

African American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii, 35.

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THE STRENGTHENING POWER OF PRAYER

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The Prayer Life of Jesus

It is the outgoing of stored energy to meet and overcome all opposition and claim the world. It is the outgoing not only of faith in God but also faith in one's self, having a consciousness of the abiding dynamo of the Spirit.

The world is not wanting for convictions, for everybody has them; but only a few are courageous enough to express them, especially when they conflict with present beliefs and practices. Speaking of Him as a man, a time came in the life of Jesus when He mustered up strength and self-reliance to declare Himself to a hostile world in regard to legal outcasts and daily religious problems.

Legal Outcasts.

It happened as He was in one of the cities, behold a man full of leprosy! A leper was a legal outcast; the church closed its door against him; men would not come near him; his place was out of the camp. Here is a surprise: this outcast was in the city and in the path of Jesus. The meeting was not an accident. It was as far as the leper was concerned, but Jesus planned it to give us a lesson in how to catch men. The great question today is how to deal with outcasts? This was the lowest type; society shut him out; priests and Levites would not sympathize with him; the people abhorred him. Beholding Jesus he bowed and begged, "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Here was need; here was a bitter cry going out for help; every ear was deaf to his cry; the door of hope was closed to him. Who would give that helping hand to restore him to his place in the camp, to society and to the church? And stretching the hand Jesus touched him, saying, "I will, be clean." A radical departure from custom, society, etc.

We must have hearts overflowing with love for all men. The most degraded has the image of God stamped upon him. He may be in the far country feeding upon the husks of swine and wallowing in the mire of sin, yet he is a son of the Great King and a place is reserved in the home and at the table for him.

We must be ready to give bodily or soul relief to all types of outcasts and despair of none. No one is sunk below the grasp of Jesus; His love is deeper than hell, broader than space, and able to lift the worse of sinners to His throne. We must be a friend to the friendless. If the church and church people would regain the place of a vitalizing force in the community and in the world, the community must see the Christ life in them. The world is yearning for the touch of the Christ-spirit, a touch to inspire confidence, a touch to convince the basest that he can be made to take his place again in the family circle; a touch to convince that God loves him with a love stronger than death and longs to have him separated from his sins. We must break all barriers that stand in the way of accomplishing the task. This is the trial of faith; it may cause physical sustenance to be cut off, it may lead one to ostracism but it is the path of undying glory.

Jesus' regard for law. Show thyself to the priest. Although the work was done, nevertheless the outcast must observe the ordained law to restore him to society, to the church and to right relationship with God. Acknowledgment must be made; thanksgiving must go up to God for His new lease on life;

and he must know that God has the first claim on his new life.

Social Outcasts

He saw a publican. He not only saw this social outcast but also looked upon him with admiration. That look searched through Matthew. Jesus saw his yearning of soul for the fuller life; He saw also a fit subject in whom to deposit His great trust. Follow me. Now He called a social outcast to be His disciple and companion. He was now able to overcome public opinion; stopped his ears, closed His eyes to the jeers and frowns of his opposers. His method was to gather into His circle representatives of all kinds of people to encourage all to come to Him, to form mediums to reach all.

The Great Reception.

Levi made a reception at his home. It had a two-fold meaning. It was a farewell to his past, forsaking his old master and marrying the new Master. It was taking Jesus into his confidence and showing his esteem of Him.

The invited guests. A great multitude of publicans and others were reclining. He did not go out of his class to get a representative gathering to greet his new Lord and Master but brought his every day friends of the same social standing, those in sympathy with his ideals, to meet Jesus. When a man comes to Jesus it should be his effort not to forsake his friends but to lead them to Him. He must make it plain to him that he has turned his back on the past, his face is set heavenward and he is duty bound to invite all his friends to take the stand with him and go on to glory.

"We are journeying to the place which the Lord said, I will give it thee. Come with us and we will do thee good for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." See the guests of Jesus; see the horror it brought to the religious people of that time who said, What is the ultimate purpose in view that ye eat with publicans and sinners? See also the mind and yearning Spirit of Jesus!

