

Service

Delivered to the Brotherhood of the First Baptist Church of Sarnia, Ont., by Rev. A. T. Williams, B.D., Pastor of the A.M.E. Church.

The birth of a man into the world is of the greatest significance. It is of more importance than the creation of a world. For it is the addition of a distinct factor to the world's life; a personality to the world's forces. It is a force that touches the whole gamut of human destiny in time and eternity.

Every man borne into the world is a possible addition to the forces of evils that wreck men, and blight society, or he may become a great factor for good, blessing men, advancing civilization, and increasing the power of the Kingdom of God, so that every individual that kisses the light of day is a positive factor, a recruit, either to the forces of evil or to the forces of good. It is up to the individual to decide upon which side he will serve.

The service a man renders society is an index to his own character, and a prophecy of his own destiny; but because of its influence for good or evil, it becomes a matter of the gravest concern to the world. You can hear the din of the cries of inquiry from thousands of unfortunate men and women, boys and girls, pleading for advice, pleading for instruction, pleading for encouragement, and for help in the struggle for life; many of whom are anxious to enlist and serve on the side of righteousness.

The value of a man to society depends upon his service. In a study of Wall Street with its intense greed for gold, of the deference paid to wealth, in nearly every circle of society, and the thrall with which money holds the minds of men, it seems that it is the supreme purpose in life, and that the value of a man to society is measured by his bank account. But it is not so; it only seems so, for many men of wealth are of little value to the world; they hoard their money, or use it for selfish purposes, and often for a bad cause. To illustrate for instance: Just across the border, less than a hundred miles away, is a man, a millionaire, a man in high position, a U.S. Senator, and ex-Mayor of the City of Detroit, Senator Cousens, who is advocating the return of the Old Time whiskey and beer. Evidently he got his millions from the poor people; but he is ready in return, and has almost pledged himself to spend his millions in a service that without a doubt will destroy the characters and stultify the moral, religious and spiritual lives of the sons and daughters of those poor people who have contributed so largely to his wealth. Even when they try to use it for society, when money is the only thing they have to give, it falls short of the highest service. The fact that they are trying to discharge their obligation to their kind by the gift of money vitiates the gift itself.

There are many who seem to believe that position determines a man's service in life, and therefore his value to the world. If he has a good social position, belongs to the select circles, has entree to the exclusive set, or at least has standing in well recognized society; if he has

position in the business world due to large money interests, great executive ability or powerful connection, or a recognized place in the political or educational world, so that the very position itself carries influence. Certainly under any of these circumstances a man's power depends upon his position. But there have been parasites in the very best families; drones have sunned themselves in the fairest gardens. The coarsest animals have occupied high positions, and pupets have been upon the thrones. And even when men have sought to pay their high obligation to society by the mere use of position they have signally failed.

Nor does a man's value to society depend upon merely ability and culture. There is a tendency in these times to put the wrong emphasis upon these things. Some men excuse themselves for their failure to meet their debt to the race on the plea of one talent, and lack of education. Many grade men by that which they call brain: putting men of of the highest ability in the first values. With others the emphasis is put upon education, culture and intellectual development. They believe all results can be achieved and all progress realized through education. And yet educated men and men of superb ability are not necessarily a blessing; many have used their superb power for the base purposes of a sinful, selfish heart, and have only increased their power to do evil; and even when the general results of their work were good, when the motive was purely selfish, they have fallen short of the best, and have, so far failed to meet the claim of the world upon them.

It is not that any of these things are valueless; on the contrary, they are of great value, and should be factors for good. Yes, we may even make it stronger, and say that the world sorely needs money, strategic position, and trained ability, in her mighty work; but these things must be dominated by the supreme spirit of service. It is not a question of how much money, how great a position or ability, but how much real service we have been able to render men, and the motive by which that service was actuated, how much we have been able to advance righteousness, redress wrong, and reduce suffering; how much we have been able to advance the Kingdom of God: for a man's real value to society, and the Kingdom of God, is determined by the real service he renders man. It is the chief duty of man to serve men. For illustration: A simple hearted old shoe-maker, who lived in his shoe shop, had a dream one night as he lay sleeping, all alone. In his dream Jesus promised to come and take breakfast with him the next morning. Simple hearted and faithful, the next morning he arose and prepared breakfast for his royal guest. He spread his table with the cleanest cloth, and fried his ham with a delicate hand, and made his biscuit the very finest he could prepare, and after setting the table he walked up the steps to look for Jesus, but He did not come. Jesus came however, but he did not know him. While he stood looking for his promised guest a little child came along crying. She had no hat upon her head and no shoes on her feet. "What are you crying about my child, said the shoe-

maker." "I have nothing to eat; I slept under the steps last night; and I have no home to go to," was her reply. "Come with me and I will give you something to eat," said the old man. He carried her into his room and divided his breakfast with her.

The next night as he slept he dreamed that Jesus came to his bed again. "Why did you disappoint me," he asked the Master? "You said you were coming to take breakfast with me this morning, but you did not come." The pleasant, yet surprising reply was: "I took breakfast with you in the presence of that little child."

So that if a man is not ministering to the needs of his fellow men, no matter how many social or religious organizations he belongs to, or what his profession is, he is a liability, rather than an asset to society. The value of a man's service then, depends upon its quality. The man who improves material conditions, or who contributes, in however rude a fashion, to the work and progress of the race, renders service of real value to society, and in that degree is a benefactor to the race. Dean Swift's familiar saying, about making two blades of grass grow where one grew before, expressed a truth recognized the world over. The men who have discovered or opened up new countries, who have extended the facilities of civilization to the ends of the earth, who are constantly improving our facilities, so that we save a great deal of time, and are able to accomplish our work with more ease, are benefactors to the race. Their work is not of the highest type, but it is necessary, and is the basis upon which the higher work must be done, as the human will is the basis of the intellectual and the spiritual.

(Continued on page 8)

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Preaching 11.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m.

Sunday School 2.00 p.m.

Spencer's League, 7.30 p.m.

Rev. Wm. A. Richardson, Pastor

Hill St. Baptist Church

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REV. J. F. JOHNSON, Pastor

Sunday Services

Brotherhood—10 a.m.

Preaching—11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Sunday School—12 n.

Prayer Meeting—Wednesday evening

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