

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

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## THE ATTITUDE OF THE COLORED AMERICAN TO THE VOLSTEAD LAW OR PROHIBITION

The most lively and stirring theme before the American people today in state and Church, is the Volstead Act or the 18th Amendment to the Federal Constitution. That the ultimate fate of this humane and beneficent act should even seem to rest in the balance after the experimental period of a few years is a very sad commentary on our boasted progress, proud civilization, and even Christianity. For whatever else might be said, this act per se has been more fruitful of good to all the people of the country, and has proven to be more far-reaching in its benignant effects than any other that has found its way to the statute books, and has richly earned a place as part of the organic law of the land. None more wise and important has been enacted into law within a century perhaps.

There are those in our group who firmly believe this act has come in the evolution of the divine plan to purge and purify the American people, hence, it cannot long rest in the balance, if at all, neither go backward nor miscarry. It must and will meet the divine purpose, to wit, the deliverance of the most progressive and aggressive group of the human family—the people of the United States—from the thralldom of the rum demon—finally the world.

It is quite natural and a thing to be expected, that the secular element of the country should entertain varying views and divide on the subject of prohibition, hence, break up into hostile and madly contending camps. The fight when confined to the realm of politics gathers more than passing notice and interest as it promises a decidedly temporary advantage or disadvantage to the pros and cons.

For already men are translating the retention or abrogation of the Volstead law into national issues that will overshadow all others in the next Presidential campaign. Prohibition thus employed largely loses its moral force and effect and is degraded into a matter of political expediency.

But here is a new world wonder. The church of Jesus Christ seems almost as evenly and hopelessly divided as any other organized body, if we are to credit current press reports. The clamor for some form of modification or even the repeal of the Volstead law rings out as loud and clear from some quarters of the Church as from any unholy camp of the world. It seems to this lay writer that if this subject had but the single, saving element, to wit, the lifting of American manhood and womanhood into a higher and purer atmosphere, the Church, the Christian Church—ought to be able without scruple, bent or bias, to present a united front and stand full four square to the heavens. The wonder becomes more wonderful when one considers the social, economic, civic and the less noticeable values, blessings and benefits that fall into the lap of all the people following in the wake of temperate living whether forced or voluntary.

But I have gone very far afield generalizing, and must get back to my chosen theme—The Attitude of the Colored American to the Volstead Law or Prohibition.

When it comes to the matter of violating the prohibition law, I freely and frankly confess, with shame and confusion of face, that the colored American can't take to himself very large comfort, while pointing a scornful finger into the face of some other with the taunt, "holier than thou."

Yet since in any local or

country-wide issue, the final settlement of which vitally affects the whole people, the man of color is kept under closest surveillance, and actions are carefully watched and subjected to critical scrutiny, his attitude to any such issue should be made up on facts and evidence. What are the facts and evidence before the court of public opinion in making up his attitude to the 18th Amendment? He seems possessed of an insatiable appetite and an inordinate desire for intoxicants. His disposition to drink to excess is almost well-nigh proverbial. In addition to this the frequency with which he is caught in charge of an illicit still, watching a blind tiger, with small quantities of whiskey on his person, haled into court, takes a sentence, a fine or both, and thus earns free publicity through daily press reports, all go very far in determining popularly his attitude to the 18th Amendment. I am not inclined to enter into a discussion of the fairness or unfairness of thus determining his attitude; but since there are facts more germane and bearing more decidedly upon the matter under consideration, they ought to be allowed and duly credited.

That such facts are available and adducible ought to cheer the man of color, his friends and all truth-loving and fair-minded people. Any just and fair determination of the attitude of the colored American to the Eighteenth Amendment, must take into account, primarily, his activities in connection with the manufacture of contraband liquors. Here it needs only to be noted and said, if he figures at all, it is as a moorer, and hence, becomes nothing more than the dead machinery harnessed in the service of some master mind. His part the country round, therefore, as a manufacturer in violation of law is negligible.

In the second place, his connection with and interest in the illicit sale and dispensation are as little worthy of serious notice, as his participation in the manufacture. If he enters the field of trade at all, he can come in one or two ways: he must enter either as employe, or is duped in under the delusion that sooner or later it will prove to be "a gold brick." In either case he almost invariably becomes a willing tool of someone "higher up."

