

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

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## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

An Excerpt from the Sermon of Dr. William O. Thompson, the Retiring Moderator, on "The Gospel of Reconciliation."

### Text

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." II Cor. 5: 18, 19.

A San Francisco paper recently remarked that man has not invented a new sin in 51,000 years, but that he does invent a new alibi now and then. Obviously the alibi has been overworked. Men operate on the theory that a man's ways are just in his own eyes. This accounts for many of the innumerable excuses by which men attempt to escape the unpleasant condition of sin. Meantime sin has persisted in its deadly consequences. No one has yet been able to escape the judgment that "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." There is nothing new about this announcement. That is the tragedy of it. The same old record of disaster, worse than all the rest of nature with her fires, floods and famines, is a never-ending, continuous story of endless repetition but no reformation. Nothing has occurred in all the history of progress to transform sin and make it respectable. To those not spiritually blind, the leopard's spots are as distinct in our lives as ever. In fact, the more assured the progress, the deeper the conviction that sin has no corrective factor within itself and cannot be made the basis of a satisfying personal experience or of a desirable social order. Whether it takes the form of a disordered intellectual life of selfish and depraved emotions, or of an ill-driven will power due to the sway of motives of malice or evil, or whether it takes the form of a defeated moral purpose, the end is spiritual death.

No wonder men have sought release in the alibi. They would gladly be relieved of any responsibility for transgression, iniquity and sin. Experience with sin has been so disastrous that no one has come forward with an attempt to justify it or make it respectable. There have been cases where the morally color blind under the blighting influence of selfishness have attempted to explain away the obvious teachings of Holy Scripture. Explanations are often interesting, but not so often satisfying. The darkness abides. The brilliant age in which we live carries the darkest shadows except to those who will not see. Sin has never been blacker nor righteousness whiter than at the present moment. People who see clearly distinguish between the intellectual and spiritual progress of our time and the darkness of selfishness wherever found. The beauty of the future lies in the fact that there will be no night there; for the Lamb is the light.

The fact that sin is so intimately personal still further explains the use of the alibi. The defense of sin is never a welcome task. Men do not usually desire to sacrifice their own good names as a reward for trying to make sin attractive. Many there are who attempt an explanation, but few there be who attempt a justification of sin. Some means of escape from the disrepute of sin is eagerly sought. There is conscience enough in the worst of men to restrain them from a defense of that which they cannot justify except upon the same basis as that which seeks to justify selfishness. Others less depraved in their ideals seek a means of escape through affirming the universality of selfishness as if

that proved it a necessary part of the moral order.

Our generation, like others, has sought a release by denying the nature of sin and its consequences. So long as the Scriptural nature of sin is recognized, the element of hope is gone until an adequate remedy is provided. A denial is never a remedy. The attempt to gloss over the fatal consequences of sin by ignoring its true nature deceives but for the moment. To treat it lightly is to fly in the face of all human experience. The element of self-justification fails to satisfy the honest mind. It is simply a means of attempted escape. Those who seek an ethical basis for individual life or for that more highly complex life of the social order must reckon with the fact and the consequences of sin. No alleged superiority relieves the situation. History is too illuminating upon the record of sin and selfishness to warrant the assumption that wealth, power, social position or popular favor may be accepted as evidence of freedom from the contamination or guilt of sin. Social respectability or social approval, a thin veneer in many cases, is in no sense an evidence of moral integrity. The sham and vanity in much of the current living in any generation bears unmistakable testimony of the deceitfulness of sin. These external evidences of wealth and affluence do not go to the center of the analysis, for out of the heart are the issues of life. It is high time that we cease apologizing for or commending people of wealth, of high social position or of public favor, chiefly because of their trappings and superficial appearances.

When the evidence is all in, it is not quite sure that even the grosser forms of vice and sin do not frequent the centers of wealth and luxury as often as they do the least favored portions of the world. It is not necessary to read your Bible in order to be sure of a statement like this. The first chapter of the book of Romans is a very modern description of a type of life which many people of this generation have not the courage to criticize. The daily newspaper furnishes all the evidence necessary for an intelligent mind to understand the heinousness of sin. We are prone, however, to take these things as a matter of course, instead of a matter of life and death which occasioned the world's greatest tragedy.

