CHARGE AGAINST WILLIAMS VOID

Arkansas Jury Frees Man Accused of Assault on Woman.

BIG VICTORY FOR DEFENSE.

Graphic Story of How Attorney Scipio A. Jones Broke Down State's Evidence In Sensational Criminal Case In Pulaski County Circuit Court. Case of Mistaken Identity.

Little Rock, Ark.—The case against Lee Williams, charged with the crime of rape upon a white woman in Pulaski county, Ark., recently came up for trial in the circuit court of the said county and failed. Williams was indicted by the county grand jury and faced the court with a strong array of state witnesses against him. He was defended by Attorney Scipio A. Jones. According to the evidence given by the state, the woman had been criminally assaulted and Lee Williams was the man who had committed the crime.

Williams had been thoroughly identified by the woman as her assailant. She had picked him out of a collection of seven colored men at police headquarters and declared him to be the guilty man. She knew he was the man. She had seen him several times before and knew him. She had previously failed to identify any one of several colored men brought before her, but by the time she saw Lee Williams she declared him to be her assailant. The state also produced some testimony which supported the main prosecuting witness.

When the state closed its testimony it was the general impression of nearly all the spectators in the courtroom that the state had made out an ironclad case and that Williams would surely be convicted and executed. And this conclusion was not at all strange, for Williams was a colored man and

SCIPIO A. JONES, ESQ.

had been declared by the white woman to be the criminal, and in such cases the custom has been that a conviction would follow.

Against this ironclad case of the state Lawyer Scipio A. Jones, who represented Williams, proved possibly the most complete, the most sweeping and the most irresistible alibi that has been produced in the court in recent years. And with it he utterly annihilated the state's testimony, forcing the state to an unconditional surrender, with the result of a verdict of "Not guilty" by the jury. This meant, of course, the complete exoneration of his client.

Able Defense by Attorney Jones.

Williams had been employed by the Blissville Hardwood Lumber company. Mr. Jones produced an array of witnesses, time checks, time slips and written records, which proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that at the time of the alleged crime Lee Williams, the defendant, was on duty at this mill, which was 100 miles from the place of the alleged crime. The proof on the part of the defense showed that the prosecuting witness was mistaken in her identification of Williams. "She knew Williams was the guilty man. She knew she could not be mistaken about it." But she was mistaken, as Williams was not the man.

This striking illustration of the imperfection of all human judgment teaches a valuable lesson and should be carefully considered by all the people, as it is of universal concern, and most especially should it be remembered by our courts and juries, not that guilty men may escape punishment, but that innocent men may not be put to death.

The court and jury of Little Rock and Pulaski county, Ark., are to be congratulated upon the spirit of fairness and justice exhibited by them throughout the trial, which was a great credit to that community, state and southland. The facts in this case and its final conclusion illustrate the splendid position held by Lawyer Jones in the courts and demonstrate his extraordinary skill and ability as a trial lawyer.

Lawyer Scipio A. Jones in this one case in bringing forcefully to the minds of the people the universal frailty, weakness and uncertainty of all human conclusions as to ability to perceive clearly, remember correctly, describe accurately or identify truly in addition to preserving the innocent life of his client has rendered mankind universal service. He has made his way up on higher ground by close application, dint of hard study and labor.

The House by the Side of the Road

By the late Sam Walter Foss.

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the peace of their self-content;
There are souls, like stars, that dwell apart
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where the highways never ran—
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by—
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban—
Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife.
But I turn not away from their smiles or their tears—
Both parts of an infinite plan—
Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead,
And mountains of wearisome height;
And the road passes on through the long afternoon,
And stretches away to the night.
But still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice,
And weep with the strangers that moan.
Nor live in my house by the side of the road
Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by—
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish—so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

—Western Advocate.

CAREER OF THE REV. A. J. STOKES

His Achievements as Minister and Educator in Montgomery.

