

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

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## SOME SIGNS OF GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Sermon by Rev. W. E. Carr, D. D., of Danville, Va., preached at the Synodical Sunday School Convention and School of Methods, Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N. C., Sunday, August 30th, 8 P. M.

Text—"Is the Lord among us or not?" Exodus xvii: 7.

The question of the text is one of the most important that could engage our attention just at this time. It comes to us with tremendous import and it should be well weighed and seriously considered. As we look out on the world and catch a vision of its present condition, the question of the text naturally forces itself upon our minds.

There are times when the Holy Spirit seems to be pervading a community in an unusual manner. There have been such times in all ages of the Church. It is in reference to such a divine influence that our inquiry is made. To help us decide we propose to mention some signs of God's gracious presence among His people.

I. When God is among His people they have a deep sense of their sinful condition. This is an invariable effect of the quickening influences of the Spirit of God. Therefore the most consistent Christians, those in whom the work of sanctification has made the greatest progress, always seem to have the deepest sense of their own sinfulness. The most devout men realize they are imperfect, and as they grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they become more and more sensible of their depravity. They realize that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and every new manifestation of the character of God gives them a clearer vision of their own sinful condition. Thus they are ready to exclaim in the language of Job, "Behold I am vile; I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

II. When God is among a people Christians enjoy the spirit of prayer. A spirit of prayer is really a manifestation of God's presence. It is His special gift to man. "I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication." If you should go through a place where the people had degenerated into a low state of spirituality and inquire whether or not they enjoy a spirit of prayer, they will answer emphatically, they do not. They will tell you they do not have that joy or realize that nearness to God, that sense of His presence they once experienced; that sweet communion which once filled and thrilled their hearts.

They do not have that cheerful confidence that their prayers are heard which they have sometimes found in their experience. Now what is the cause of this condition? The reason is the Holy Spirit is not operating among them. Christians sometimes complain of a separating wall between God and their souls. What is it? Our iniquities have separated us from our God and our sins have hidden His face from us that He will not hear. Christians, if duty is neglected, if the heart is cold and stupid, it is a foregone conclusion that there is no spirit of prayer. If we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us.

III. When God is present by His Spirit Christians will be zealous for the Lord's cause. They will have an ardent desire to see the work of the Church go forward in all its branches and when they look around and see how she is neglected sorrow fills their hearts. May our eyes be opened that we may see how important it is that every one be standing at his

post of duty doing some constructive work. There is no time to be standing idle. We should make strenuous efforts that our work may be a success in both church and Sunday school.

Many who claim to be followers of our Lord have lost their fire and fervor of devotion through spiritual idleness more than in any other way. Now, in view of this condition, we are led to ask the question of the text, "Is the Lord among us or not?" So many, both old and young, are deserting the churches and the Sunday schools to an alarming extent and going from town to town on wheels, and thus desecrating the Lord's day. Pleasure and a good time as they call it seem to be the uppermost thought of their minds. They are going from early morn until the midnight hour, and many do not return until the chickens are crowing for day. The automobile is one of the most convenient inventions of modern times. If properly used it is a blessing, but if abused, it is a curse. Worldliness is the greatest danger of the Christian. We must live the Christian life in the midst of the world. If we join hands with the world to do evil we bring reproach upon the Lord's cause and at the same time shame upon our own lives.

Christians, let us get some concrete idea as to what life means. It is a very serious thing. The only life worth while is the Christian life; the life in imitation of Him who said He was the life. We need to hold on to the world as lightly as possible in order that we might not lose sight of those things which make for our eternal good. The tendency of many in all our churches and Sunday schools seems to be towards the world. It behooves us to seriously consider the question, "Is the Lord among us or not?" There is a great work for us to do. The matter is urgent. With great fervency of spirit let us reach out and endeavor to save our young people from the drift of this terrible age. Save the young people and you save the Church and save the world. God has given this work to you and me, not to angels. They can not do it. We must do it or it will not be done. Let us look into our own hearts that we may be conscious of the fact whether or not God's presence is with us or not.