The effort in our generation to think lightly of sin and especially of its consequences has failed to commend itself to the mature judgment of spiritually-minded people. Those who would treat it lightly from a theological point of view frequently speak of sin in civic and political circles in most denunciatory terms. Some of the most vehement denunciations of social, civic and political sin have been from the sources where the doctrine of personal sin involving a divine remedy by way of Calvary is rarely heard. This is not due to increased learning or to human progress, but rather to neglect and to a certain cultivated indifference. The consciousness of sin and guilt with such people is no longer a personal experience demanding a thorough-going treatment, but is regarded at most as a fitting shadow whose memory may soon be forgotten and out of mind. Materialism in our day and generation has no more significant quality than that it tends to substitute the lower for the higher. Under this philosophy men assume that wealth, public office, high social standing, are in some sense a certificate of character. We have overlooked the

real essence of the problem. There are millions of people today, of the very finest among us, who have these material conveniences, and at the same time humility and meekness of spirit, as well as a reverence for God and a love for man. This fact should not blind us, however, to what a true diagnosis reveals from day to day. The current comment on every hand directs attention to the fallacy in placing too great reliance upon the mechanical and material advance in our generation. Men seem to forget that a man is better than a sheep. They fail to appreciate that the human spirit is better, finer, and of more value, than all these aids to human comfort. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. A little more personal application of the direct teachings of our Lord and of His disciples, would make it perfectly obvious that the gaining of the whole world is still possible with the loss of one's own life.

## URBAN LEAGUE REPORTS ON INDUSTRY FOR APRIL.

Bulletin No. 14 of the Industrial Department of the National Urban League summarizes employment conditions as follows:

### General Conditions

Employment conditions showed considerable improvement over what they were the previous month. This is particularly true of the iron and steel industry, the building trades, shipping, out door activities, road building and even the textile industry.

### The Flood Area

From the flood area in which 80 per cent of the sufferers are said to be Negroes there appeared no wide spread migration into the North as was predicted. While there are indications and correspondence pointing to an exodus to Northern industrial centers because of the devastation which the flood has caused in agricultural regions in which large numbers of Negroes live, such a movement will probably not be observed, if at all, until the victims have had a chance to recover from shock and deprivations they suffered. In St. Louis, Cleveland and Chicago there have already come to the notice of welfare agencies enough instances indicating the arrival of new citizens from the flood area to warrant special efforts for their employment and care.

A rumor that camps of Negro men and women, bent upon leaving the South to take up residence in the North, were detained by public and private authorities against their will, could not be substantiated. Bulletins from the area tell of considerable restlessness, but do not indicate any approaching unified conviction that the anticipated number will exchange their Southern habitats for residence in industrial sections of North.

The favorable conditions reported are those which refer to the return of workers to the jobs they held before the depression forced them out of employment and from a larger number of reports than usual there was but one account of the accession of a new field or a new job. This was in Chicago where 14 colored workers part of a 65 per cent Negro force in a factory that manufactures roofing materials, were placed on machines, workers of this race had never before run. In Milwaukee about three hundred men were placed back on jobs they were dismissed from in the winter when employment conditions generally were poor. In parts of the South and in many points of the North increased building activities took up the slack of unemployed workers. This was true particularly in Baltimore, Chicago, Winston-Salem, Jefferson City, Tulsa and Fort Wayne.

