

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

VOL. LIII. CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 1931. NO. 1.

## REMEMBERING ALL HIS BENEFITS

By Rev. Halley B. Taylor, D. D.,  
of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C.

(A Thanksgiving Sermon delivered in the Lincoln Temple Congregational Church on the occasion of the 1930 United Thanksgiving Services held by the Lincoln Temple, Plymouth and People's Congregational, and the Tabor and Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Churches, at the request of whose ministers it has been printed in pamphlet.)

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."—Psalm CIII:2.

In keeping with our custom and in response to the call of the President of the United States, we have assembled here today to show, by the holding of these special services, that we are thankful for the manifold blessings that have come to us through the kind providence of God, our Heavenly Father. We could do no more fitting a thing, on this occasion, than to join with the Psalmist in singing the second verse of the one hundred and third Psalm. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits," and we could not engage our minds in a more helpful way than in that of "Remembering all His benefits."

I have no doubt but that we have listened already to splendid, helpful sermons in our several churches, in which were set forth reasons why we, as Christians and Americans, should be full of the spirit of thanksgiving; and we, therefore, think it not inappropriate to confine our remarks to some of the reasons why we, as a racial group, should be thankful for the goodness of God to us as a particular people.

The fact that we have gathered ourselves together here in this sanctuary to join in a service of thanksgiving means unquestionably that we believe that God, our Provider, has dealt with us according to the promptings of infinite love, agreeably to the decisions of illimitable wisdom, and that He has expressed His boundless goodness, through the exercise of His infinite power, according to His unconditioned, sovereign will.

In our public and private devotions we usually thank God for health and strength, for food and raiment, for peace and prosperity, for splendid achievements and beckoning hopes, for courageous hearts and glorious victories. But we need to remember that the God whom we thank today is a God of infinite love, wisdom, goodness, power, justice and truth; and that since there is none to stay His hand or question His decisions, does it not necessarily follow that the cups of bitterness, disappointment, failure and hardship, as well as all of the tempestuous storms of life, come to us either from His hand or by His permission, and that through all of these things, regarded by us as evils, He still discovers Himself to His teachable children, as the God of infinite love, goodness, power, justice and truth.

As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." "Now no chastening," said he further, "for the present seemeth grievous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby."

Neither as individuals nor as a people are we prepared for the living of the fullest life unless we have worked out for ourselves a philosophy of life that reveals our struggles as

developers of strength, that teaches us in defeat how to triumph, that shows us through failure how to succeed, that leads us to self-improvement because of the scorn of men, that makes us confident that the valley of tribulation guides us to the plains of joy and peace.

And it is because we blend our voices with that of the Psalmist this morning in calling upon our souls to "Bless the Lord and forget not all His benefits" that we have decided to call attention to a few of the reasons why we should thank God for some of the manifestations of His love, which we have been prone to regard as evidences of His ill favor.

"God moves in a mysterious way." When we fail to walk in the right way, of our own free will and accord, He, at times, uses methods to coerce us into His way that cause no little pain and confusion.

Several years ago a series of incidents transpired in a city in which I was pastoring that illustrated, to my mind, this particular truth; and since those incidents teach in a concrete way the truth that I have just uttered, I shall, in a few words, relate them.

A Baptist church and a Methodist church strove covertly and unintermittently to be recognized as the leading church in the community. Both had programs that called for new church buildings. The Baptists announced their ambitious plan to break all records by raising a thousand dollars in a financial rally. They gave themselves wholeheartedly to their undertaking and at the end of two months they heralded to the world the fact that for the first time in history a church of our race in that city had raised in one effort a thousand and three dollars. Their jubilation was pronounced and the inclination to boast became irresistible. The minister openly declared that the members of no other church in that city had the ability to raise a thousand and three dollars in one effort.

When the boastful words of the Baptists were conveyed to the Methodist minister, he called together the members of his church and made known to them what he had heard. "Is it true," he prodded them "that you can't raise a thousand dollars? Let us show them," he challenged. The result was that they set their rally day, and at the end of three weeks they reported the astounding sum of fifteen hundred dollars—nearly five hundred dollars more than their Baptist brethren had been able to gather.

What the Methodists would not attempt because of their love of their church they accomplished under the sting of brotherly contempt, and afterwards thanked God for having led them to the discovery of their actual ability.

And so, may it not be true today that, when race pride and self-interest have failed to move us to think as we ought to think, of the correcting of some of our shortcomings, that God either caused or permitted the much-denounced entertainers, Amos and Andy, through their searching ridicule, to stir up our drowsy, sleeping spirits to praiseworthy indignation; and should we not thank God, who controls all things, for this corrective punishment, under which so many of us are wincing and smarting?

We are emptying our vials of denunciation and wrath upon these two comedians be-

cause they are broadcasting it that multitudes of us are rather susceptible to the appeals of secret fraternalism.

But is it not true that the sound of the gavel that calls to order a national meeting of some of our fraternities is heeded by a more numerous cross-section of our race than any other sound that reaches the ears of our people in this country?