There is a story of a king who married his daughter to a very poor man who loved her but the marriage had a condition annexed to it, and that was that whenever the man's side looked black, or whenever he lost his wedding ring he should not only lose his wife, but his life also. One day while pursuing the chase, he fell into a quarrel when he not only received a bruise on his left side, but lost his ring in the scuffle. The tumult over he perceived the danger into which his own heedlessness had brought him, and in the bitterness of his soul he shed many tears. In his great sorrow he espied a book. Opening this, he found therein his ring and the words he read directed him to herbs of which a plaster applied would not fail to heal him. Thus he was cured and his life saved.

Members of the Synodical Sunday School Convention and School of Methods, if any of you have bruised your hearts with envy, hatred, malice, anger, or any other sin in the midst of the world's tempta-

tions, or if you have lost that wedding ring of love which is the pledge of your union with Jesus Christ your Saviour, we know a Book where you may find that precious ring again and the remedy for the cure of your bruised heart. Come back to the Bible, God's own Word, and to the service of your Lord. So long as you remain away from Him that special presence and the influence of His Holy Spirit will not be present with you. Get in close touch with God and His people. At such a time as this we need church fellowship more than ever. When you had that fellowship God was with you. You enjoyed the fervor of love. You lost it when you neglected your duty and disregarded the voice of God.

IV. We believe God is present with His Church in the trouble through which she is now passing. Christians are greatly perturbed over the unrest we find in the Church today. Many are asking, "Is the Lord with us or not?" Confronted as we are with the greatest crisis in the history of the Church we should be seriously concerned about her welfare. Truly this is a time of trouble in the Church. God has said if we call on Him in the day of trouble He will deliver us. He has promised to be our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. We need that help now, perhaps, as never before. Unless God interposes our efforts will be futile.

There are those who repudiate the idea of God. The evolutionist in his scientific investigations is endeavoring to prove man is not the handiwork of God, but that he was evolved from the monkey or ape. Others deny the divinity of our Lord and His virgin birth, and not a few are openly declaring His atonement was not vicarious, and His resurrection a mythological delusion. The second coming of Christ has been declared an impossibility—out of all reason and can never be.

We have simply mentioned a few of the things which are disturbing the minds of Christians. It may be God is permitting these things for our good to drive us to our knees, to humble us in our pride, that we may feel that without God we can do nothing. Because of these pernicious doctrines we must not sink down in hopeless despair. God has not forsaken His Church. Though we are passing through the fires of heresy in its various forms, we shall not be destroyed. These disturbing elements should constrain the people of God to cry mightily to Him for His divine aid.

In the controversies of the past the orthodox parties won, and by the grace of God we are going to be victorious; for God has said: "Fear not, I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the East and gather them from the West; I will say to the North, Give up, and to the South, Keep not back; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even everyone that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him."

Church of God, this is to be a hard-fought battle. The whole army of Christians is to be called out. This is the psychological moment in the history of the Church. Let us line up into one solid phalanx and take to ourselves the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Hold up the Cross of Christ, march boldly on, and as you go, exclaim, "By this sign we conquer." Let us rise up in the strength which is ours through Christ. We may ask what we will and it shall be done unto us. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

## THE STORY OF THE "GLORY SONG."

By Homer Rodeheaver

It has been said that no gospel song in history ever attained the international popularity of "Glory Song" in so short a time. It was written in 1900, and in less than five years it was sung around the world. The wonder of this, however, is not due to the song alone, but to circumstances and conditions that took control of it.

Many interesting incidents connected with it have been sent me from many countries, besides scores that have appeared in print, but to me the most remarkable fact concerning the song is that it stands today note for note and word for word as Charles H. Gabriel sent it to the printer twenty-five years ago.

