

# Africo-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii, 32.

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## DR. DANIEL JACKSON SANDERS, FIRST NEGRO PRESIDENT OF JOHNSON C. SMITH (FORMERLY BIDDLE) UNIVERSITY.

An Address delivered by Armond W. Scott, Esq., in St. James Presbyterian Church, New York City, Sunday, May 31st, at Memorial Services in honor of Dr. Sanders, held under the auspices of the Johnson C. Smith University Club.

Master of ceremonies, fellow Alumni and other visiting friends:

Permit me first to express to the Johnson C. Smith University Club my very deep appreciation for the privilege of being present with you today, to deliver, in my feeble way, the eulogy in memory of the first Negro President of Biddle University, Dr. Daniel J. Sanders.

On March 6th, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seven, amidst the classic surroundings of the University over which he had presided for the previous 15 years, Daniel Jackson Sanders, one of the finest and most remarkable characters this oppressed race has ever produced, passed into that mysterious beyond from which no traveller has ever been known to return, and, though eighteen long, weary years have passed since his demise, yet it is indeed fitting that the Johnson C. Smith University Club, consisting of the Alumni of the city and State of New York, should set apart this day to memorialize and commemorate the life and character of the first Negro President of our beloved Alma Mater, formerly known as Biddle University.

Since time was, death has been our constant companion; yet we are never fully prepared to meet its terrible consequences. It is in the eternal plan of nature that all living creatures must die that others might live. The flowers of the fields blossom and send forth their fragrance to sweeten the air we breathe, and then wither and die and the dead refuse serves to fertilize and enrich the earth in order that others might grow up in their places into a grand fruition. The lower animals come into being and we sacrifice them in order that human beings may feed upon them and live. Death is everywhere! If we go to the far off isles of the sea, or on the storm-tossed billows of the mighty deep, in the depths of the ocean, or on the snow-capped peaks of the rugged mountains, on the plains or in the valleys, this terrible monster is continually exacting its awful toll.

Dr. Sanders had not reached his three score years and ten, but died in the vigor and strength of his manhood.

Daniel Jackson Sanders was born a slave near Winnsboro, S. C., on February 15, 1847, of poor and humble parents, but who were endowed by nature with those splendid and sterling attributes which were destined to enable and cause this son to rise above the obstacles and disadvantages which hedged him about, and finally to reach that station in life which not only made him a national character in his day, but, after his death, entitled him to a place in the hall of fame. In early childhood he manifested a strong character and fine mentality, and it was because of the same, that two young white men living near Chester, S. C., took a lively interest in him, and became his first tutors. It was through their aid, together with that of Dr. S. Loomis, that he acquired not only his primary instruction, but was also given a knowledge of mathematics, Greek and Latin. After finding his bent, in September, 1871, he entered the Western Theological Seminary, at Allegheny, Penn., from which he graduated in 1874, and won high honors for

his scholarly attainments in his studies there. After leaving the Seminary he visited England and Scotland, and raised thousands of dollars as an endowment fund for Biddle University.

In 1874 he was called to the pastorate of Chestnut Street Presbyterian church of Wilmington, N. C., where his labors continued until he was called to the Presidency of Biddle University.

He was one of the recognized leaders of thought in the Presbyterian Church throughout the whole country. A scholar of unusual attainments, gentle in his manner, and yet unexcelled in his wonderful constructive and executive ability, he was a man who, in his early life, dedicated himself and all that was within him to the service of his oppressed race.

He was sympathetic and kind, and his heart was always quickly touched by those who needed aid and comfort. How well do I remember when, a few years after the Wilmington, N. C., riot, I was invited by him to deliver the annual address during commencement week, before the graduating class of the Preparatory Department, and, when I referred to that unfortunate experience and the circumstances under which I left my home, his rugged being shook with resentment and indignation, and yet he wept with the simplicity of a child.

His magnetic personality was the daily inspiration of the student body, and we have continued to be influenced by the same up until this very hour.

