

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

VOL. XLVIII.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1926.

NO. 29.

## THE SESQUI PETITION OF COLORED AMERICA

By Kelly Miller, Washington, D. C., July 4, 1926

On last Friday the National Equal Rights League and United Colored American Committee presented to Pres. Coolidge a mammoth petition containing 25,000 names protesting against racial segregation in the government departments at Washington. It is no disparagement to the rest to say that Mr. Trotter was the moving inspiration of the presentation. In the interest of historical accuracy, it should be said that it is due mainly to the indomitable courage and energy of the editor of The Guardian that segregation was forced upon public attention as a national issue. Some ten years ago Mr. Trotter headed a delegation to the White House to protest against departmental segregation which was at that time taking on definite shape and direction. Because the White House spokesman lost his temper the item was carried by the Associated Press in sensational headlines. The discriminatory practice was all but universally condemned. Few were found with the temerity to justify the policy of the government in placing a stigma upon any element of American citizenship. The American mind is always fair when forced to a frank facing of a moral issue.

Those who manipulate the government will, by devious ways, circumvent the principles of democracy when applied to the brother in black, or rather the brother in colors, but none but the self-confessed criminal will dare stultify the nation's conscience by frank avowal. All right-minded Americans will hold up the true ideals in principle, but only the incessant insistence of those debased will compel the translation of those principles into practice.

Herein Mr. Trotter has been a persistent and consistent race advocate. Despite his faults of disposition and temperament (who has not his share) Monroe Trotter from first to last has stood upright and down straight for every right without reserve and without delay. I have differed with him and still differ in modus operandi, but his devotion, his courage and persistency demand an unlimited admiration. Because I am of a different type of temperament in no wise lessens the candor of my judgment and the sincerity of my esteem. How the awarders of the Spingarn medal could year after year overlook the claims of this intrepid agitator for human rights staggers the understanding, if it does not surpass comprehension. In the absence of previous formal recognition I suggest the staging of a nation-wide testimonial to this unrivaled champion of equal rights. Waiving aside personal idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of temperament, Mr. Trotter has laid every Negro in America under a heavy debt of gratitude. It was none but he that kept alive the fires of agitation when others have let them die down in the smoldering embers of compromise and debasing peace. But I must not in this release eulogize Mr. Trotter. I am merely describing him. The performance on last Friday was a most dignified and decorous procedure. Mr. Trotter has a genius for the picturesque and the spectacular. He seeks to dramatize every significant event in American history as a background for portraying the wrongs and demanding the rights of American Negro citizens. One can scarcely visit Boston without running into some celebration of some distinguished American or patriotic happening under the auspices of the Boston Guardian, with the intent and purpose of keeping alive in memory the just and righteous claims of the colored race.

The sesqui centennial week had been proclaimed. The mind

of the nation was to be made newly conscious of the soul-stirring incidents and events which gave rise to the birth of the nation. The rights of man formed the enacting principle of the Declaration of Independence. Go to, said Mr. Trotter, why not take advantage of entering into the pool of liberty while the Angel of Liberty is troubling the waters? Let us dramatize the occasion by presenting to the President of the United States a memorial demanding the application of "liberty, fraternity, equality in the inner working of the government itself. Let twenty-five thousand Negroes through their signatures, speaking for 12 millions who would have as willingly signed, ask the President who embodies in his traditions the American ideals to abolish once for all by executive order the undemocratic and un-American and unethical practice of racial segregation within the departments of the federal government. The thought was conceived in Trotter's mind and executed through instrumentalities under his guidance.

As the committee stood in the august presence of the chief magistrate of the greatest nation on the earth, I am free to confess that I for one felt apprehensive that Mr. Trotter as spokesman might let his unrestrained ardor for his cause get the upper hand of caution and propriety and inveigle the President into a faux pas, as he had done on a previous similar occasion. But disciplined by experience and chastened by the ripening effect of age, he kept wholly within the canons of propriety in the presidential presence. He presented the case of the twelve millions of American Negroes to the President of the United States in a clear cut, unyielding and dignified manner, such as would have done credit to the aptest disciple of Chesterfield. Every Negro in the land can feel proud of Trotter at that moment.