It has been translated into more than twenty different languages and dialects, and over twenty millions of copies have been printed. I have heard it played by brass bands, German bands, hand organs, street pianos, and phonographs. I have heard it numerous times sung by over ten thousand people, and again by the usual congregation; but the most impressive rendering I ever heard given was by a certain congregation of over one thousand men; these men were all dressed in steel gray suits, and sat with folded arms: the man who played the organ and the man who held the baton and led the song were dressed in exactly the same way. Down the right side, across the rear and up the left side of the audience room, on high stools, sat a row of men in blue uniforms holding heavy canes across their knees; these men seemed never for an instant to take their eyes from certain spots in front of them. Not a man whispered during the service—for it was a state's prison. Among that congregation of 1,077 men, 256 were there for life—there to live and die, and on each of their cell doors, where they would read it every time they left and re-entered, was the startling word "life." How strangely their voices impressed me—these men without a country, without a home, without a name, deprived of every privilege accorded to all men by the Almighty, and known only by number. As I sat before the prison pallor of their faces against its background of within that frame of made a picture never to be gotten. With few exceptions every man sang; here and there with downcast eyes and other with mute lips under near the center a strong fellow was a little child—but he told me he had a short time, with he had heard under different and where, gods at face.

Softly stanza: BER. "Friend loved Joy will Yet Will through the ages be glory for me." The song ended, the chaplain said a brief prayer, and that great crowd of men, at signals from the guards in blue, marched out squad by squad, keeping to the music of the organ played by the men in gray.

"There is an old saying about a thing being funny enough to make a horse laugh. The power of laughter is reserved to the human race, and is one—if not the principal one—of the marks of man's superiority over the beasts of the field."—Bruce Barton.

## FAIRFIELD CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR CONVENTION.

The Y. P. S. C. E. Convention of Fairfield Presbyterian Church met at Westminster church, July 29th, at 9:30 o'clock. The Convention was called to order by the President, Mr. J. A. Frierson, and opened with singing, "Come ye that Love the Lord." The President then made a few remarks concerning the misunderstanding in regard to the meeting of the Convention. He then introduced the Rev. R. E. L. Smith, who preached a very touching sermon from the words, "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us," Hebrews 6th chapter, and the latter clause of the 18th verse.

The delegates that were present were then enrolled as follows:

Mr. Henry Shaw, Goodwill; Miss Rosa Boulware, Ridgeway; Miss Ethel Brown, Columbia; Miss Eunice Smith, Lancaster.

The President then appointed Mr. Harry Shaw, of Goodwill, and Miss Rosa Boulware, of Ridgeway, to lead prayer and praise service Thursday morning.

The offering was then taken, which amounted \$1.40. Benediction was pronounced by Rev. R. E. L. Smith.

Thursday Morning, July 30th.

The Convention was called to order by the President. Prayer and praise service was conducted by Mr. Shaw and Miss Boulware.

The President then delivered his address. His subject was, "The Object of the Christian Endeavor Society." He brought out some very helpful thoughts on the upbuilding of the Christian Endeavor.

The minutes of the previous evening were read and approved and the new delegates and ministers were enrolled. The minutes of the last meeting were then read and adopted.

The Secretary having died during the past year a temporary secretary was elected in the person of Miss Susie E. Cooper.

Next was a round table talk delivered by Prof. A. A. Adier. He asked all of the delegates to give a few minutes talk on system of raising money in C. E. Society. These were read and very helpful. He gave some very interesting suggestions on the Tenth and how to have C. E. ls.

The subject, "How the C. E. Help to Foster the Inter- of the Church," was discussed by delegates from Lad- Cheraw Second, Sumter id, Hermon and Melina.

The next subject was, "What Can the C. E. Play in the gelistic Work of the ch?" Discussion of this ion was opened by Dr. J. oster, who was followed by delegates from Ebenezer, ruitry and New Haven; af- which there was a general sion by the Convention. ter having a short song ce, conducted by Dr. M. J. on, we adjourned for re-

Thursday Afternoon.