No one can more fully appreciate the sterling qualities of this fallen leader than your humble servant. It was he who persuaded and influenced me to go to Biddle University. From the time I can first remember of being conscious of my existence, until he was called to the presidency of that institution, he was pastor of the little Chestnut Street Presbyterian church, which stood upon a hallowed spot amidst stately oaks and weeping willows, in my native city, where hundreds of men and women, not only received their spiritual nourishment from this God-fearing man, but drank deep from the words of wisdom which always fell from his eloquent lips.

It was my good fortune to have been a pupil in the parochial school which he established in connection with his church. How patient and thorough was he in his endeavor to lay the best possible foundation for those youthful lives in order that they might be best prepared for the future.

To him I owe it for choosing the profession of law. In my early childhood it was he who assisted me in discovering my "bent" and from that time up until the hour of his death, he was my faithful and constant friend.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I stand here today to publicly proclaim that whatever success in life I have achieved, either in my professional career or otherwise, is due largely to the aid, friendship and encouragement given me by this splendid man, who has passed from the scene of action, but has left his impress indelibly upon the hearts and minds of all men and women who have the proper regard for Christian character,

splendid manhood and scholarly ability.

In the national councils of the Presbyterian Church he was not thought of as a Negro, but as one of its prominent leaders, and his advice and judgment was often sought and followed. In the General Assembly his characteristic manner, interesting personality and magnificent intellect soon caused the leaders of that great and powerful denomination to not only respect and honor him, but to see in a new light the race which he represented and with which he was identified.

Through him they were brought to the realization that, after all, the Negro was one of God's creatures made in His own image, thinking the same thoughts, worshipping the same God, and that "of one blood God created all races to dwell upon the face of the earth."

In one of the eulogies delivered at the time of his funeral he was characterized as a "conservative man." He was conservative in his thoughts, judgment and actions. He was careful and cautious, and never acted hastily in any important matter which required his sober and mature consideration. But the modern notion of a conservative man of our group is one who "knows his place," which is fixed by others, who never sets himself against the injustices heaped upon our loyal and oppressed race, and is satisfied with whatever conditions with which he finds himself surrounded.

Dr. Daniel J. Sanders never truckled nor cringed and never lost an opportunity, either by tongue or pen, to speak in defense of his oppressed race and to strike a blow against that hydra-headed monster, race prejudice.

These are the attributes which made him the ideal first Negro President of Biddle University, because, in turn, he was enabled to instill and infuse the same into the young lives of the students whose good fortune it was to come under his influence, and who have gone out into the world and are playing their part in the struggle to make America a safe and fit place to live in for all men, be they black or white, and that we may yet enjoy every privilege guaranteed us under the constitution of this government for which we have fought, bled and died, and to which we are more entitled than any other race, because we have never produced an assassin of a President, nor given birth to a traitor who has ever taken up arms against his country's flag, and if it were possible for his spirit to hover over us today, methinks I could hear him whispering to us in the words of that militant poet:

"Stick to your aim, the mongrel's hold will slip, But only crows break the bulldog's grip. Small as he is, that jaw that never yields Brings down the bellowing monarch of the fields."

The sudden transition, in a Southern community, of the turning over of Biddle University from a white to an entire Negro faculty was at that time a hazardous experiment. No one knew what reactions would come from the whites of that section, and, on the other hand, it was yet to be demonstrated that the Negro was capable of self-government in educational matters and able to successfully fill the chairs of a great institution, which was established solely for the higher education of our people.

But this master mind, though travelling over an unbeaten path, laid deep and well the foundation upon which the superstructure, the new Biddle, now known as the Johnson C. Smith University, has been erected, which stands on yonder hill as a lasting monument to

the memory of the man whom we all loved and who gave so much hope, cheer and inspiration to the youth of his time.

