

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON.

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In this goodly city - the Paris of the Western World - being made more beautiful daily by the expenditure of millions in streets, parks and buildings,- the home of wealth, refinement and the highest social contact, the modern "Mecca"- attracting pilgrims from every civilized section of the world in this goodly city, one might well be content to live and perchance to die. " I am going to Washington"- and the mere utterance produces envy; "I am going to Washington" and the heart strokes quicken in every anticipation of the same:

" I am going to Washington"- and we shrink and grow small as we think of the financial and intellectual greatness, we may be forced to meet: for of all the places in the whole wide world, none has the cultured refinement, the education and the learning, the money and the property

the opportunities and advantages, the population and the numbers, the men and the women of scholarship and renown, the eloquent pulpiteers, men of public affairs, the women of brain and brilliancy, whose names are household property within the nation and some, refusing to be hemmed in my space, have set their boundaries where the world ends, the aristocracy of intellect, religion and power, the obstacles which other towns have placed in the way so great - that the stranger within the gates can but feel the ground upon which he stands is holy and the air which he breathes, pure grace.

Washington and vicinity with 100,000 of our people, the intelligence, the schools, the churches, give to the world a chance to determine whether education, money and religion, we yet possess the elements necessary to make us a people, united and potential. If the advantages and environment here cannot produce a NEGRO whose heart beats high with the hope of race, a Negro, hon-

est, loyal and true to his race in EVERY particular, politi-  
cally, educationally, financially, and religiously- then  
there is no hope beyond: the die is cast and we are doomed  
all our days to be underlings, to stand and serve-

"Bequeathing their hereditary rage

To a new race of unborn slaves."

Despite the obstacles which other towns have placed in the  
Negro's pathway,- ladies and gentlemen, dont you know that y  
you have opportunities by far superior to those of any other  
city in this country? Dont you KNOW, you have the numbers,  
the money, the intelligence, the schools, the churches,-  
a grade of men of men and women so splendidly equipped, op-  
portunities so unrivalled for doing good REAL SUBSTANTIAL GOOD-  
that there can be no comparison?

We are taught that God holds us responsible for  
the opportunities which He gives us. OPPORTUNITY MEANS RE-

RESPONSIBILITY; BETTER OPPORTUNITY, GREATER RESPONSIBILITY; and the best OPPORTUNITY MUST ACCOUNT for the GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. With environment, facility and the opportunity to be something, to **ACHIVE** something, to **DO** something, for yourself, your **RACE** and your **GOD** - is there one single man, woman or child here tonight, who is not going to make Washington brighter, happier, sweeter and cleaner for having lived in it? Environed as you are, educated, refined Christians- what returns, first as individuals, secondly as a St. Luke Council, are you going to make for the unmeasured blessings, the "Unspeakable Gift"- the golden opportunities which you, this afternoon enjoy? What, what, **WHAT RETURNS?**

Suppose **CHRIST** came to **WASHINGTON** to-night and went in and among our poor, struggling, self abused, self hindered, self destroying people - and inquired as to the cause of our impoverished condition and our many troubles?

Methinks He would begin at the house of God, and summoning  
 before Him, His shepherds, we would hear Him ask them just  
 as He had asked Peter;- Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas,  
 lovest thou me more than these? A second time;- Simon, son  
 of Jonas, lovest thou me? And a third time;- Simon, son of  
 Jonas, LOVEST THOU ME? and as He set the test of Peter's love  
 not by the words of his mouth, I believe He would again tell  
 his shepherds, "If you love me, care for my lambs- feed my  
 sheep." The very helplessness of the young lamb, suggests  
 the NEED of a shepherd: the inborn timidity of the sheep  
 implies the protection of a shepherd. The TRUE shepherd  
 has eyes to see for his sheep, ears to hear for them, tongue  
 to speak for them, hands to fight for them- feet, to run  
 to their defense; and if need be, he is that GOOD shepherd-  
 for "the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON to-night, I believe

that He would, again, impress upon His shepherds, that he has committed His sheep to their charge; that they are the shepherds, the Watchmen, the Leaders, and in the day to come, they are to give account of their stewardship, morally civilly, politically, financially and religiously; I do not believe that IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON this night, that gathering around him His shepherds, HE would teach a DIVIDED RESPONSIBILITY. I DO NOT BELIEVE HE WOULD say- "You feed these sheep Sunday, and all the other days of the week, another shalt administer to them. I DO NOT BELIEVE that JESUS would say- "You are their spiritual shepherd, but their financial, political and educational shepherd is a WHITE SHEPHERD. I DO NOT BELIEVE that JESUS would say that the shepherd who teaches us about heavenly things, things unseen- is not good enough to teach us about things earthly- things seen and done daily.

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON, I do not believe that HE would change "one jot, or one title": but that He would again visit the poor and lowly, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, feed the hungry, raise the dead, pay his taxes, teach men their duties as citizens, teach them to seek, first, a home in heaven, and then a home on earth; and would do as much for men's bodies as He did for their souls.