A Convention was called to at 2:30 by the President. meeting was opened with song service conducted by Dr. M. J. Jackson. This was followed by a 15 minutes' memorial service in honor of the deceased Secretary, Miss S. B. White.

The report of the C. E. delegates was as follows:

Ladson, Mrs. Belle Vincent, \$2.00; Lebanon, Miss Rosa Boulware, \$1.00; Sumter Second, Miss Viola Johnson, \$1.75; Bethlehem Second, Prof. A. A. Adair, \$.75; Goodwill, Mr. Harry Shaw, \$.50; total sent to the Convention, \$6.00.

A model C. E. was conducted by Mrs. Belle Vincent of Ladson church. The program was as follows: Scripture reading by Mrs. C. E. Rutherford, of

Columbia; Comment, Miss Belle McCoy, of Sumter; solo, "Mother," little Miss Pearl Nelson Davis, of Columbia; paper, Miss Fannie Jackson, of Columbia; pantomime, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," by three little girls of Columbia; solo, "Teach Me to Pray," Mrs. Alice Johnson; recitation, "God Cares," Little Miss Ethel Johnson.

A few minutes were given for general discussion on the subject, "God's Friendliness as Expressed in Nature."

The following persons were elected officers for the ensuing year:

President, Mr. J. A. Frierson; Vice-President, Miss C. E. Manoney; Treasurer, Mrs. Belle Vincent; Recording Secretary, Miss Susie E. Cooper; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. C. E. Rutherford. These officers were installed by Dr. J. P. Foster.

The report of the treasurer was then read and received. It was decided that the C. E. Convention would send one delegate to the Synodical Convention. Miss Sarah E. Jacson, of Ebenezer church, was elected, and a collection of \$2.50 was taken to help bear the expenses of the delegate.

We were then dismissed with prayer by Rev. T. H. Toatley.

SUSIE E. COOPER, Secretary.

## THE D. V. B. S. AT MT. TABOR.

On Monday, July 3rd, the D. V. B. S. of Mt. Tabor church opened for a session of two weeks. The enrollment increased from 37 to 147. Mrs. Alma J. Harris, the special D. V. B. S. organizer of Yadkin Presbytery, supervised the work during the term and was assisted by the Supt., Mr. W. M. Cowan. The teachers were Mr. C. A. Rankin, Mr. S. L. Rankin, Mr. C. H. Cowan, Mrs. Maggie Cowan, Miss Ethel L. Goodman and Mr. W. M. Cowan. Our assistant teachers were Mrs. Anna White, Mrs. Jennie Cowan, Miss Mildred Goodman, Mrs. Alice Bradshaw, Mr. Monroe Cowan.

The teachers, under the leadership of Mrs. Harris, deserve much credit for the splendid manner in which they carried on the work of the school.

The interest manifested on the part of the children was keen. The boys and girls learned the Beatitudes, the 100th Psalm, the first seven verses of the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, the books of the Old Testament, the 23rd and the 67th Psalms.

Mrs. Harris taught the children 14 new songs during the music period. Besides directing the calisthenics exercises, she taught them many games during the recreational period. Much interest was manifested in the team work.

Quite a number of the parents and friends showed their interest in the work by their presence each day. Other visitors present were Rev. J. G. Murray and Miss Geneva Burke of Mooresville; Mrs. Naomi Jackson and little daughter, of Philadelphia, Pa.; and Dr. I. H. Russell. Dr. Russell gave encouraging remarks. In closing he urged the children to read the Bible each day, if only one verse.

At the close of the term a sacred program was rendered by the children, after which refreshments were served by the Sunday school.

This was our first time to have a Daily Vacation Bible School and we are sure the children were greatly benefitted. We are looking forward for a longer school term next year and hope to have Mrs. Harris with us.

Mr. W. M. Cowan was our Jews, gate to the School of Methæ last Johnson C. Smith University by Charlotte. A MEMI a twen-