

The Modern Day Church

By REV. STERLING N. BROWN, at University Park Temple, Jan. 3, 1900.

We have selected as a text Exodus 33 chapter and latter clause of the 15th verse: "If thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence." These words come from the soul of an anxious leader—a man of prayer, and one that prevailed. Israel had been delivered from Pharaoh's cruel oppression. The Red Sea had opened and given free passage. A part of the wilderness journey had been made; but from Sinai's rugged heights a new and untried pathway must be taken. Moses feeling unequal to the task before him prays for God's presence. He feels deeply and thus prays earnestly. Past mercies and peculiar blessings did not relieve him of great anxiety for the future. Having entered upon the work to which the Almighty had called him he had shown himself both capable and willing. Put Moses needed no outer voice to tell him that the way to Canaan was difficult and that both human agency and Divine energy were absolute essentials. The few short months and weary experiences in the march had clearly shown the conditions and emphasized the need. Many of God's servants, individually and collectively have borrowed the language of our text to give expression to the deep desires of the soul. We think it highly fitting and certainly in keeping with our thought surrounding this occasion and this hour to heartily unite with all interested in this church in the petition "if thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence." From these words and the history about them I desire to discuss the theme—"The need of the modern day church."

I. The modern day church should be apprehensive. First, in the sense of knowing, and laying hold of the fundamentals in christianity and in the problems with which it has to do. Is it true that the pulpit and pew are becoming more and more indifferent to considering the great doctrines given us in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and so thoroughly enunciated by the Apostles and proclaimed by the most successful preachers of all times? It is variously intimated that preachers and people are off on excursion in pursuit of shadow rather than substance, in search for glitter, rather than gold, that the tendency of the church is to pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin and omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. I am not sure that there is such a tendency. But whether true or not, there was never a time since the establishment of the New Testament Church that the eternal verities of God as related to human well being needed greater enforcement. The lost condition and eternal condemnation of man; salvation through the vicarious death of Christ; the mission of the Holy Ghost in applying the provisions of salvation; the great commission to the lost world; the stewardship of all Christians under God to the end of saving men; a free Gospel for the masses of mankind are truths that should be definitely held by all professed believers.

Efficiency in God's service will be largely measured by the conviction of these truths. In the light of these facts life and not death holds the supreme significance. How to live is the world's greatest problem. Death

is less important. Destiny springs from life—never from death. The blooming flowers of man's eternal Eden must be planted this side of the grave. Failure now, means failure hereafter. Man speaks the word here that will echo in his experience forever and ever. He is enlisted in a warfare from which there is no discharge. He has started upon a course that will run on through the unending energy of souls.

A moment is but a point in time and yet it holds the whole of eternity in it. Actual decisions are made in a brief space of time. Too often the question which the Gospel presents to us is flippantly passed upon and the answer at once goes beyond recall. Life, death, the judgment—eternity are facts too ponderous for careless indifference. "The wages of sin is death"—eternal death with its consequences. "But the gift of God is eternal life" with all its possibilities.

The modern day church should be apprehensive in the sense of fearing the prospect of future evil. The question of saving the world—this sin cursed world—this lost world so long away from God grows and grows upon us in importance as we think of it: and yet we tremble at the awful responsibility laid upon the church of Christ to this end.

The human family has had its Eden—its antediluvian probation—its new beginning under most favorable conditions—its trial under every known form of government and now for nineteen centuries it has had Jesus Christ, the God, man, the blessed Gospel, a saving and uplifting christianity and still the world lieth in wickedness and gross darkness. America is placed with the foremost among civilized nations. It is even called christian and yet as a matter of fact the people of this nation are intensely sinful. If this be said of much favored America, what hope is there for heathendom? If in a land of schools, colleges, open Bibles and an intelligent ministry, the great masses are unbelievers and outside of the Church of Christ, may we not like the discouraged Jew hang our harps upon the willows and cease our song of rejoicing? This might be done if man was the only interested agent and the work circumscribed by shortness of time. But be it known that God, the great and mighty one, He who vaulted the heavens, arched the sky, fixed the stars, located the planets, lifted the hills, scooped out the valleys, made the seas and created and put in motion every living thing, is the God of the church, yea even our God and that this earth has ever been the object of His special care and its people subjects of His great love. God has through the ages moved slowly but there are present indications that "His purposes are ripening fast—unfolding every hour."

With the prophet of old may we not cry out, "Watchman what of the night?" How much of it is past and how much yet to come? Why in all society, everywhere, with its politics, its philosophy and its religion are there signs of revolution? Why are old systems and modes of thought and belief tottering upon their thrones, and many of them reeling as for their final fall? Why is it that not only the common mass of

(Continued on 5th page.)

An Interesting Autobiography.

Autobiography of Dr. William Henry Johnson, of Albany, N. Y., is the title of a neatly printed book just received by us. Dr. Johnson is well and favorably known to a large number of old Philadelphians. He was a member of the old Bamker Institute, when he resided in our city in the early 60's, and was then admired because of his polished manners and forceful character. His absence from Philadelphia and his early associates did not cause him to abate one jot in life's activities, and his interest in his people. Indeed, he has kept himself well in advance as a thinker and reasoner ever since. Writings from the pen of such a man can not help being a source of pleasure as well as profit.—Philadelphia Tribune.

Some Acknowledgements.

The Colored American is under many obligations to Senator George L. Wellington and Congressman F. C. Watcher, for reports of the several departments of the government. Also to Senators B. F. Tillman and Marion C. Butler for pamphlets on "Protection for Agricultural Staples."

A Virginian Speaks.

Editor Cooper of The Colored American throws bouquets at us. We have been trying to determine whether they are artificial or genuine. It's customary to say nice things of one's host. However we are extremely optimistic, and if Col. Cooper says it's so, 'tis so. Thanks.—The Daily Recorder.

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