Jesus Defending His Program

Those well need no physician but they that are sick. A doctor's business is among the sick; his efforts must be to effect cures. If there were no sick, no diseased, we would not need doctors. Jesus now openly declared His place in the world and the place all who follow Him must occupy. His ministry is a ministry of healing; the maladies are spiritual and so also the treatment. Our job, first and last, is to call sinners to repentance. This was a distinct break with the ideas of the leaders of the Jewish church and with the ideas of the churchmen of every age who think that the church is a club for a certain type of people. Jesus declares that the world is a hospital; the churches are wards therein and every Christian a healer. As the doctor rejoices when he brings health to the sick so must we rejoice when people are turning to the Lord.

Daily Religious Problems

Fasting and prayer. Fasting is a religious exercise and discipline of the body to release spiritual energy. Prayer is the discipline of the human spirit and inasmuch as the body is the work house, the house must be in such a condition as not to hamper the free exercise of the housekeeper. Public fasts were prescribed by Moses and kept yearly at the great day of atonement. There were also voluntary fasts; men who desired to live holier lives exercised themselves in this way.

Jesus Himself fasted and commended it. "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting." Paul and Barnabas were chosen by the Spirit when the disciples had fasted. Says Jesus, fasting is unnecessary as long as I am present in the body with my disciples. I to them am the all-sufficient Helper, but when I am taken away from them, they will feel the necessity of that discipline which is so necessary to spiritual growth.

Fasting was abused in Christ's day. Some, seeking praise from men, disfigured their faces to appear to men to fast to gain notoriety for holiness. Others looked upon it as a means to merit a place in the kingdom. "I fast twice a week," etc. Because of this abuse Jesus laid emphasis not on physical fasts, but on spiritual fasts when the soul is not trammelled but can commune with its maker. The old way must give place to the new; as no man can put new wine into old skin bottles. The new way is the way of the Spirit. God is not concerned in physical exercise such as shouting, amens and even rituals. These are indifferent—neither good nor bad—but could be made a means to encourage others in the worship as the Cherubim and Seraphim cry to one another, "Holy, holy, holy." The great thing to remember is, worship is the communion of spirits. It is when our spirits engage the great Spirit. "God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The Question of the Sabbath.

Two examples are cited—hunger and sickness. It happened that in going through the cornfields on the Sabbath His disciples plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them with their hands. The Sabbath defenders claimed that rubbing the ears with their hands was a form of work and should not be done. Jesus answered this vexing question by saying, the saving of life and relieving human need—even the needs of the lower creatures—is permissible. The principle laid down is that whatever will save life may be undertaken on the Sabbath. With Jesus there is nothing secular; everything should point to the glory of God. Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do must be done to the glory of God.

The principle covers all work that is done on the Sabbath day—running trains, selling gas, cooking, visiting hospitals, etc. Jesus looked at the motive of the doer. If the motive is worldly gain, to take advantage of the occasion to forward one's selfish aims, or if it is not in keeping with His spirit then it is wrong. Just here, if a man does not know the motive for an action and does not seek to find out he is unfit to sit in judgment.

Sickness.

A man was there whose right hand was withered. Here was sickness that unfitted the man to support himself and family. Jesus healed the man and set down another principle, viz., whatever will develop life is allowed. This covers Sunday recreations. The one test he insists upon is the motive of the doer. What about Sunday baseball playing for shut-ins, factory hands and all underpaid persons? Is it right for the man who is able to own an automobile to take his family miles to the mountains or water front to catch fresh breeze on Sunday? What about the man who can not afford one, and all he can afford is a ball and bat and this he does solely unto the Lord for recreation in some old field or park on the Sabbath.

The religion which makes men quarrelsome will never bring heaven down to earth.

CAPE FEAR PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of Cape Fear met in the White Rock church, Kinston, N. C., April 11th-13th. The opening sermon was preached by the retiring Moderator, Rev. Matthew S. Branch, of Goldsboro. Rev. George C. Shaw, D. D., was elected Moderator. Rev. J. W. Smith and Elder J. P. Murfree were elected temporary clerks.