Third, when it comes to the matter of administering and enforcing the prohibition provision, the colored American stands eliminated and is not encouraged to cherish even the faintest hope of a look-in. In this respect all doors seem permanently closed in his face. From these important and significant points of view, it would seem that he has not played the leading role in violating the prohibition law, nor does he share largely the responsibility for failure in the law to meet the ends of its enactment. The question of obeying or violating the prohibition law becomes one purely and simply of patriotism, morals and religion as far as it concerns the man of color. It does not appeal to him as a business proposition since it is hedged about by legal restraints. It is noteworthy and goes down to his everlasting credit that whenever and wherever he has been allowed voice or vote on prohibition, that voice has been generally lifted, and that vote has been cast and recorded on the side of law and order. He has been uncomplaining, has taken no concerted action, has entered no protest, and no studied and unified opposition to the 18th Amendment

can be set to his account. No request or petition for modification, repeal or otherwise has emanated from him. While he, perhaps, is proportionately the greatest sufferer as a violator and an evil doer under the law, he cannot be charged with being the greatest malcontent.

Touched with all the feelings and infirmities of a man; heir to the propensities of a depraved and sinful nature; surrounded by the most powerful stimuli and manifold temptations, who wonders that he should at times fall victim to violating the prohibition law? I wish it distinctly understood that I enter no plea and make no apology for the shortcomings of this man in living up to the requirements of this most philanthropic law. But I would like to see, and suggest that the rules of the game—fairness to all—be followed and applied in a matter so vital as determining the real attitude of the colored American to the 18th Amendment. I feel if this is done, the eye of suspicion which now rests so intently upon him will find time to turn in some other direction, and the suspicion that falls upon him as a standing menace to law and order will be perceptibly lifted. At any rate, it will do much to save him biting, bitter, and withering criticism, hasty and unrighteous judgment, harsh and undue censure. I plead for him no exception in the application and enforcement of the law. For already the American man of color has reaped by far the richest harvest of any other group wherever the law has been most rigidly applied and enforced. His contribution to good order in his local community and to the country at large, his advancement toward genuine and substantial citizenship, and his growing desire and disposition to participate in the larger and more general human concerns have been noticeably increased. His economic and civic relations and condition, and even religious status are all changing for the better.

Finally, since all that is here-in claimed for him is true, he can be counted on to align himself with all the forces at work to save the country and conserve the principles of righteousness. He can be relied on to do his full bit in the prohibition crisis now before the country as he has done in all the past. The Church as such needs have no misgivings as to where her colored constituency stands on prohibition, if I have properly sense and analyzed the attitude of the colored American to the 18th Amendment. For all this is remarkable, unique, enviable.

Yours for truth and fairness,  
A. U. FRIERSON.  
Lancaster, S. C.,  
Box 146.

## JOHN HALL CHURCH, CHARLOTTE.

By Mrs. Belle M. Jackson

Sunday morning, July 25, Rev. P. N. Boykin preached a very helpful and practical sermon from Ecclesiastes 11:6.

Just after the morning service we entered into the Sabbath school and the lessons were enjoyed by all. It was formerly suggested that the class raising the highest amount would be given a picnic. Great enthusiasm prevailed throughout the Sunday school. The Young People's Division, taught by Miss Alice E. Kelly, defeated the other classes by raising the sum of \$20.31. The total amount raised was \$43.00. The amount appropriated to be sent to the Board of National Missions was \$50.

The instructors conducting the Daily Vacation Bible School are having much success with the work.

The Children's Day exercise was largely attended at Ingram (Continued on page 3)

## THE SYNODICAL CONVENTIONS AND SCHOOLS OF METHODS TO BE BIGGER AND BETTER THIS YEAR



Atlantic Synodical Convention and School of Methods, Haines Institute, Augusta, Georgia, August, 1925.

## THE OUTLOOK

By Rev. A. B. McCoy, D. D.

From all appearances our four Conventions and Schools of Methods are going to be full and overflowing this year. Registrations are coming in rapidly and rooms are being assigned. Of course that the only way to get the pick of rooms—register early.

