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

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THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY

(A paper read at the Twelfth Annual Presbyterian Workers' Conference, held at Johnson C. Smith University.)

By Rev. L. M. Onque

To correctly discuss this subject we must first know what the community is and what the Church is.

The community is a group of people living in the same locality, governed by the same laws and customs, and having the same interests. The Church is an organization or society founded by Jesus Christ for the purpose of carrying on His work in the world; the chief work being the redemption of the souls of men, or, if we express it in the every day language, making men and women Christians.

Canon Wood has said, "Furnishing the world with Christians is the chief business of the Church; and this is true in regard to the community. It is the church's business to keep the community supplied with Christians. It is not only a business; it is more than a business; it is an obligation that cannot be shirked because the community needs the Christians to help it solve the many problems that confront it daily."

We have stated the proposition as to the duty of the Church; let us see, if we can prove it.

In the first place, the community needs Christians to deal with her problems, because all the problems are related to the needs of humanity, and were brought about by not keeping the Golden Rule. Christ came into the world for man's salvation. He came to remedy the needs of humanity. He came to save men not from hell but from sin and the evil results of sin that was sending them there. In the community we have many evils that are destroying the property, safety, peace, and happiness of its citizens. For years great efforts have been made by those who have the interest of their fellow men at heart to combat these evils, but without any permanent success. The reason is that every evil that threatens humanity, is either the direct or indirect result of sin. Thus if we get rid of sin we get rid of every problem not only that the community has to deal with, but the world everywhere. This is the work of the Church—cleansing the world of sin.

This is done by the use of the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. It is by influencing men to become Christians, to accept Christ as their personal Saviour, that this is accomplished. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," saith the Scripture, and "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

Then the foremost business of the Church is evangelistic or soul-winning. It must recognize the fact that every one needs Christ. Men must be taught their divine value. They are well acquainted with earth's values but with their souls' value so few are familiar. Christ asks, "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The Gospel is meant for all; there should be none within the sphere of any church's influence that has not become a Christian. John 3: 16 gives us God's will in this matter, and says that God is ready to welcome any one who comes. There are those in every community who are left alone because the church thinks they cannot be reached. It feels that they are wicked, too poor, too rich, too proud, or too hardened. Now, this is not God's way of looking at it. God would have none lost but that all would come to repentance.

In the second place, when a man becomes a Christian he be-

comes a new creature, his thoughts are new, his ideals are new, his character is new. He is not of the world, in that he no longer draws his inspiration from the world but from Christ and God, and such a man is an asset to any community in which he lives. Every citizen in a community owes the community a duty. That duty is to help to promote those elements which make for safety, prosperity and general welfare. Now who is in a better position and more able to do this than the Christian? Personally he is fitted for this work because of the influence that he exerts in his daily living. He is regenerated and redeemed. He is a child of God and possesses a Godly nature, therefore his influence is godly, and godliness will make any community a place worth living in. On the other hand, this is his special duty or work. By his redemption he automatically becomes the "light of the world" and "the salt of the earth," by the decree of the Master.

Then it is plain, since the world is to be saved through the preaching of the Gospel, that the first and greatest work of the Church is evangelistic.

Let us notice briefly another phase of the Church's duty, and this is the teaching or the educational work.

The idea of education or teaching is to fit man for a greater service of usefulness in the world, and to inspire them with desires to excel. The central thought of life is service; it is the key to success and fortune. He who serves most is honored most and he who serves best receives the best, and what agency is more fitted to teach men the true form of service than the Church? The very essence of the religion of Jesus Christ is service. The cost requirement for discipleship is service. "If any man would be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me." The example of the Master is that of service. "For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The service of the world is a selfish service; it is a service for personal gain and ease; the Christian service is a service of usefulness; it is for the good of others. It is the only service worth giving. It can not be measured in dollars and cents; neither can it be put away in vaults and safes, but it is felt nevertheless in the world, and if men would write their names in the undying memories of mankind, let them serve the world with the great truth that every man owes the community he lives in his due portion of service; that the welfare of the community depends upon how well he pays that service to it. Not only must he be taught that he must serve his community, but he must be taught how to do so, and that it is only when prompted by the Spirit of Christ that a man can give his best.

It is the responsibility of the Church to see that the community learns the great truths of religion. Too many churches are spending their time with a propaganda of denominationalism instead of spreading the truths of Christianity in the world. If a church would add to her roll and increase her following, let her declare and teach the truths of religion untainted with creed or sectarianism, and her courts will be filled. In the age in which we are living men are demanding the truth. Old ideas, old customs and traditions die hard. They were men of present

valor, stalwart, old, iconoclast, and so we, too, must meet the demand of our age for the truth with truth! Christ says, "I am the truth," and the Christian Church is the only agency that has the power and the right to proclaim the great truths of God to the world, the knowledge of which will save and assure the community of an unending security.