## SIDELIGHTS

### ON BOARD COMMISSIONERS' SPECIAL TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The fellow who said "Pike's Peak or bust," on his ascent, knew what he was talking about, for if you do not reach the peak or summit, you certainly will burst. Our party spent the afternoon and night there (May 20) On our arrival a fleet of Pierce Arrow cars was there to take us up the highest automobile road in America, an ascent of thirty miles and in an actual time of five hours in a half. That seems a long time, but one must remember that 14,109 feet is no small job over a perilous climb of that nature. It is an exciting thrill every moment of going. Here you go on a short stretch for a few yards; now a sudden short turn, and as the car swerves around the short curve, your blood almost chills as the sharp wind around the curve, filled with gravel, hits your face harder and harder as the car rumbles along on the upward climb. Again, as you are brought to another short and swift turn, you have a chance to look down the deep precipice and contemplate what might happen under a less skillful driver. One cannot describe the scenic beauty and the awe-inspiring peaks as they lift up their heads covered with snow, above the clouds. It is not only thrilling and wonderful as one beholds the work of nature, but it also gives a sublime feeling of the Creator of this wonderful panorama.

The top is reached at last. Dust-covered and cold, the party alights and walks unsteadily to the hotel for a cup of coffee and the fire, for we have encountered freezing weather. This particular day the wind was terrific and the dust blinding. One can imagine our looks, much more our feelings. Rare air on that high elevation did not suit everybody. Difficult breathing caught some, while dizziness got others; and this other fact, not to be discounted, in the least, fear played a great part in getting almost the entire party. The cog route, by rail, is the old way and is still in vogue. That is tame now compared with this hair-raising ride on the automobile.

How do you feel when you get on the "top of America"? I don't think the sensation, whether physical, mental or spiritual, can be described accurately by any one. Wonderful and marvelous and sublime, one may say in all of its sensations, but these are faint words to portray the experience and feeling on this dizzy snow-and-rock-covered peak.

After this wonderful trip and a night spent at Colorado Springs, we are on our way again, next morning. About 10:30 o'clock we reached the Royal Gorge and the Hanging Bridge. The train stops to give passengers a chance to see this wonder of nature. The road bed is cut out of the side of the mountain, with space enough for the track. One the other side of the track are the turbulent waters of the Arkansas River, beating against these solid walls of granite as if a prisoner trying to loose itself from its bounds. Look up at the towering peaks and cliffs as they raise themselves over two thousand feet almost in perpendicular heights! Here is grandeur and majesty, and here is order and symmetry, for Nature's Designer has been perfect in His works. We are on our way again. Mounts Elbert and Massive loom up in the distance with their heads covered with snow. Down in the valley it is warm, and exceedingly so on the train.

Traveling on we reach Salt Lake City early Sunday morning where we stop off for rest and worship. Good Presbyterians do not travel on Sunday as a rule. Only necessity will make

them begin a long journey on the Sabbath.

Salt Lake City is a splendid city of 125,000 people. Brigham Young, the founder of Mormonism in Utah, was a prophet of vision, if nothing else. He was fortunate in his selection for the development of his cult. Today we saw the first cabin built by him as we emerged from the mountains into this fertile valley.

Salt Lake Presbyterians (white, for there are no colored) welcomed us warmly. We were met at the station by a delegation with cars enough to carry everybody to the Newhouse Hotel and thence to the different churches. Some of us worshipped at the First Presbyterian church of which Dr. W. M. Paden is the acting pastor. We heard a fine Adult Bible Teacher, Mr. Thomas Weir, a retired capitalist, who is devoting his money and time to the Church of Jesus Christ. We heard a sermon by Dr. S. A. Munroe of Parson, Kansas. After luncheon at the hotel, we were again in service at the Mormon Tabernacle. We must admit that we were not greatly interested in the tabernacle service, but were in that wonderful organ and beautiful singing. The tabernacle has perfect acoustics, for every word can be heard over that building which will seat 10,000 people. We suppose that if the service had been in the temple, "The Sanctum Sanctorum" of the Mormons, our interest would have been aroused. But only "the faithful" can enter there. Well, it was wonderful anyway.

We were on our way again after this service to Westminster College, the only Protestant College anywhere in this section, and having the distinction of being Presbyterian. It is a beautiful place and efficiently administered by Dr. H. W. Reherd.

An educational rally was held here with Dr. Wm. Covert making the principal address. It was a fine inspirational meeting and is destined to do much for Westminster College in the future.

Only about five hundred colored people live here. The few we saw were as glad to see us as we were to see them. Such is racial instinct or whatever you may call it.

