

Dawn of Tomorrow

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Editorial

A Voice From the Wilderness

In this age, when conferences, conventions and associations are busy wrestling with world problems, it is indeed encouraging to notice that in such a momentous gathering as the London Conference of the United Church of Canada, someone had the temerity to speak out for Negroes. In an article of the London Free Press, under date of June 8, the following appeared: "The Negro and non-Anglo Saxon population of Southwestern Ontario came in for some consideration and a great deal of discussion at the concluding session of the third annual meeting of London Conference of United Churches yesterday." The article credits David Ross as having quoted statistics obtaining among Negro churches throughout Ontario and for calling the conference's attention to the Canadian League for the Advancement of Colored People, which organization could assist materially in pointing out the real need of the British Methodist Episcopal Churches. In his opinion, the conference should lend assistance to this weak connexion. Finally a recommendation was moved by Rev. Anthony and seconded by Mr. David Ross "that the conference call the attention of Presbyteries and Home Mission Committee to the conditions obtaining among our non-Anglo Saxon population and particularly to the social and religious life among our Canadian Negroes within the bounds of this conference."

David Ross and others who stood by him in his attempt to obtain assistance for Negroes knew what Christ meant when he said to Peter, "Feed my lambs." He knows the underprivileged, the weak, the despised, the downtrodden, the off-casts are the lambs to whom Christ referred. When our churches become filled with men with the spirit and vision such as these men possess, Christianity will become, as it should be, a living, vital thing, rather than a cloak to hide our many sins.

We have often wondered why the British Methodist Episcopal Churches (colored) were not considered when the union was being formed

of the Methodist and other churches of Canada. Before the days of the United Church, the only difference between the white Methodist Churches and the British Churches was, not a difference in creed, but a racial difference in membership. Yes, there was another difference. One was rich and powerful, the other poor and weak. And even in those days the only connection which ever existed was the giving occasionally of a few crumbs from the table of the rich to its poor and weak brethren. Is this the spirit which Christ would have shown? Is this what He meant when He said: "Feed my sheep?"

We have heard some "Christians" ask, "Why do not Negroes support their own church?" Others sometimes ask: "Are we responsible for Negroes?" To the first question our answer is, we most certainly do support our churches and according to our economic conditions and according to our population, we give more towards the upkeep of our churches than does any other race. This is a proven fact. To the second question, our answer is, yes, you are responsible for Negroes. You brought their forefathers upon this continent against their will, worked them as slaves for hundreds of years and even now you refuse to give their offspring an economical and an industrial opportunity. You have erected insurmountable barriers between them and success. You refuse to recognize merit among their young men as you do among children of foreigners. And finally shall we say with Shillock: "O father Abram, what these Christians are, whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect the thoughts of others."

THE WEEK'S EDITORIAL

(From the Nation, 20 Vesey Street, New York City, June 22).

While we were all rejoicing in the fact that, as Charles Evans Hughes has put it, Charles Lindbergh typified the spirit of America in its best aspects, came the news from Mississippi of an act of fiendishness, possible only in the United States. A mob of one thousand American citizens—not foreign-born immigrants or recent arrivals from "the slums of Europe"—took two Negroes, brothers, from the hands of the sheriff, tied them to a telegraph pole, poured gasoline over them, and burned them alive. Their screams were so terrible that one member of the mob had a momentary impulse of humanity and tried to beat out the flames. The sadists near by promptly restrained him. Their victims were not guilty of the "usual crime"—rape. They were merely charged with having shot to death in a quarrel the white superintendent of a sawmill which employed them—and they had not been proved guilty. They were not seeking to escape; they were in the hands of the law. But, as usual, "the sheriff fired in the air." Equally as usual, "because of the darkness, the officers were unable to recognize any members of the band." If Mississippi does not find a way to identify the members of the mob and punish them then the argument for a federal lynching law once more becomes unanswerable.

ANITA WHITNEY'S ARREST WAS A MISTAKE.

Let's have the courage and wisdom to correct it.

Walter J. Petersen, who was head of the Oakland police force at the time of Anita Whitney's arrest in 1919, says now that her arrest was "all a mistake."

"I always considered her arrest a mistake," he says. "I opposed it, and directed Fenton Thompson, then in charge of the police espionage bureau, not to arrest her. He went over my head to Commissioner F. F. Morse, and the arrest was made; the subject of her speech was the condition of the American Negro—I knew Anita Whitney during most of her constructive life, and I always considered her a person doing a large amount of good in the community."

Her arrest was a mistake. But perhaps not an unnatural mistake. We had been living through years of terrific nervous tension. We did and said and believed things then that we would not do or say or believe now.

"Weakness and folly make mistakes, courage and wisdom are required to correct them," said Cicero long ago.

Let us have the courage and wisdom to correct this mistake, to avoid the greater mistake of putting in prison this gentle woman who never harmed anyone, whose life has been devoted to helping the poor, the hungry, the helpless.

The war has been over a long time.

Other civilized nations have long since released their political prisoners. One of President Harding's last acts was to release the majority of political prisoners in America.

By putting into prison at this late day a woman whose only crime was joining a political party now practically non-existent, California would make itself absurd. A pardon from the governor will save California from being ridiculous as well as save Anita Whitney from going to prison.

—Oakland, Calif., "Post Enquirer."

PREJUDICE AND INSANITY

"A Negro educator, E. Franklin Frazier, director of the Atlanta School of Social Work, in an illuminating article in the June issue of Forum Magazine, has drawn a striking parallel between the sub-conscious processes of the insane and of those who vehemently hate or despise other races.

"In each case the behaviour motivated by race prejudice shows precisely the same characteristics as that ascribed to insanity. This does not refer, of course, to those phenomena of insanity due to abnormalities of the actual structure of the brain, nor does it refer to the changes that come in dementia. We are concerned here chiefly with the psychological approach to the problem of insanity—for race prejudice is an acquired psychological reaction."

"One characteristic of insanity is the 'dissociation of the mind into logic-tight compartments,' and this, as Mr. Frazier explains, is precisely what happens where race-prejudice is concerned.

"Whether race prejudice is to be considered as just another complex may wait for further study, but in action it gives all the signs of a condition of mind similar to the mind of an insane person."

Sacramento, Calif. Union

Our Great Hymns

There are many beautiful hymns in our language, some of which are found in every hymnbook published for what speaks to the heart like a beautiful hymn. Some indeed, with suitable music, will make an appeal that is met almost with tears, and every church tries to make its collection complete. Many instances of their striking effect at times are given, one of which is the following, of "Sun of My Soul," by John Keble. Keble filled the chair of poetry at Oxford. His book of poems is called a "Christian classic." Dr. Arnold once said, "Nothing equal to it exists in our language."

On a wild night a gallant ship went to her doom. A few women and children were placed in a boat without oars or sails, and drifted away at the mercy of the waves. Earlier in the evening, before the darkness had quite set in, brave men on the shore had seen the peril of the vessel and had put out in the face of the tempest, hoping to save human life, but even the ship could not be found. After fruitless search, they were about returning to the shore, when far out on the water and above the wail of the storm, they heard a woman's clear voice singing,

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear, It is not night if Thou be near."

The work of rescue was quickly accomplished. But for the singing, in all probability the boat load of human lives would have drifted beyond help, or have been dashed to pieces before morning."

S. E. G. ALLEN.

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