Through the teaching of the Gospel, men are to learn the real meaning of love, that the old law of retaliation is done away with, and that men are to love their enemies as well as their friends. They are to learn the law of neighborliness, they are to learn that all men are brothers and that God is the common Father of us all, and that He expects us all to govern our actions by the Golden Rule.

The church is to be the great inspirational source and agent of the community, and to do this it must fill the community with the Spirit of Christ. This means that the Holy Spirit will become the motive power of men's lives, shaping and molding their characters, governing and influencing their thoughts and actions.

The Church has always been the maker of ideals. The followers of Christ have always had a vision. The principles taught by the Christian religion are such as to inspire men to higher and nobler living. No man rises higher than his ideal; no community rises any higher than the ideals of those who compose it, and as water can not rise any higher than its source, so man's ideals can not rise any higher than the source from which they are inspired.

All the ideals inspired by the world are selfish and self-centered. There are many other religions and cults, some of them thousands of years older than Christianity, that have sought to be the world's source of inspiration, but they all have failed to relieve the world of its ills. The only inspiration that has led to the culture and development of the race with any lasting effect has been that given by the Christian religion. Then it rests on the Church, as one of our daily newspapers says, "To be a busy, humming powerhouse of spiritual ideals, lighting the minds of men, energizing their hearts, and moving their steps toward a higher social order."

In the teaching work of the Church, it must not be forgotten that upon its shoulders falls the burden of protecting the youth of the land. The Church must see to it that the great truths of religion have their place in all education of the young. The future, not only of the Church and community, but the whole world depends upon it.

Nowhere can we find the fundamental elements that go to build up character and produce souls that are inspired for the service of usefulness that are found in the principles as taught by the Christian religion. It is a sacred trust imposed upon the Church that it must take care of the education of the youth of the land.

The third phase of the business of the church in the community, is that of community welfare or social service work. In the early days of the Church, it was thought that its only duty was to take care of the spiritual interests of men and for the Church to interfere in the temporal affairs of men was a mistake, as would tend to draw the Church away from its main business, that of evangelism and education. But the Church is coming to realize more and more that the religion of Jesus Christ touches every part of man's life—body and soul, mind and spirit, and that the fullest development of one depends upon the development of the others as well. And if man is to be at his best and fulfill the end

for which God created him he must impartially build up the world of his being.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save the whole man. This is made clear in the doctrine of the resurrection. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." We cannot conceive of men inhabiting heaven with pure souls in impure bodies. If the bodies of men are reunited with their souls and both are to be made perfect in righteousness, then the bodies must be redeemed as well as the souls. The Bible testifies to the fact, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The soul is influenced by its surroundings. We are all creatures of our environments. "We form a part of all we meet," says one poet. Our characters are the products, more or less, of the thousands of influences our souls come in contact with, and while the body is only the agent of the soul; yet we know that the soul is largely influenced by the appetites of the body and the emotions of the mind.

Then if the Church is to keep men's souls straight it must keep their bodies straight also. It must not only tell men not to yield to temptation, but must also help to remove temptation out of their way. Jesus tells us that we must prove our religion by our works. Christ makes the second commandment equal with the first, and teaches that ministering to the needs of the body is as important as ministering to the needs of the soul in regards to performing our whole Christian duty. Christ bears out the right for the Church to devote herself to social service, in that He sets the example. He begins His public life with a miracle, not to heal a soul, but to aid in recreation of a community, which was taking the form of a wedding feast. He healed a palsied man to prove His claim to the Godhead, and sent as a proof of His Messiahship the evidence "that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

What more authority do we need than this to prove that one phase of the Church's business in the community is to concern itself in those things of the community that lie within the circle of its social interests. Some say that for the Church to do this it is leaving the field of its regular activities and meddling with things that it has no business to interfere with. That such work will tend to make the Church less spiritual and lose its power with men. But this is not to be feared. There is no conflict between the spiritual and social activities of the Church, and it is not departing from our Christian ideals to interest ourselves in the securing of steady employment for men, and helping them to make an adequate salary, in order that they may supply their families, not only with the necessities but also some of the pleasures of life; that they may not be either tempted to steal or envy. Did not Christ say, "Give ye them to eat?" It is not seeking another's wealth, but obeying the Golden Rule, when we busy ourselves with promoting those interests that will bring about sanitation and housing for the community, that health may be safeguarded and the morals taken care of, and is it not giving a drink of water on a large scale when we help a community to secure an adequate water supply?

Faith without works is dead, and the religion that only cares about a man's soul and lets his

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HODGE ACADEMY, WASHINGTON, GA.

Commencement and Other Activities.

Hodge Academy closed one of the most successful years in its history May 1st, and the commencement was a grand success.

The commencement sermon was preached by Rev. DeWitt Talmage Murray, pastor of Ladsen church, Columbia, S. C. Rev. Murray was at his best, using for his text Proverbs 22: 6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." His theme was "The Right Kind of Training." A large and appreciative audience turned out and all enjoyed this sermon.

On the following Tuesday night two beautiful plays were given, "A Day in Flowerdom," and "The Lost Comet." The primary grades under the direction of Miss Amada Harris made a great impression.