The statistical reports reveal that the churches have made a slight increase over the previous year. An increase in finances was also noted.

Rev. David Alexander Johnson was received by letter from the Presbytery of Knox. A call was placed in his hands to become pastor of the Chestnut Street church, Wilmington. Dr. Clarence Dillard, Rev. A. H. George and Elder G. P. Dudley were appointed as a committee to install the Rev. Johnson. The installation will take place April 29th.

Mr. Chas. H. White, a theological student in J. C. Smith University, was licensed to preach the gospel. Mr. Jno. Mays, a Senior of Mary Potter School, was taken under the care of the Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. He will pursue his studies in J. C. Smith University.

Dr. Jno. H. Hayswood, of Lumberton, was elected principal ministerial commissioner to the General Assembly, and the Rev. M. S. Branch, of Goldsboro, was elected alternate. Dr. E. E. Toney, of Oxford, was elected principal lay commissioner to the Assembly, and Mr. E. R. Bostic, of Goldsboro, was elected alternate.

Presbytery ordered the dissolution of the pastoral relations existing between the Rev. T. T. Branch and Haymount church at Fayetteville. These orders are to go into effect on or before the first of July. Rev. Branch will serve the Faison Memorial church at Clinton and the Pilgrim's Chapel at Burgaw.

Miss Theodora Percival, Young People's Worker, was accorded the courtesies of Presbytery. She gave an inspiring and informing address on Christian Education and outlined some objectives for Cape Fear. On Thursday night the ladies rendered a popular program. Miss Barr, of the Board of National Missions, was one of the principal speakers.

The work of the Women's Presbyterian Societies was attended with good success during the past year. The reports were inspiring and uplifting. More finances were raised than ever before. More effective work was done in the local societies than ever before.

The work among the young people in the Presbytery is very encouraging. This is noted in the increasing numbers of young people attending the sessions of the Presbytery.

It was voted to have the next meeting of Presbytery a week later in order to give the men a chance to attend some of the other Presbyteries. This is only an experiment; if it does not suit it is understood that the old order will stand.

Presbytery adjourned to meet in the Second Presbyterian church, Whiteville, the third Wednesday in April, 1929.

"SCRIBE."

CEDAR GROVE COMMUNITY NOTES.

By Mrs. Hattie A. Russell

Sunday, April 15th, was a very rainy day, but our Sunday school was largely attended and the lesson for the day was beautifully discussed. The offering was very good.

Sunday, April 22nd, our pastor, Dr. L. J. Melton, came to us

with a powerful sermon. We had a well filled house and every one seemed to be touched by the Spirit. Sunday school was held at the regular hour with 107 pupils and 11 teachers.

April 6th, the Household of Ruth held a District meeting with the Landis Lodge. Those attending from this community were Mrs. Dora Davidson, Mrs. Bettie Phifer, Mrs. Carrie Lytle, Mrs. Katie O. and Mrs. M. J. Alexander and Mrs. Hattie Russell.

A number of people from Cabarrus County attended the Mecklenburg County commencement on Friday, April 13th.

Mrs. M. J. Alexander, leader of District No. 2, of Catawba Presbyterial, held a very interesting meeting on April 14th at Siloam church. A large attendance from the surrounding churches of this district was present, and all report having had one of the best meetings of its kind ever held.

We were delighted to have with us on Easter Sunday Mr. M. L. Black, who is a teacher at New London. This is Mr. Black's second year to teach in this school and he has done some very creditable work in that community.

On last Friday Rev. L. J. Melton and Mrs. Carrie Harris motored to New London to attend the closing exercise of Mr. Black's school. Dr. Melton was the chief speaker of the evening.

The Cedar Grove school will close Friday, April 27th, with a program on Friday night.

CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WILSON, N. C.

The Friendly Church on the Corner continues to plod on in her efforts to meet the religious needs of the community. Her growth has not by any means been phenomenal. She strives to move along conservative lines. Whenever any new ground has been gained she is careful to make sure of it, and then move forward.