The gavel sounds and the disfranchised Southerner and the Northern office-holder—the all but illiterate rustic and the polished doctor of philosophy—the humble common laborer and the most renowned professionals—those who live from hand to mouth and those who revel in the luxuries of life—the respectable-looking bootlegger and the most notorious appearing religionist, all press shoulders together and listen with bated breath for the sound of the voice of the most Excellent—called by Amos and Andy, the King Fish.

Now we may announce anathemas against these two humorists to our hearts' content, but when we have finished we must admit in all soberness that there are many true lines in this ludicrous picture that they have drawn of us.

We find ourselves chafing also under their representation of us as being willing to accept, as final and satisfactory, the opinions and promises of our brother in white.

Now whether it is because of a lack of confidence in the wisdom, or power, or integrity of our own racial advisers, we do not here and now venture to say; but we do say that whatever the reason may be, it is generally true that our people do believe in the word of the white man as they do not in that of our own people.

If by ridiculing these and other admitted weaknesses of ours, Amos and Andy lash us, as it were, across the face and drive us to show to the world—

That we are not worshipping at the footstool of the worthless high society, as it is represented by Henry VanPorter;

That we are able to do business among ourselves in a business-like way;

That our common race interests can call us together from all walks of life, more readily and in larger numbers than can the gavel of the secret fraternity;

And that we have confidence in the wisdom, power and integrity of our own racial brothers, as we have in others;

We say, that if their stinging, biting ridicule can drive us to do these things, then it must be regarded, though bitter for the moment, one of the greatest blessings that God has permitted to come to us in the last half century, and we should thank Him for His goodness.

Sanballet and Tobiah ridiculed the efforts of Nehemiah and the Jews as they labored to rebuild the broken-down walls of Jerusalem. When they laughed and cried in derision, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up (against it) he shall even break down their stone wall," they but increased the determination of Nehemiah and his co-laborers to finish the task; and so the wall was built, the temple reconstructed and dedicated, into which came eventually the long looked for Shiloh.

And again we should appreciate the goodness of God in allowing to rise to places of eminence and power such Negro-hating defiers of Constitutional guarantees and human decency as Senators Coleman L. Blease and Thomas J. Heflin and others of their ilk.

Because they were not soft-speaking, hand-hiding race as-

salants, but were brutally outspoken in their bitter opposition to our people, we have been led to understand some truths.

We now know that the personal love and friendship of the Southern whites would not save us from degradation plotted by such political demagogues and through their hostile activities we have been brought to realize that our Northern friends, as politicians, place a higher value upon an unholy sectional peace than they do upon the sanctions of justice, whether human or divine.

Through their persecutions they have made us see that the Republican Party no longer stands out as the champion of our cause and defender of our rights, but that it basely acquiesces in the humiliating and handicapping of our people and fawns at the feet of our traitors.

The applause their anti-Negro tirades have received from all quarters of the country has compelled us to realize that our only unflinching sources of help are to be found in God above and our own resolute hearts.

The ignominious defeat suffered by these two arch-haters in the last election, simply published to the interested world the fact that they did not understand the minds of the people whom they represented, who demanded of them blind, unreasoning party regularity.

Because their judgments were condemned at the polls by their constituencies the world is bound to realize that they were given to faulty reasoning and to the reaching of ill-founded conclusions and finally that their attitudes towards our people were not necessarily warranted.

If the persecutions of these men have driven us to our knees in prayer before God, as the persecution of Haman drove Mordecai and the Jews, and if like Haman, Blease and Heflin had to mount the scaffold to meet political death, because of our prayers, then we should thank God for their persecutions, because, like Mordecai and the Jews, we are due to begin our march to favor and to power.

Another thing that causes us pain for which we should thank God, is that we are coming to see the truth that, for the most part, as our classes increase in material wealth, through the good favor of our masses, they decrease in their practical interest in the things that are of vital concern to us as a people.

It is our belief that no battle could be pitched in any city in this country against the powers that are crushing the life out of our people that could attract the brains, the wealth, the influence, and the culture that the contest for athletic honors, to take place this afternoon, has attracted to this the Capital City of the Nation.

Most of our people of comparative wealth, we have been forced to realize, have money for country clubs and golf courses, but not for institutions for the saving of the lives of our morally injured, delinquent boys and girls.

They have money to maintain exclusive clubs and circles, but not for the decent support of the organizations that are battling for our citizenship rights.

They have money to satisfy every whim of their acquired luxury-loving tastes, but not to invest in enterprises that would give to their weaker brother a chance to earn ordinary bread and meat.

We say that we should thank God for permitting us to realize through experience this truth because the realization of

(Continued on page 4)

## THE WEEK OF PRAYER

In accordance with a custom reaching back for many years the first full week in January has been designated by the Federal Council as a "Week of Prayer for the Churches." The plan is carried out in co-operation with the British section of the World's Evangelical Alliance by which the same devotional program is circulated in all parts of the English-speaking world and also translated into many other tongues.