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON and went in and out among these beautiful school buildings, and looked into the pre-eminently for Jesus that is as extensive and expansive as the needs of man, that IF JESUS CAME TO WASHINGTON to-night- to this magnificent body of men, I BELIEVE HE would say "Well done good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Our future hope is in our children, - the thousand  
black boys and girls of Washington: for although their  
looks may be flaxen, their eyes blue and their skins like  
alabaster-if they belong to us, they are black boys and  
girls: and though we have been here since 1619, it does  
seem that the white man grows more sensitive, daily, about  
our color; but, like Jacob's cattle ring-streaked, speckled  
and spotted though we be, God is with us.

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON and went in and out  
among these beautiful school buildings, and looked into the  
faces of these thousands of children - hungry children- being  
fed daily, both head and heart, I believe His heart would  
be touched in pity and concern for their future. I believe  
that the tender concern which He felt for children in the  
olden days when He said- "Suffer the little children to come  
unto me and forbid them not," would immediately return and

He would inquire, "Wherewith will they be clothed, and how shall they be fed?" I know not what the answer would be, but I fear He would be told, that nothing is being done for

them, but, like their mothers and fathers, before them, they

will have to depend upon the liberality and kindness of the

white man. If in very pity His brow should cloud, how much

heavier must grow His heart, when told, that the buildings

were as good as any in the land; the teachers the best; the

course of study all that could be desired- but that RACE

IDEALS, RACE COHESIVENESS AND RACE LOVE, formed nonpart of

these children's training, hardly by precept and less by ex-

ample. Suppose it was told to Jesus, that these children's

TAUGHT IDEALS were men and women of another race; that they

were named after men and women of another nationality; that

in their homes, were the books, pictures, photographs and

busts of the men of another race; that in some instances

IF to-night CHRIST SHOULD COME TO WASHINGTON and go to the  
 they were ashamed of their race- both teacher and pupil!

I imagine, I can hear Him say, "O, crooked and preverse  
 generation!"

For, ladies and gentlemen, on account of the aw-  
 ful conditions to which we have been subjected, the degra-  
 dation of slavery, which destroyed our womanhood, our man-  
 hood and our race unity - for until the Negro child begins  
 to draw in race love from his mother's breast- until his  
 day school teacher makes it a part of her daily course of  
 training- until it becomes a part of the Sunday School  
 teachers **TEN COMMANDMENTS**- thou shalt not have any other  
 race before thy own- until the prayer meeting leaders makes  
 it a part of his weekly devotions, and the preacher in the  
 pulpit a part of his public service to His God- We need not  
 expect **RACE CO-OPERATION** as we see it daily in the other  
 people around us.

If to-night CHRIST SHOULD COME TO WASHINGTON and go to the men and women of our race, whom He has blessed and made trustees and custodians of His wealth and demand of them an account of their stewardship; if He went to our men with their hundreds and thousands of dollars, and demanded of them what they had done for the benefit and relief of their own flesh and blood- their own race;- if He went to the men and women who make nearly their every dollar by Negro patronage, who occupy places of standing in the community, because they represent the Negro; if He went to them and demanded of them, that they should tell Him, what they had done with HIS MONEY, HIS INFLUENCE, HIS TALENTS that HE HAD LOANED them- if He demanded that they should name the Negroes that they had helped, the struggling young women they had helped to save by assisting to clothe and feed them;- if Jesus insisted on knowing, publicly knowing- so

that all Washington should know where His money was and what use had been made of His opportunities would the answer be-

"Lord, I have hid thy talents in the white man's bank;

I have invested thy money in a white man's business and I have given thy influence to uplift, politically and financially, a race which oppresses me daily and nightly. Would-  
this- be- the- answer?

If JESUS went to those of our race, courageous, enough to attempt to do business, and inquired of them from whence came their meagre support, their patronage, their customers; from what walk in life, who they are and what they are, what answer would He receive? WHAT?

If, on to-morrow night, JESUS stood in our lodge rooms and heard the beautiful rituals read, the vows made and the oaths taken in His Father's name- to be true one to the other, to join tongue and hand for mutual support and then

should hunt through the city to find what these sacred pledges and oath-bound support had produced, would not JESUS be compelled to say, "These people draw near with their lips, but their HEARTS are far away?"

My dear friends, there is no bitterness in my heart, no venom in my words; but, standing here before you to-night, when there is so much to be done, and so few doing, my heart aches and cries aloud for your help. The harvest, - the opportunity - is truly great, but the laborers are few, very few. Pray friends, wont you pray, that the Lord of the harvest may open our eyes and our ears, that we may see and realize as we never have before, the great work to be done, not alone by Amanda Smith Council, but by every loyal man and woman in this great, magnificent town.

When you pause a moment and think of 100,000 of our folks - with 100,000 pairs of shoes to be bought; 100,000

heads to be covered, 100,000 bodies to be clothed, some scantily, some nicely, and some expensively; when we think of this river of gold, with banks of silver and a bed of greenbacks, flowing thro this modern great Babylon, a river made by our money- and yet, while permitted to spend, we are denied the privileges of participating in and enjoying the advantages which our millions create. We are, practically, shut out from Great Babylon - as completely as Cyrus was shut out from ancient Babylon 2,500 years ago; shut out by walls too thick to be pierced; too high to be scaled, too deep to be undermined- locked out by a hundred brazen gates, and yet Cyrus captured the city, not by force but by strategym.