It is against the canons of journalistic propriety to quote directly any utterance which falls from the presidential lips. According to the prevalent mode one may attribute the outgiving to the mouthpiece of the fictitious "spokesman of the White House."

The spirit and purpose of the petition were fully accepted in principle. This was a tremendous advance over the interview of ten years ago, when the country was well led to believe that the White House upheld segregation in principle as well as in practice. The committee was assured much had already been done to correct the evils complained of, and that much more would be done until the invidious distinction would disappear altogether. There was also the distinct caution that the question was a difficult and troublesome one, and that it could not be resolved all at once. Admiration was expressed at the patience with which the race endured discrimination and wrongs whose essential injustices were fully recognized and appreciated.

The committee withdrew. The petition with twenty-five thousand signatures remained with the President. The cause of the race had been presented as forcibly as we were able to do. The response was received with appreciation and understanding. The qualified assurances were as much as we had any reason to expect. Segregation will doubtless continue in the departments. But the issue has been put squarely up to the fountain head of authority. The President now knows exactly how the race feels over this iniquitous practice. The country also knows through the medium of the Associated Press. The race has done its duty. The

oppressed must never for a moment let the oppressor think that the oppression is lightly felt. The man who feels the wound must utter the groan. The protest must continue as long as the injury lasts. The spirit of protestation will never die as long as Monroe Trotter lives and wrong endures. I entered the employ of the government under the civil service many years ago. At that time race discrimination, as we see it now, was unheard of. There were relatively more Negroes in the classified service then than now. The germs were present, but were not allowed to sprout into full growth. The present odious manifestations are but part of the degeneracy of the time so far as race feeling is concerned. Let us not make the mistake that segregation is due to the evil machination of any political party or section of the country. The evil spirit is wider and deeper than partisan alignment or lines of latitude. Nor may we expect any single effort, however significant, to bring complete relief. All forces and influences within the race must co-operate towards the end which all devoutly desire to accomplish.

I cannot, however, close this release without a word of caution. This specific protest is against discrimination within the government service. For several years, I have been trying to stress upon the attention of the race the importance of combating the dangerous practice of discrimination in the civil service commission through which applicants enter the classified service. By death, resignation and retirement colored clerks are herein rapidly eliminated from the government departments. There are, however, no fresh recruits. They are shut out at the threshold. Unless we insist in keeping open the port of entry, in a few years there will be left no colored clerks, and the whole question of segregation will be settled by elimination, and our last state will be worst than the first.

—The Equal Rights League, racial organization, whose work is thus commended by Prof. Miller, invites the race to organize branch leagues everywhere for greater strength in the race's behalf, notice to Secretary Trotter at 9 Cornhill, Boston, Mass., being the only requirement. Form Leagues or Equal Rights Committees, for the main Sesqui stroke at Philadelphia itself at League Convention, Sept. 21. Send delegates.)

## BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NORFOLK, VA.

Our congregation is having joint services with the John Wesley M. E. congregation, whose house of worship is being razed to give place to a new one.

Rev. M. G. Hoskins, retired, who has been our substitute since our minister's death, is taking a much needed and richly deserved vacation.

Rev. F. D. Nance, B. D., class of '26, Johnson C. Smith University, was the welcome occupant of our pulpit at both services on the first Sunday in July.

Miss Jessie Dixon, of Charlotte, who is attending the Hampton Summer School, was among our esteemed visitors recently.

Little Miss Carolyn Dungee returned as Girl Reserve delegate to the recent Kings Mountain Conference, and reported a pleasant and helpful experience there and in Charlotte.

The Negro is entitled to make, under God, the best of himself of which he is capable, and no prejudice, contempt or injustice on the part of the white man should hinder or handicap him. He should have every opportunity and every assistance from his stronger brother to work out his salvation individually and racially.—Bishop F. F. Reese.