Calvary maintains three outposts:

A Sunday school recently organized in the Bynum school located about six miles from Wilson. This school was organized by Mr. Vick. It has an enrollment of over 25.

Second Calvary, located at Bailey in Nash County, is in its second year. The school has an average attendance of over 30. Preaching is conducted there once a month. During the past year ten infants were baptized there and 14 were added to the mission.

Fremont has a church building. The congregation is well organized. It bids fair to make rapid progress in the very near future. There were six additions during the year. The missionary and the Tuxis Girls met their obligations along with the other departments of the church.

These outposts are so conveniently arranged that they do not interfere with the regular work of the mother church. It is noted that there was a total of 35 additions to the Presbyterian Church for which Calvary may claim the responsibility. They are, Bailey, 14; Fremont, 6; and Calvary, 15.

The Ladies' Missionary Society recently held their Better Wilson Banquet in the auditorium of the high school. Short speeches were made on Better Churches, Better Schools, Better Lodges, Better Homes, etc. The affair was a brilliant success.

The annual reports of the activities of the church reveal the following organizations: A Missionary Society with 32 members; a Mother's Club, organized with 19 members; a Tuxis Girls' Club with 25 members; a Pioneer Boys' Club with over 40 members; a Light Bearers' Club with over 30 members; a

Cradle Roll Department with 45 members.

The Wilson unit of the Scotia Alumnae Chapter raised \$200.00 for the Scotia Building Fund. Their quota was \$100.

Plans are being formulated for the celebration of Vocation Day the first Sunday in May. Some of the Tuxis Girls and Pioneer Boys are trying their hand at writing a pageant to be presented on that day.

Calvary has begun the new year under favorable conditions. She is looking forward to increased activities along all lines. She is going to attempt great things for God this year. The church has had three additions during the new year.

THE SCRIBE.

DISTRICT PRESBYTERIAL MEETING.

District No. 2, of Catawba Presbyterial, held its Spring meeting with the local society of Siloam church Saturday, April 14. The program was as follows:

Singing, "Just as I am without one plea."

Scripture lesson, 100th Psalm, read by Mrs. M. J. Phifer, of Huntersville.

We were favored with prayer by Rev. N. Bell, of Huntersville. Singing, "I Love to Tell the Story."

The financial report for the year 1927-1928 was read by the leader, Mrs. M. J. Alexander, of Cedar Grove.

The apportionments for the year 1928-29 were given to the local societies by Mrs. Alexander.

The Mission study book, "See for Yourself," was completed, with the Rev. H. Wilson, of Concord, as instructor.

In the study of this book we have been able to see some of the outstanding features of the work done by the Board of National Missions.

In view of this fact we rejoice to know that we have a part in this great work. Are we playing our part to the fullest extent?

Among the many very helpful things our instructor brought to our attention were that our success in this great work depends largely upon coordination, cooperation and consecration.

The hymn, "Work for the Night is Coming," was sung.

The following persons were then called upon by the leader. Each one responded to her name with greetings from her local society.

Miss Carrie Harris, Cedar Grove.

Mrs. M. J. Phifer, Huntersville.

Mrs. Matilda Harrison, Belle Fonte.

Miss Lawson, New Hope.

Miss Hester Roscoe, Westminster.

Mrs. Ada Briley, Bethpage.

Mrs. Katie O. Alexander, who is Secretary of Literature, of Catawba Presbyterial, presented her work and distributed quite a bit of literature.

The following named elders from the various churches were then called on: Elders Wm. Phifer, Sam Harrison and J. W. Brown. Each of these gave some very inspiring remarks.

The hymn, "Blest be the Tie that Binds," was sung, after which Rev. L. J. Melton, D. D., pronounced the benediction.

The ladies of Siloam church and friends invited us to a nicely prepared and well spread dinner. Of this we all partook and were filled.

Thus ended one of the most successful meetings we have had in District No. 2.

MRS. MARY J. ALEXANDER, Leader.

MRS. MARY H. GREENE, Secretary.

The religion which makes men satisfied with evil will never save the world.