In issuing the call to the churches to observance of this Week of Prayer, the Federal Council's Commission on Evangelism, over the signature of Bishop A. R. Clippinger, Chairman, and Dr. C. L. Goodell, Executive Secretary, emphasizes the possibility of building upon the impetus received from the 190th anniversary of Pentecost. The statement is in part as follows:

"If we were right in celebrating the last Pentecost as the sixteenth hundredth anniversary of the first, we are now keeping the anniversary of the first Pentecostal year. Let us remember that after the gospels in the New Testament come, not the Epistles, but the Acts. Those Acts were preceded by the endowment of power through the Holy Spirit. That power must manifest itself. There may be some religion in which God only and the individual are concerned, but Christianity requires three—God and the individual and somebody else. The individual must work out his salvation in order to keep it; he must give in order to receive. That is a lesson which we need to take to heart today. It is a witnessing church that will be a growing church. It is the carrying of the Good News which is to change the face of the world.

"For the coming of the Holy Spirit, the first preparation was one of prayer. It is not, therefore, fitting in the highest degree that we should begin the new year with a week of prayer—a time when we carefully examine our own hearts? Are we troubled with doubts? When we have told them to God with open heart they seem to melt away. Are we confused about our duty? When we practice the presence of God we face duties and the world's need in a manner pleasing to Him. Is not the first attitude of prayer the 'waiting before God?' If we wait for His voice, we shall be more likely to utter the petition which He has indited and which He waits to answer. Thus shall we come to feel the passion for the souls of men which Jesus felt; thus will our field of service be as wide as human needs the world over.

"Like the first disciples, we must begin 'at Jerusalem.' If the Christian forces of our own land become imbued with the Master's spirit, the ends of the earth will be made to rejoice."

The general topic for the Week of Prayer is "World Evangelization," and a special sub-topic is indicated for each day of the week as follows:

Sunday, January 4, it is suggested that sermons be preached on one of the following themes: "The Lord's Command," Matthew 24:14; Matthew 28:16-20; "The Divine Dynamic," Acts 1:6-8; "Essentials to Success," Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4; "The World's Only Hope," Acts 4:12.

Monday, January 5, "Thanksgiving and Confession," Luke 24:36-53; Psalm 72; Acts 2:1-18.

Tuesday, January 6, "The Church Universal," Ephesians

4:1-13; Colossians 1:1; Corinthians 12:12-27.

Wednesday, January 7, "International Fraternal Co-operation," Luke 2:1-4; Psalm 67; Isaiah 2:1-5; Acts 17; 24-31; Romans 13.

Thursday, January 8, "Foreign Missions," Isaiah 52; Isaiah 11:1-9; Matthew 9:36-38; Mark 16:14-20.

Friday, January 9, "Family, School and University Life," Deuteronomy 6; Psalm 34; Proverbs 4; Mark 10:3-16; II Timothy 2:1-15.

Saturday, January 10, "Home Missions," Luke 24:44-49; Romans 2; Romans 11.

## RACE CO-OPERATION IN THE SOUTH

On a recent visit to Memphis, James D. Burton, Executive Secretary of the Commission on Interracial Co-operation, of Jakkdale, Tenn., in preparing his annual report of Race Co-operation in Tennessee for 1930 made the following statement with regard to the work of the Memphis and Shelby County Interracial Committee:

By James D. Burton  
In Shelby County, co-operation has been given to the erection of a number of school buildings, and today this county has a larger number of Rosenwald schoolhouses than any other county in the United States. Co-operation has been given to the city and county departments of health, holding meetings and building public sentiment in favor of educational and health agencies. Crime prevention campaigns have been conducted in schools. Many causes of irritation and friction have been eradicated.

Relations between whites and Negroes 12 years ago were far from satisfactory. Following the Armistice and return of the soldiers, suspicion, prejudice and misunderstanding reigned. Ominous possibilities of the situation loomed large on the horizon. Memphis was organized with George R. James as first chairman. Among other members of the Committee at this time was C. P. J. Mooney, late editor of The Commercial Appeal. They successfully withstood and outwitted reactionary forces and restored confidence and stabilized public opinion. The Memphis Chamber of Commerce gave splendid co-operation. In the beginning meetings were characterized by complaints and criticisms, but these elements soon vanished, and the committee became an earnest objective working group, dealing intelligently with specific situations. Public sentiment has improved, and suspicion and distrust are giving way to understanding and confidence.

The commission believes that if white and Negro leaders understand each other, and if given the facts about any situation, they will do right about it. They believe that Negroes have a right to be heard in their own cause, and that white people can be appealed to successfully on the basis of good will, justice and fair dealings.

White leaders find the contact in the Interracial Committee valuable. It acquaints them with the best types of Negroes, of whom, for the most part, they are ignorant. It brings to their attention conditions of injustice and neglect, often unsuspected, that challenge their sense of personal and civic justice.

As a future program, it will be the effort of the Interracial Commission, through its Memphis and Shelby County Committee, to conserve the best elements in the 12 years' experience, finding new and better methods of approach to old situations. It will follow up its

(Continued on page 4)