Devotions are still carried on. Several from other cars worshipped with us Saturday night, among whom were Dr. and Mrs. Gaston. It might be well to add here that the day we spent on Pike's Peak was given over to prayer. Nobody had any need to bother the Lord that night.

Salt Lake Presbyterian hospitality was splendid in every detail to our group. They did not leave anything undone to make everything pleasant and on equality with everybody else.

It snowed last night (May 21) and again, May 22, here. The mountains are white and the air is keen and bracing. Some of these brethren have increased appetites, among whom is the writer. We just saw Drs. Shute and Partee with two big bags. Those brethren were eating.

Rev. A. A. Hector, took part in the service at Westminster church, of which Dr. J. H. Ensign is the pastor.

The Mormons have large real estate and business holdings in Salt Lake City. They do a volume of business amounting to \$7,000,000 a year.

After the law was passed prohibiting the practice of polygamy, the government passed a law to provide a hotel for the discarded wives of Mormons. There was only one applicant for admission. One can reach his own conclusions as to the reason. The building is used now as an apartment house. It is one of the objects of interest for sight-seeing.

Mr. A. E. Spears, of Durham, N. C., found among the small population in Salt Lake City, the "Black Cat Hotel," so named by Dr. G. W. Long. So glad was he

to see some of his own, and so glad were his new found friends to see him that a special reception was extended to him.

Today (May 23) we are passing over the sage-covered fields of Nevada, bordered by snow-capped peaks. The varied scenic beauty continues and our ardor for this wonderful country is heightened as we continue towards the Coast. Soon we shall be in Reno, the place made famous because of the ease with which one can obtain divorce. We have had no applications from our party so far, for after several days in Pullman cars enroute and back, home will be "Home, Sweet Home," to everybody.

Everything continues pleasant and everybody is in good health. We reach San Francisco tomorrow morning (May 24).

### SIDELIGHTER.

## ST. JAMES CHURCH GREENSBORO

By Mrs. G. A. Bridges

Sunday morning, Rev. H. C. Miller spoke from Hebrews 12: 2, 3, subject, "Endurance 'the Test of Worthiness.'" Among other things the speaker said:

Life in its final analysis—at least in so far as achievement is concerned—revolves about what we can endure rather than what we can do.

One of the elements of Nordic predominance is the power to endure—hold on to the bitter end.

Christ was glorified because He had the power to endure—stand up in the face of opposition, criticism, loneliness, enduring even the agonies of the Cross.

The Ladies' Aid met with Mrs. S. W. Carter last Thursday evening.

The Earnest Workers won the cup from the Up and Doing class this Sabbath. Since the Up and Doing class holds the banner for finance they do not worry about the cup.

Mrs. Horne, of Sanford, spent several days in the city last week visiting Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Miller. She gave a very interesting talk to the Ladies Society Thursday evening.

Miss Lois McRae has returned from St. Augustine, Raleigh, where she attended school. She will spend the summer with her sister, Mrs. S. W. Carter.

## SALEM DAY OBSERVANCE URGED.

June 17th Set for Public Celebration.

Boston, Mass., May 23, 1927.

—Today the national headquarters of the National Equal Rights League issued a call for the race everywhere to observe "Salem Day as a nation-wide Race Day on June 17th, anniversary of America's first regular battle for Independence, at which Colored men were soldiers and heroes, especially Peter Salem and Salem Poor, thus reminding Americans of manly service in demand for Equal rights and stiffening the spirit of the race itself. A historical leaflet is offered for 6 cents in stamps, post-paid from 9 Cornhill.

Observance everywhere by Equal Rights Citizens Committees or Leagues or by Equal Rights sub-committees of race bodies or churches is advocated, with a plan for every meeting to send a resolution to President Coolidge for abolition of federal segregation and for a federal anti-lynching bill with signatures and addresses and a copy to the League to be used in bulk as a united race appeal to President Coolidge.

There are volumes of the Scriptures in 448 different languages and dialects in the library of the American Bible Society at its headquarters, Astor Place, New York City.