## URBAN LEAGUE REPORTS INDUSTRY FOR JUNE.

Bulletin No. 4, of the Industrial Relations Department of the National Urban League summarizes employment conditions throughout the country as follows:

Industry on a whole was static during June and the situation among Negroes coincided with this general condition. Here and there fluctuations were recorded and a few outstanding events were reported. The incidents cited below are the principal reported deviations during the month of June:

Atlanta—This city provides the most glaring injustice reported because of the signing of a bill by Mayor Sims granting a minimum wage of \$100 per month for all "white" skilled and semi-skilled city employees. Forty colored male employees of the city have petitioned the Committee on Church Cooperation at Atlanta to intercede in their behalf for a higher wage. The men, fearing the loss of their jobs or other forms of intimidation, have used fictitious names and addresses.

St. Louis—A leather goods factory employed 125 girls in a new department. They were provided by the Urban League of that city. Then comes also this amusing statement: "With the coming of the hot weather whites doing street work are being rapidly replaced by Negroes."

St. Paul—The American Radiator Company has promised to employ forty colored men in a new foundry to be opened in August.

Detroit—The steady inflow of American common labor is distributing the already unsettled conditions of Detroit. Prophecies as to its effect upon Negro labor are frequently made. The Negro population is 81,000. In 1920 it was 41,000.

Raleigh—A movement of labor toward new development sections of the State is noted and there is a report of a temporary movement to Washington, D. C., of bricklayers on account of large building programs there.

Lansing—The new Olds Hotel is employing a small number of doormen, bus boys, porters and cleaners. Efforts are being made to extend this employment to bell boys and waiters, but local opposition makes this improbable at present.

San Antonio, Texas—The first Negro orchestra to play in a white hotel in San Antonio, Texas, is filling a summer engagement at St. Anthony hotel. Alphonse Trent's orchestra has the contract.

Jefferson City, Mo.—The first street contract to be awarded a Negro has been granted Charles Marberry to grade a city block. He employs all colored help. His contract is \$5,000.

Minneapolis—Negroes were re-employed by the Minneapolis Street Railway Company. At the instance of the Urban League of that city the company was prevailed upon to disregard complaints of inefficiency and permit another trial. Maurice Rothchild's Store hired a maid and a watchman. They were the first Negroes to be employed there.

Milwaukee—Negro musicians were employed in resorts out from this city where previously white orchestras were employed. They are union men.

Summary  
Cities in which business houses employed Negroes in June for the first time: Lansing, San Antonio, Jefferson City, Missouri, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, St. Louis.

Significant industrial problems: Students from southern schools stranded throughout the North. The city of Louisville has paid the transportation of a number of these boys back to their homes. As many as 17 were provided with free trans-

portation in June.

Atlanta has enacted another discriminatory law. It granted raises to white city employees and ignored colored employees.

Union labor:—No report of recent friction between white and colored workers involving union labor. Approximately 100 colored girls are on strike with white workers in the cloak workers' union in New York. In Raleigh less hostility is reported against Negro bricklayers by white union bricklayers. In New York motion picture operators recently permitted to join the union, reported greatly increased wages. One colored operator, formerly employed at \$45.00 a week for sixty-six hours work, now receives \$63.02 a week for thirty-five hours work.

## FROM ANDREW ROBERTSON INSTITUTE OF THE IM-MANUEL MISSION, AIKEN, S. C.

After a successful school year we closed with the following program May 17th, 18th, 19th and 21st.

Monday night the fourth and fifth grades, under Miss Bernice Jones had a play entitled, "Cinderella's Sisters," which was well rendered; also the tiny tots gave "Tom Thumb's Circus," under Miss Florine Nix, that delighted the audience.

Tuesday night Mrs. Mary Price presented a Chinese operetta, "The Feast of the Little Lanterns," using the second and third grades, assisted by the school. This was a delight to the eye as well as to the ear. Your humble servant presided at the piano each night.

Wednesday night was the Grammar School play, "How Many Marys?" which kept the audience guessing. Mrs. George Smith and Mrs. Emma Connor directed this play which introduced the A. R. Institute school song with good effect.

Friday night was Junior High School night when the declamations were rendered, solos and duets sung, and we listened to the annual address by Dr. C. J. Baker on the subject, "Carry On." Those present will long remember the gifted orator as he showed the need to "Carry On" in the Master's work, especially here.