FOUNDER OF GREAT SCHOOL.

First Baptist Church Holds Elaborate Exercises In Honor of the Twentieth Anniversary of Veteran Pastor—Sermon by President M. W. Gilbert of Selma University.

Montgomery, Ala.—In a two weeks' celebration recently held in this city the colored people signally honored the Rev. Dr. A. J. Stokes, the veteran pastor of the First Baptist church. The event marked the twentieth anniversary of Dr. Stokes' pastorate in Montgomery and was participated in by the pastors and members of the various churches without regard to denomination.

The anniversary sermon was preached by the Rev. M. W. Gilbert, D. D., president of Selma university, who was a classmate of Dr. Stokes at Benedict college, Columbia, S. C. Dr. Stokes has the distinction of being the pastor of a church with the largest membership of any church among our people in the country, having an enrollment of more than 5,000, with over 2,000 active willing workers. He is in many respects a remarkable man, is of commanding influence in the state of Alabama and as far as his congregation is concerned is loved and revered.

Dr. Stokes was born a slave in 1859. His father had purchased his own freedom and had paid for the freedom of his wife, with the exception of $14, when emancipation came. Consequently the earlier children were slave property at their birth. Through his father's help he received his education at Benedict college, finishing the course in 1884. Dr. Stokes went early into the ministry and has been one of the most successful church builders within his denomination. He has built eighteen churches in South Carolina, one being a $5,000 structure at Orangeburg, his home town; one in Clarksville, Tenn.; repaired a church and erected a parsonage in Fernandina, Fla.

After taking the pastorate of the First Baptist church in this city Dr. Stokes completed the church, including all the interior work, and built its membership up until it has overtopped the 5,000 mark. He has had an eventful career in Montgomery. By his unusually manly stand upon political matters, announced in an emancipation address in 1897, he brought down a storm of denunciation upon his head through the agency of the white press; but, singularly enough, his congregation and other friends have always stood by him in whatever advanced step he has taken or advocated with reference to his people.

He is pronounced in favor of a system of education which teaches children to be proud of their race and to that end began a school in Montgomery, known as the Montgomery academy, which is supported entirely by the membership of the First Baptist church. The school has been in existence about fourteen years and is attended annually by about 200 students. While the church is large as to membership and is what might be considered unwieldy, a remarkably well systematized management does away with any laxity in church management.

The forty-two deacons have each a district under their immediate care and watchful supervision, so that the needs of any individual are speedily looked into and adjusted. Each deacon visits in his section, making careful report of conditions, and, to accommodate the pastor in his arduous work of calling upon his members, he has been provided with a handsome automobile. The church does a large amount of benevolent work among the poor people of the city and tenderly looks after any of its own members who are in any way unfortunate.

Just now a handsome brick edifice is going up, at a cost of $55,000, and when the building is ready for occupancy in October every cent necessary to pay for its construction will have been paid. The building was designed by W. T. Bailey, the architect at Tuskegee institute, and is being erected by two colored contractors of Montgomery. The erection of this building is a fitting climax to the twenty years' service of a telling and helpful nature that Dr. Stokes has given to Montgomery. He is held in high esteem by the people of this city and state, and ever since he has been in Alabama he has been moderator of the Spring Hill District association. He is also treasurer of the National Baptist convention.

Dr. Stokes is counted well off in this world's goods and has invested his salary for the most part in well paying farm land in and around Montgomery. He has a goodly amount of city property, a 720 acre farm near Wetumpka and thirty acres in rich cotton land within the corporate limits of Montgomery.

Read The Afro-American Ledger.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By Rev. William Evans, D. D., Director Bible Course Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 25.

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

LESSON TEXT—Mark 1:9-13; Matt. 4:1-11.
MEMORY VERSES—Matt. 4:3-4.
GOLDEN TEXT—For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.—Heb. 2:18.

Three things deserve special notice in connection with the scene of the baptism of Christ: The baptism itself, the descending dove, and the heavenly voice.

