

CHAPEL, January 17, 1933

-- President Wright

Scripture lesson, First Chapter Mark, Verses 21-28

I have been thinking for some time on the subject of government, and this morning I shall vary my talk from the lesson I have read, that I may leave with you a thought or two I have had with reference to the Republic we have in our country. The founders of this government of ours endeavored to establish a government where all the people would be interested in their government and would feel that the government and the responsibility belonged to them. A Democracy is a government of the people and that government is intended to be of the greatest possible service to the people. Anything that is done that removes from the people authority in a government of this kind, as I see it, really eliminates the true spirit of a democracy in its technical sense. In other words, when authority is taken away from people in a town, or county, and removed from them to the state capital they no longer feel the same responsibility for their acts as when the government was left in their hands. What I mean is this, if the county officials have to work in every conceivable way to get authority to conduct county affairs they no longer feel they have the responsibility. When a state sets up an authority above those who represent the state in the Legislature, in executive and ^{the} judicial authority, no longer do citizens feel the personal responsibility for conducting the state's affairs. When the nation sets up an authority over the state that causes the state to have to move out of its own borders and to the Federal government to have authority to do things the state thinks should be done within the state, no longer do citizens of the state feel a personal responsibility for the conduct of state affairs. People soon begin to look upon the government as THE government, instead of OUR government. People begin to think, all right, it is all right to "get by" the government. When there is a feeling that it is THE government instead of OUR government the

true spirit of democracy has been taken away from the people. I am wondering if we have reached that period, in America, today. As we look over this government of ours from Washington to Greenville I am wondering if we have not ceased to feel the personal responsibility in government and if we are not now beginning to feel that it is all right if we can get by. If we have reached that period then we are today in the most critical period this government has ever had. If we cannot do something to remedy that situation then our boasted Republic of America will soon become some other type of government, or we will have a revolution, not necessarily of guns and cannons, but a revolution. It is a thing, young folks, we should think about. A serious situation confronts us in America today. Millions of people in America today are just waiting for the new administration to come in, and show what it is going to do. If the people feel that the government is not our government there probably is going to be something done that will change that feeling and take the government back to the people. In our own state we have been materialistic. We have developed the material side and we have neglected what I call the spiritual values, and education is the greatest one of those spiritual values that our state is engaged in.

Judging from the newspaper reports this morning, and I suppose they are correct, the recommendation ^{to} of the General Assembly increases the appropriation of the ~~insane asylum and the~~ state penitentiary and reduces the appropriation for education. Are we going to sacrifice the childhood of North Carolina that we may build up insane asylums and a large penitentiary, or, are we going to say to the youth that they may not be found in ~~insane asylums~~ ^{the} and penitentiaries? Will the voice of the people be heard so the children of today will be given a chance, or, will education be curtailed to the extent that the penitentiary will and the asylum must be made larger to take care of them?

A serious problem confronts us, and one that you young folks probably will have to solve.