for bad. Much patience and great discretion are needed in this part of our great Church—first in the ministry to transmit to the people—and less underground, political wire-pulling, and our financial condition will be greatly improved, the Church built up, and our God glorified.

Charlotte, N. C.

ANSWERING REV. ALLEN.

BY REV. C. E. BAKER.

I wish to answer the three question of Rev. R. Allen, of Marshville, N. C. He asks:

Has the quarterly conference any right to transfer the membership of a local preacher from one circuit to another when he runs because he can't have his way? A local preacher is a member of the church and must have a certificate signed by the pastor and his leader, and join a church in the circuit of his choice to become a member of another quarterly conference. However, the quarterly conference can grant this right.

Is not the election of the trustees by the people final or must they like other officers be confirmed by the quarterly conference. See page 117-185, Discipline.

Members who absent themselves six months without communication with the pastor or leader, shall be put on the probation list; at the end of the time a probationer is to serve, if they don't amend they are to be dropped from the probation roll in common with all other probationers.

Montgomery, Ala.

The fourth session of the Palmetto School, at Union, S. C., will open the first Monday in October, 1898. By order of the Board. For further information, write to the President, Principal or Secretary. Rev. S. T. Meek, P. E., President; Prof. J. A. Cunningham, Principal; R. B. Williams, Secretary.