The baptism of Christ is connected with the fact that Christ was thirty years old. This was the age when Levitical priests were set apart and consecrated to their office. The baptism, therefore, has reference to the priestly office of Christ. By submitting to baptism Jesus identifies himself with the world's sin.

Christ's baptism then was not personal—for he himself was sinless. The lesson tells us that while others, after their baptism, stood confessing their sins in the Jordan, he immediately went up out of the water, for he had no sins to confess—but official and representative. Christ submitted to the same baptism which the generation of vipers had received, not because he was one of them, but because he was their representative, and had come to take upon himself their sins.

Christ, in submitting to John's baptism, set his seal upon the divinely appointed ministry of John as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. He recognized in John's baptism God's plan for him, and he submitted to it without questioning. If any man in his own right did not need baptism, it was Christ. By this act, Jesus set his seal upon the rite of baptism, a rite which may be abandoned only when it no longer teaches any truth. Rebellion against customs and rites for rebellion's sake is vicious individualism.

The descent of the Holy Spirit indicates Christ's equipment for his service. In his sermon in the synagogue he referred to this truth when he said, the spirit of the Lord God is resting upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel. Even Christ could not accomplish his life work without the aid of the divine spirit. Nor can we.

The voice from heaven could scarcely have been heard by Christ without his associating it with the identification of himself with the servant of the Lord in the prophecy of Isaiah (chapters 42 to 60).

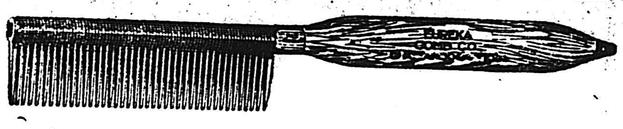
The temptation is closely allied to the baptism of Christ; indeed, it is based on the proclaimed sonship of the baptism. From this we learn that the greatest temptations ofttimes, indeed generally follow the greatest blessings.

The temptation was a real event, and not a mere mental or soul struggle. The personality of Satan is as evident as the personality of Christ in the narrative. Nor is there anything in the story to indicate that it is an allegory, but everything predicates a reality.

All of the temptations were along the line of Christ's intention to establish the Kingdom of God in the world. Satan's suggestion to Christ was to take a short cut to the obtaining of the Kingdom. The adversary did not ask Christ to do a single wrong thing; he did suggest doing right things in a wrong way and with wrong motives. There is nothing wrong in being hungry and satisfying hunger, but it is sinful to use wrong measures to satisfy even so natural an appetite. Nor is it wrong to trust in the word and promises of God for deliverance when we find ourselves in places of danger, but it is wrong to unnecessarily place ourselves in compromising positions because of the temptations of the evil one, and then presume to rely upon the promises of God to extricate us from a position into which we have thus been brought. Such is not an act of faith, but of presumption—it is tempting the Lord God. Nor is it wrong to engage in the act of worship, but it is sinful to worship anything or anybody other than God.

Christ's method of victory is significant. He does not resort to dazzling inventions or manifest any attempt at shrewdness in his answers. He does not even try to be original. He goes to the quiver of God's word, and takes out an arrow that had been polished by much use, and hurls it at the adversary. He exemplies the psalmist's expression: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." No doubt Jesus quoted from memory. Herein lies the blessing of learning gospel texts, and of storing the memory with scripture.

Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are. We must not think that these three temptations were the only ones Christ endured, even in the wilderness. The narrative says that "When Satan had finished all the (whole cycle of) temptations, he left him for a season." This implies that there were other temptations, and that his whole life was beset by temptations. There is not a single note in the great organ of our humanity, which, when touched, does not produce a sympathetic vibration in the mighty scope and range of our master's being except the jarring discord of sin.



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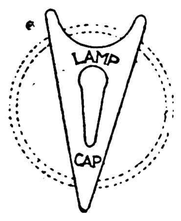

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