

Africo-American Presbyterian

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

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FOLKS IN OUR CHURCH

(From The Richmond Christian Advocate)

We have a big church out our way. It is a cosmopolitan church. That is, we have all sorts. You ought to come out to our church and meet some of them.

You have heard of the Pillars? They are in our church and we couldn't get along without them. Brother Pillar is a steward, and Mrs. Pillar is the President of the Aid Society and the Missionary Society. The preacher and his wife could not get along without Sister Pillar. She goes over to the parsonage oftener than she goes to the movies and when she has anything real nice to eat she takes the preacher's folks some. She looks over the parsonage, and when she sees anything that is needed, she does not wait for the preacher's wife to ask for it, she goes and gets it and reports to the Society. Sister Pillar and Brother Pillar and the little pillars are always at church and the preacher seems to preach better when he sees them.

Have you ever heard of the Sleepers? They, too, belong to our church. Mr. Sleeper and Mrs. Sleeper do not always attend, but when they do they get a good berth and often Mr. Sleeper snores out loud. The funny thing about it is he is the first man to rush up to the preacher and tell him what a grand sermon the pastor preached that time.

The Kickers also belong to our church. I don't know when they joined, but I think they are charter members. Brother B. A. Kicker and his wife, Mrs. Emma Kicker, are the heads of the family, and they have several children with in-laws and out-laws. Nothing ever suits them and they are always letting it be known. They never like the preacher. One preached too long and another one preached too short. One wife dressed too fine and the next one didn't dress well enough. They never like the programs of the church and refuse to follow the plans laid down. But we can't get along without the Kickers, because they are rich and prominent socially. Brother Kicker is chairman of the Board of Trustees and he nearly always goes to Conference looking for a new preacher.

The Knockers also belong to our church. There is a large family of them. Colonel Ur A. Knocker is head of the family. They all attend church and take a prominent part in every thing. It is very hard to suit these folks. They are cousins to the Kickers and belong to the same social set. Colonel Knocker is always telling us about the bad side of everything. He is chairman of the Pessimistic Club and works overtime complaining about the state of the government and the church. He is always harping on how things are going to the dogs and how much worse the young people are than they were when he was a boy, but he never supports the Epworth League nor any other organization designed to help the young people in the church. He does not believe in picnics and socials in the church and always uses his influence against such things.

We have another man in our church known by all who attend. He is Mr. Jim End Seater. He always parks himself right at the end of a seat and refuses to move up when the others try to get into the pew. He never pays any attention to suggestions from the ushers and seems to take delight in having women and children climb over his feet. There are several branches of this tribe, but all of them are alike. Tom Front Seater is this man's cousin, but he is a different man. He always sits on the front seat and pays attention to the preacher. He says he knows

enough to know nothing depresses the preacher more than bare wood and empty seats and he is sure most preachers rather have empty heads before them than empty seats. Tom is a jolly, good-hearted fellow and everybody likes him. He has a brother, however, who is not like Tom. His name is Bill Back Seater. Bill always gets the back seat next to the door. No one ever saw Bill sit anywhere else at church.

We have a prominent woman in our church you may know. She is Mrs. Jennie Sensitive. She used to belong to the First Church, but one day the superintendent failed to put her little son Reginald on the Children's Day program and Sister Sensitive left the First Church and brought her letter to our church. People say she is a good woman—but—and when people say a person is "a good person but—you better get your hat. Sister Sensitive always puts on her wraps while we are singing the last hymn and rushes for the door before any one can see her. Then she says we have the coldest church she knows. It is not like the First Church where people are cordial. She has been in our church a year and no one, not even the pastor, ever notices her when she comes to church. If the pastor calls on any one on her street and does not come to her house she is hurt. She always gets offended when the church sends her a reminder of her dues. Says she is not dishonest and considers duns insults. I wonder if she ever gets bills from dairies, grocery stores or other places.

Another woman you may know in our church is Mrs. Kate Late Comer. She always comes and she always comes in late, usually after the offering has been taken and she marches down to the front and sits next to the front seat. Sister Maggie Tellaboutit is whispering all the news of the neighborhood, such as all the family disturbances, whose children have adenoids, who is to be married, whose servant has quit, who has a new radio and all such stuff. When we get a new preacher Sister Tellaboutit is the first one to call, and she tells the preacher enough to fill a book, before he has been there a week.

Another prominent family in our church is the Cants. There are several of them on the church roll. Mr. I. Cant is President of the First National Bank and a successful business man with vision, but, when he comes to church work, he is always discouraging the preacher and all others, who try to do something. He says we can't get up the collections, we can't build a new Sunday school annex, we can't have a revival, and we can't do anything. He has a brother, Mr. U. Cant, who is a dealer in automobiles. He has a big business. He always backs up Mr. I. Cant in church affairs. There are two other brothers, H. F. Cant and W. E. Cant, and they are alike. The Cants are the most prominent people we have. They live in fine houses on the Boulevard and have two fine automobiles each. They take long, expensive trips in summer and wear fine clothes, but they do not think we can possibly do what the Conference asks us to do in our church.