And here we are, in Washington, shut out from employment in the concerns which we so largely support, by a prejudice higher than the Washington Monument, thicker than the thickest granite walls of your most massive building -

a prejudice so rank that it is an offence to God. Cyrus finding force of but little avail, went back some little distance from the walls of the city, out of the sight of the Babylonians, and while they were laughing at his puny efforts, he set a part of his mighty army to digging a trench, or canal for the purpose of changing the course of the river. And one night while all Babylon feasted and made merry, Cyrus turned the course of the mighty river, which flowed under the walls and through the city, - turned it so that it flowed around Great Babylon: and thus under the great walls and through the river bed, into Great Babylon, Cyrus and his army marched and Great Babylon fell!

The Independent Order of St. Luke much desires to adopt the plan of Cyrus: we come to you to-night and beg of you, men and women of money and brain, join our army, march under our banner and help us to change the course of

the great river, which sweeps through the business sections of this town, carrying away from us millions and millions of dollars which should be used to give employment to our boys and girls, who graduate from our schools and find nothing to do, after they have spent years in preparing for life. Friends, friends, you can rest assured, if we change the course of the river, Great Babylon will certainly fall.

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON to-night, and found us in this historic edifice- built for the protection of His flock- found us housed herein, planning to take this modern Great Babylon,- to batter down its walls of prejudice, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked- to exemplify to the world, our love for each other, and our unswerving faith in His religion- a religion of blood, and race and RACE LOVE- do you think that He would scourge us and cast us out as He did those who defiled HIS Temple at Jerusalem?

It is on Friends, let us draw aside the curtain of time, and look back into the past, nearly 1900 years ago. Come, go with us to the land of Judea and to the town of Behtany. The time of the passover is at hand. The meek and lowly Jesus, daily, is teaching in the Temple. Scourging the hypocrites He drives them from the house of God. On this beautiful morning, as He comes on His daily journey from Bethany to Jerusalem, we will join the holy company- Jesus and the Twelve.

The Master hungers: seeing a luxuriant and beautiful fig tree, having LEAVES, by the wayside afar off, He presses on, if happily, He may find anything thereon. Coming to it, the Master finds, despite the beautiful leaves, emblematic of fruit, despite the TIME, which should have brought forth FRUIT in season- the Master is disappointed; there is nothing but leaves, only. The Master rebukes the beautiful barren tree, and under His accusing eye, it withers away and dies!

It is an AW-FUL thing to stand by the wayside, seen of all men, beautiful and luxuriant, with all the appearance of a GOOD tree, bearing fruit, and upon examination and inspection, to show forth nothing but LEAVES. It is an AW-FUL thing to be stripped of our leaves and be shown in all our SELFISHNESS and UNWORTHINESS! It is an AW-FUL thing to let our opportunities, for good, passed unused and present ourselves, before the world and before God with nothing-but LEAVES! Leaves, but no fruit; opportunities, but no works; appearances, but no deeds; shadows, but no SUBSTANCE.

When Jesus, hungering, sought the fig tree, He sought it because it had the appearance of a fruit-bearer and because it had the opportunity to be a fruit-bearer.

Our poor, oppressed, despised and hungry race— hungry financially, hungry intellectually, hungry religiously, MUST be fed; and it is from such individuals and combinations

of individuals, as the Amanda Smith Council that food for the hungry must come. If you can, individually, feed and clothe and help yourself, you can, combinedly, clothe and help others. The pennies, dimes and dollars of one individual may be few, indeed- but the combined dimes and dollars of a thousand individuals, change the weak-word-"few" into the powerful word "many".

The trouble with us, as a people, and as individuals is: we profess with our LIPS, but forget with our HANDS and our FEET. We preach great things for the race; we read great papers concerning the race; we form great associations, leagues and clubs for the benefit of the race- but have the most remarkable faculty for forgetting TO DO the things about which we preach, pray, lecture and speak. Jesus cursed the fig tree because it was a LIVING LIE! It stood there, by the wayside, in sight of all the world, proclaiming by its ap-

pearance, that it was fruitful; for upon the fig-tree-  
 FRUIT comes first and then leaves. But, when the test was  
 made- there was nothing-nothing but leaves; not a single  
 fig was found! For this deception, this brazen hypocrisy,  
 the penalty was death;- death inflicted by Jesus.

IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON, NOW, and made the  
 test, HERE to-night, would you and I have to die?

And, now, I leave you, I leave you by the wayside,  
 standing before that identical figtree, that drew forth the  
 Master's condemnation- LOOK, there it is; there it stands,  
 in all its beauty and luxuriance, arrayed in living green.  
 But- LOOK! The Master cometh. His eyes are upon us; they  
 transfix us- search us. He speaketh. WHAT- O, AMANDA SMITH  
 COUNCIL, What doth He say? What doth He say to you, What  
 doth he say to me?