Wednesday night the upper grades came out ready. The auditorium was filled to its capacity with both white and colored. This play was a Chinese play, "Crimson Eyebrows," and to look upon the stage was almost like being in a city in China, for the costumes, scenery and music were all oriental and beautiful. Mrs. Hargrave at the piano was mistress of the situation. Great praise was given the management and students of Hodge for putting over this beautiful play.

Thursday night the graduating exercises were largely attended. Rev. W. S. Porter (white), Presbyterian minister of Washington, made the commencement address. His subject was "Building a Life." The address was very rich in thought and was appreciated by all. The graduates were at their best. Miss Emma Edwards, of Union Point, Ga., read the class prophecy. Another feature which was impressive was the placing of the mantle upon the succeeding class by Miss Mary Simpson and the beautiful response by Miss Edith Winkfield.

Prof. W. A. Simpson (white), of the City High School, presented the diplomas. Our white friends spoke highly of the school and the work our pastor is doing here.

Evangelistic Services

Our pastor, Rev. Hargrave, is a busy man. Just after commencement he left for Danville, Va., where he spent the third Sunday. He reports a pleasant trip. He also spent a while attending Johnson C. Smith University commencement. On his return all plans were made for a great revival. All the ministers in town were asked to take a night and the fire was kindled. As we have had a drought for the past two years and were facing another many prayers went up for rain.

On June 12th, Dr. S. D. Thom, Synodical evangelist, began to preach under a large tent and all the churches in town had representatives in the choir. We asked for a choir of fifty voices and all the churches rallied. Mrs. Hargrave and Miss Amada Harris as well as others have worked untiringly and the spirit has been great.

Dr. C. J. Baker and his son, Charles, spent a few days with Rev. Hargrave and entered into the spirit of the meeting. Our prayers have been answered, for the heavens opened and the rain has not stopped this week, yet our meeting is still going on.

We must mention the hospitality of our members. Mrs. Huff, Mrs. Verdelle, Mrs. King, Miss Amada Harris and her sister, Mrs. Johnson, also Mrs. Stoniker have killed the fatted calf for us and we have enjoyed great dinners at their homes. Elder Grant brought his gifts to the manse as he has not yet

taken his lady friend to wed, but we hope he will soon.

We have had two to join our church and the anxious seat is full each night we can escape the rain. The town is worked up and Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and all have worked together without seeing work in it and a beautiful spirit is felt.

Our rally is on for benevolence and Dr. Baker has done much to inspire us. We promise to pay our entire quota before fall for we do not believe in waiting and killing ourselves at the last moment.

Our program is to continue the revival as long as we can keep Dr. Thom and I am sure that before the meeting closes every church will have her membership increased.

REPORTER.

NEW CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL, ASHEVILLE.

All of the different departments of the church are trying to do their bit. The 11 A. M. services are regularly attended and the sermons are helpful and instructive to all who listen. We have had to join recently and be connected as members four new persons. We are glad to have them and hope that they will carry the banner of Christ as they walk through life. Evening worship is well attended and the sermons by our minister, Rev. W. G. Hamilton, are soul-stirring.

The Sabbath school having been newly re-organized, with Mrs. C. Birchett as Superintendent and Mrs. C. J. Williams, Assis., is doing great work and there has been no falling off.

We are happy to have back from the various colleges and schools our young members who are making themselves useful in the Sunday school, Christian Endeavor and in their places in the choir. Misses Blanche Hammond, Lucile McCormick and Mr. Israel Garrison made splendid records in their schools graduated from this past term—Swift Memorial College and Ingleside Seminary.

The baccalaureate sermon for the class of 1927 of New Calvary Parochial School was delivered by the Episcopal minister, Rev. H. A. U. Powell. A splendid and great one it was. The church was full both gallery and auditorium, before the processional. Special music was rendered by the class and others.

The graduating exercises were May 20. A greater crowd than on Sunday witnessed these exercises. There were fifteen graduates. The class was larger than any other during the time of Rev. W. G. Hamilton's administration. The young women and young men delivered their orations with great care and enthusiasm. Miss Hermie Dizard, valedictorian, made the highest average for four terms. Mr. M. D. C. Kennedy, the salutatorian, made the second highest average for four terms.

Mrs. J. R. Jones delivered the annual class address.

Dr. Robert Hendrix presented diplomas and awards. Those who received medals were as follows: Miss Hermie Dizard, from Whitted-McCoy; Undertakers; Mr. Willie M. Down, from Wilson Undertakers; Miss Alice Poston, for Ambition, from the school; Miss Mamie L. Towns, for highest average in department for two terms. Mr. M. D. C. Kennedy received a medal from the teachers of New Calvary Parochial School. Lastly, but not the least, to the great surprise of the Principal, Rev. W. G. Hamilton, B. D., A. M., was presented a handsome "Loving Cup" from the school children for the service rendered during his administration. Not only was it a happy surprise to the Principal, but to the throng of witnesses.

W. M. S.