Not only did he with strength and fortitude successfully carry the burdens of that great institution, but during that time, the greatest sorrow of his life came upon him, in the death of his favorite child. She was charming, beautiful and brilliant, and loved her father with a fervor approaching almost that of worship. But in order to help and cheer and comfort his faithful and devoted companion, he stood up under this terrible affliction and with suppressed emotion bowed submissively to the will of him that doeth all things well.

Dr. Sanders believed in the dignity of labor, and in his early life learned and mastered the shoe maker's trade. In 1879 he established in Wilmington, N. C., his newspaper, known as "The Africo-American Presbyterian," and was its editor until his death. During the first ten years of the paper's existence, there were no colored printers in the South and it was very difficult to get the work on his paper properly done by white men. So he built a printing office on his own premises, learned to set type himself, and then taught several young colored men the trade, one of whom was William E. Hill, who has remained with the paper all these years, and is now its associate editor.

During all the years of his public career, he was faithfully assisted and encouraged by his devoted wife, whose superior training and devotion made her the ideal help-mate, ever watchful in administering to his every need and counseling with him in helping to solve the many difficult problems with which he was daily confronted.

In the issue of Mch. 14, 1907, of "The Africo-American Presbyterian, Rev. A. A. Wilson, of Decatur, Ga., class of 1903, suggested that the Alumni start a fund for the purpose of erecting a suitable monument over the last resting place of this man who gave his life in the service of his race, and pledged five dollars for himself and twenty-five dollars for his class. Why has not this been followed up? Have we not been derelict in our duty, and is not this the psychological moment to start this movement anew for a memorial fund in order to erect a shaft which will appropriately and suitably express to the world our lasting admiration for Daniel Jackson Sanders, whose life and character will ever serve as an inspiration to the aspirations of the youth of the race who would make the most of themselves according to the talents which God has given them?

He believed in himself and was ever conscious of the fact that brain power does not depend upon the color of a man's skin, for it was Shakespeare who said:— "Tis mind that makes the body rich,

And as the sun breaks through the darkest cloud, so honor peers through the meanest habit."

You have indeed considered the eternal fitness of things by having these exercises at this time, just at the close of National Memorial Week and on the day following the one which has been legalized as the day upon which to commemorate and memorialize those who gave their lives in order to preserve this union and to bring liberty to an oppressed and enslaved race.

The man in whose memory these exercises are held today did not give up his life upon the field of battle; but he died because he overtaxed himself in his relentless struggles in his efforts and desire to ameliorate the condition of his benighted people.

During all the periods of the

world's history, beginning with the savage tribes, all people have at some stated periods held some form of memorial service in honor of their dead. It is a noble spirit which actuates such a custom, and it is in the flesh

of our fellows, and it is fitting to contemplate that we have shaken off this mortal coil and all that is left of us is deposited in the cold clay from which we come, that we are not forgotten; but that our memories live in the hearts of those left behind and who only too soon will follow.

He preferred to wear out rather than rust out, and the world certainly has been made better by his having lived in it. He felt at all times that he was his brother's keeper, and was not too proud to reach for the man lowest down and lift him up and impress upon him that he, too, had a chance in the race of life if he had the pluck, push and perseverance to make a man of himself.

Johnson C. Smith University is today the most richly endowed school of any colored institution in this country for the higher education of Negroes, and this money has not only come from Northern philanthropists, but J. B. Duke, a Southern white man, born in the State of North Carolina, has just recently given one million six hundred thousand dollars to this institution and has especially requested that a medical school be established in connection with the same.

This wonderful achievement did not come in a day, but is due largely to the sure and safe foundation laid by this wise and prudent man, together with his pure and upright life, all of which have exerted a lasting influence upon the good thinking people of this country, both North and South; giving it a standing which has caused these people to pour out their bounty in this generous way. If we should continue this eulogy indefinitely, we could not, in the slightest degree, give to this man the praise and credit which he so richly and justly deserves.