These weeks of recreation and study have already been placed on the vacation calendar of a goodly number of persons and they look forward to going to Swift, Haines, J. C. Smith University and Cotton Plant Academy with the same regularity that they go to their places of business. I was told by a man the other day that he has been present in all of the conventions for four years, he and his wife, but this year he is going to bring his four children. And we will be glad to have those children, too. Provisions will be made for them and the mother will have ample conveniences in any of the conventions to care for the children.

A letter from a pastor states, "At last I have succeeded in getting every auxiliary in my church to agree to send a delegate to the School of Methods this year."

Another one writes, "Whom should we send and how many?" You can realize at once that this church has never been with us before. We welcome them this year. That's not a bad question, though; is it?

Just "whom to send" needs to be gone into very carefully on the part of our churches. Pick out the most promising ones in your school, Young People's Society or from the church at large. Or would it be easier to tell you those you ought not

to send? No teacher that is disinterested in her work, no head of any department that is only there out of respect for age; no young person whom you wish to reform should be sent to the School of Methods.

We have a line-up this year in class leadership that is unexcelled in any one of the white conferences. Those who have been selected to teach our Bible classes are men of ripe experience and intellect—such men as Dr. Clark, Rev. Sample, Dr. West, Dr. Jackson and others. I heard Dr. Jackson preach for a week not long ago. I say unreservedly that he is in a class by himself.

Our own Miss Percival has returned from Boston University where she spent the past school year. She is ready and full of the best in her line. Miss Dawson, of Iowa, is a gifted athlete and promises to put some new thrills in our recreations. What has been said about these can be said about all the other members of the Faculty.

Have you noticed our list of speakers? Read your program. The names of Prof. Seabrook, Rev. Francis, and Rev. C. A. Edington should be sufficient to guarantee what is in store for us. Please note also that we have a Woman's Night in our popular evenings' program. Such speakers as Mrs. H. W. McNair, of Kentucky, Mrs. H. L. McCrorey, of Charlotte, and Mrs. J. T. Douglas, of South Carolina, are to grace our rostrum.

Sure, the old "standbys" will be there. Can you conceive of our having a Convention without Miss Kinniburgh, Mr. Black and Mr. Somerndike? If you want to see Presidents White, (Mrs.) Clark, Watkins

and Crowell smile, pile up a big delegation at these conventions.

You will note from your programs that the East Tennessee Convention meets at Barber College this year, opening August 9th.

## SPECIAL NOTICE — EAST YADKIN CONVENTION.

The members of Silver Hill church are in full effort in their endeavor to make the S. S. Convention which convenes at their church, August 12-15, the best ever held in the Yadkin Presbytery. Silver Hill community is the ideal of Scotland County for colored people.

We are also trying to plan the most economical way of travel for the delegates and friends coming to this convention; in doing so, we offer the following plan:

All delegates coming by the way of Sanford, Aberdeen, and Hoffman are advised to come down on the "Shu Fly" Thursday morning and get off at Hoffman, where you will be met by cars to take you to Silver Hill for the price of \$1.00. This will make a net saving for you of about \$1.00 one way. We will also return you to Hoffman for the same rate (\$1.00). Remember, we are only going to meet the "Shu Fly" Thursday morning; all persons coming after Thursday morning had better come to Laurinburg. So we advise ministers and superintendents to see to it that your delegates have \$2.00 outside of their R. R. fare to Hoffman. Explain this fully to your delegates before leaving.

On Sunday we are planning a great service and are expecting folks from all over the district. We are requesting all delegates and visitors to send in their names immediately to

REV. J. B. FRANCIS,  
P. O. Box, 382,  
Laurinburg, N. C.

## EBENEZER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, HENDERSONVILLE

Sunday, July 25th, Rev. W. G. Hamilton delivered the morning sermon for the Rev. Brannon at the Star of Bethel Baptist church. Rev. Brannon filled Rev. Hamilton's pulpit in the afternoon and preached an inspiring sermon. After the sermon Deacon Dempsey, Reid, took charge as it was his day. He was head captain and was successful in raising the most money. The results are as follows:

Deacon Dempsey, Reid, \$38;  
Elder Jason Jones, \$25; Mrs. L. A. Whitley, \$22.50. Total, \$85.50.

Human life is so short that we must learn from the experiences of others as well as our own.