Dr. W. L. Metz was with us last year and left an indelible impression upon his hearers and gave great encouragement.

Prizes were given the following: Mary Price, for the greatest number of different Bible verses recited during the year; to Edward Jones for unflinching courtesy and willingness to oblige; to Nancy Calhoun, 9th grade, for the highest general average and all round scholarship.

The choral class delighted the audience each night with well rendered songs.

Dr. C. C. Johnson gave some encouraging remarks in his characteristic, happy way, after which the Principal, Rev. L. E. Ginn, spoke of the good work done during the past year, asked the continued co-operation of the public and assured them that with God's help we would "Carry On."

On the second Sunday in June we had our Children's Day and sent our offering to the Board. Mrs. Nancy Price is the efficient superintendent and Little Miss Martinez Jones is pianist.

On Sunday morning and afternoon, July 11th, we were favored with special sermons by Dr. D. W. Boatner, of Montgomery, Alabama. This was introductory to his lecture on "Prohibition" Tuesday night, which attracted the thinking people of Aiken. With Prof. Will Jackson playing the cornet, Master Clarence Hammond the violin, and Mrs. Jones the piano, while some of the best vocal talent of Aiken sang, the music, too, was inspiring.

Among many good thoughts advanced Dr. Boatner advocated

a system by which the government would assist the parents in placing proper environment around the growing child, and this would obviate the necessity for so many enforcement officers. We enjoyed the lecture so well that he is expected to return to Aiken at no late date. He is a scholar and an orator of great ability. His presence at this time was an inspiration and an encouragement to "Carry On." Pray for us.

ADA L. W. JONES.

## ST. JAMES CHURCH GREENSBORO

By Mrs. S. W. Carter

Sunday morning, Rev. H. C. Miller spoke from Micah 2:10: "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest."

The speaker said men seem to forget God not in the hour of adversity, but in the time of prosperity. The message to Israel was a warning against placing the material above the spiritual.

One of the peculiar weaknesses of the human race seems to be the tendency of those who have been freed from oppression to become oppressors. I have wondered, continued the speaker, what would be the attitude of the Negro race to the opposite race, were conditions reversed. Would our treatment of them as a whole be better than their treatment of us?

The speaker drew a stage picture of life whereon each man is an actor, showing how each plays his role and then passes off.

Another striking statement was: The man who fails is not always the weakling. Often it is the strong that fails in the midst of his role.

Nothing in the world can give perfect satisfaction to men—at least nothing material. There remaineth a rest for men and the trials and uncertainties of this life are the hounds of heaven to drive us home. Not how well we played our role, nor how ill, but the motive that urged us, will be the final test.

The Missionary Society met with Miss Mamie Jordan, E. Gaston St., last Thursday. The ladies decided to put new carpet in the church in keeping with the new pews. The church auditorium has been renovated and the choir loft and pulpit space enlarged. The interior is just beautiful.

The Society enjoyed its annual picnic last Monday. Many spent the day with this popular organization.

Dr. and Mrs. W. L. McNair returned to the city last Saturday after spending a month visiting in the States of Pennsylvania and New York.

Mrs. Daniels and grandson, relatives of Mrs. McNair, are visiting in the home of Dr. and Mrs. McNair.

The Sunday school was largely attended Sunday, many visitors being present. The banner for finance remains with Earnest Workers.

Mrs. Sarah Prayor has gone on a two-months' vacation. She will be missed in the various activities of the church and Sunday school, yet her friends wish her a pleasant vacation.

Miss Clara Wade, who has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Andrew Bridges, left this week for her home in Asheville.

Rev. G. E. Henderson, of Charleston, S. C., who has been visiting relatives at his former home, Danville, Va., passed through the city on his way home, stopping with his former classmate and friend, Rev. H. C. Miller, to deliver a sermon last Sunday night, which was very interesting.

Mrs. Gertrude Booker and Mrs. Willett Howard have been in the city for some time visiting their father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Jones, on Beach Street. They expect to return to their home in New York about the last of August.