We therefore conclude these observations by commending his well spent and useful life to all of those who desire to have a perfect standard to follow. His life will forever serve as a fountain of inspiration, not only to every man and woman of his religious faith, but to every member of his race throughout the length and breadth of this country.

He impressed the lesson that the minister has not only to look after the spiritual life of the flock, but to do his part in bettering their civic conditions. If, in our imagination, we could today stand by the bedside of Dr. Sanders, as his life was slowly ebbing away, we might hear him whisper as his final benediction, the valedictory which Paul Lawrence Dunbar left to his struggling race:—

"Go on and up, our souls and eyes Shall follow thy illustrious rise; Our ears shall list the story From bards, who from their roots shall spring, And gladly tune their lyres to sing Of Ethiopia's glory."

### TRUSTEES NAMED FOR NEGRO INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Raleigh, June 18.—The following appointments as members of the board of directors of Morrison Industrial School for Negro boys were announced at the governor's office today:

Mrs. J. LeGrande Everett, Rockingham, to succeed M. B. Hart, Tarboro; W. L. Parsons, Rockingham, to succeed L. B. Varner, resigned; W. N. Everett, Rockingham, to succeed himself; J. H. Hayswood, Lumberton, to succeed Thad Tate, Char-

lotte; C. C. Spaulding, Durham, to succeed S. G. Atkins, Winston-Salem.—Charlotte Observer.

### C. S. C. & S. M. NOTES

(From the office of the Dean.)

It will take \$328 to meet the 1925 budget of the Catawba Synodical Convention and School of Methods, so when you send your registration fee of \$1.00 to Rev. F. C. Shirley, 414 Severs Ave., Charlotte, N. C., we will need only \$327.

The patrons of our convention will be pleased to know that of the members of our 1925 faculty, four will be from the headers' staff of the Board of National Missions. They are Mr. J. M. Somerndike, Director of the Department of Sunday School Missions; Miss Maud Kinniburgh, of the Department of Promotion and Publicity; Mr. L. E. Black, Regional Superintendent of the Highlands of the South; and Mrs. Agnes B. Snively, field representative of the Division of Missions for Colored People.

The first three instructors named need no introduction to School of Methods "fans," but it is especially stimulating to know that Mr. Somerndike will be with us again this year since he could not be with us last year.

The new Headquarters' Staff representative is Mrs. Agnes B. Snively. Those who attended the Workers' Conference at Albion Academy in 1924 will remember with pleasure Mrs. Snively's interest in that Conference. Not only will Mrs. Snively be welcomed as a member of our faculty, but also she will be greeted as one of the noon day platform speakers as well.

In next week's notes we will give a close-up view of the other members of the faculty.

The athletic interest is already developing. Rev. W. G. Anderson, captain of the Blues last year, has the silver loving cup with a yard or so of royal blue ribbon streaming from it, and states that it looks good in his study, indicating that he would like to take it back again this year. Rev. Anderson has attended every year and has been on the winning side in athletics each year. He plans to be on hand for the fifth meeting and expects to keep up tradition.

Mr. L. W. Ellis, the progressive Superintendent of Church St., Salisbury, writes that he will be on hand. He is usually among the first to register.

It is up to you: 1. To standardize your Sunday School. 2. To plan for a Workers' Conference. 3. To instruct the Teacher Training Class. Then you will do well to attend the 1925 meeting of the Catawba Synodical Convention and School of Methods at Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N. C., August 24-30.

### THIRD STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NOTES, GASTONIA.

Revival services were held here last week. Dr. I. H. Russell, the Synodical Evangelist, conducted the services. During the meeting there were six additions to the church.

Mrs. S. L. Rollins attended the Southern Church Conference for Colored Women at Johnson C. Smith University.

Children's Day exercise was held on the third Sunday in this month.

Mrs. Orr of Blacksburg, S. C., has been visiting her niece, Mrs. Gertrude Enloe.

Mrs. Gertrude Enloe and Mrs. Sarah Miller have been indisposed for several weeks. (MISS) CECELIA ROLLINS.