One of the best men in our church is I. Will Standby. He never talks much, but every preacher says he has no better friend than Bro. Standby. He always comes and he always stands by the preacher and the program of the church. He often visits the parsonage and is friendly with the preacher's children. He is nearly always the last one to leave the church after services and walks by the

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MY LIFE'S SPAN

By Dr. Kelly Miller

I am now three score and ten and two years old. I have passed the Scriptural allotment and I am still going strong. I was placed on the retired list two years ago for purely calendarial reasons rather than on account of falling strength and physical or mental infirmities.

I was for four years a contemporary of Abraham Lincoln. There has been greater transformation in the material aspect of civilization since my birth than had taken place from the time of Adam until then. Abraham Lincoln never saw an electric light, rode in an automobile, used a telephone or listened over the radio. The intellectual transformation has been no less marvelous. Darwin's "Origin of the Species" was published in 1859, four years before my birth, but did not come into general acceptance and vogue until some twenty years after. This discovery has caused the readjustment of religious, political, economic and social thought of mankind. Nor is the end in sight. It does not yet appear what the reconstructive thought shall be, but we do know that it will be traceable back to Darwin and the theory of evolution. All of this inspired during my life time, although I can not say with Aeneas, "Magna pars quarum fui" (I was a great part of those things), yet I can truly say that the span of my life covered these great transformations.

The seventy-two years of my life may be taken as a yardstick to measure the progress of the Negro race from emancipation until now. I came to notice things at the far end of reconstruction. I have known and in a measure have touched and been touched by the great men and measures who have shaped the destiny of the Negro race. I have seen the political experiment reach its height (under Douglass and Langston, Pinchback and Bruce, and have seen it fade almost to nullity, and then again take new spurt under DePriest and Mitchell. I have seen the religious life of the race reach the point of highest hope and expectation in the great A. M. E. Church under Payne, Wayman and Brown and then to decline on a lower level of moral and spiritual energy and enterprise. I have seen the educational life of the race buoyant with the hope of salvation through learning, and then to taper down to hundreds of thousands of college bred men and women who are seemingly satisfied to get a place on the white man's pay roll. I have watched the agitative organizations of the Afro-American League, the Niagara Movement, the Equal Rights League to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. They have all arisen, flourished and faded, except the last mentioned, which is still functioning. I have seen business organizations flourish for a season like a green bay tree, and then wither at the top for want of depth of earth.

I have always maintained some sort of a self-distance from those movements. I have mixed with action only to a limited degree. I never entered actively into the political arena, in religious leadership, nor business enterprises, nor into fraternal and social organizations. I have been, in the main, an observer and a commentator rather than a director of the current of racial life.

I was born with a certain equipoise of mind and am not easily swayed by the hysteria of the moment. I have incurred the reputation of not being willing to take sides in issues and controversies to which the race is so readily prone. My intellectual sanity saves me from such

fruitful partisanship. I watched the fury that raged for two decades between the advocates of higher and industrial education, but became the blind partisan in neither. From the start I made a just appraisal of the value of both. I realized their relative importance and comparative impotence. I remember thirty years ago speaking in Boston and presenting two briefs, one for the higher education and one for the industrial education as contributive factors in the solution of the race problem. Of course, I was branded as a compromiser and blunderer. At that time Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois were the irreconcilable antagonists. I stood midway between the two, appreciating the merits of both and their deficiencies. Twenty-five years later, both schools have come to my platform. Dr. DuBois, in delivering the graduating address at Howard University several years ago, acknowledged the failure of both the higher and industrial education as a solvent for the race problem. In my Founder's Day address at Tuskegee last April I stood precisely where I did thirty years ago and watched the storms go raging by. During the past forty years since I began to comment on public life I have engendered much acerbity and some bitterness but I have no enemies. I feel like Elbert Hubbard—"My enemies are my friends who misunderstood me." I have never hated and do not now hate a single individual who has risen above the horizon. I emphatically dislike many of the attitudes and faults but have always disentangled the genuine from the excrement in character. I hate the sin, and yet love the sinner.

I have never hated the white race; on the whole, I have pitied them. After severe self-searching, I have feared in my heart of hearts that had there been a transposition of places I should possibly, nay probably, had the same disdainful attitude towards them which they now exhibit toward the Negro. Then I know that I should hate myself. I have always preserved a more or less unruffled attitude and stood aplomb amidst irrational things. I have the patience of Job which could cry out in deepest despair and distress, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." I have an abiding faith that all human problems of which the race problem is but a troublesome incident, will finally be solved. This will not take place in my day but I trust that my past forty years of endeavor will neither hinder nor delay that great consummation in God's fullness of time. I have been able to maintain this equipoise of mind and calmness of spirit because of a certain introvert psychology by which I am able to sink into the sub-cellar of my own soul while the storm of life goes raging by.

I shall devote the remaining years of my life actively along the same lines of endeavor. I shall not allow myself to be carried away by any sudden nostrums, political, religious or economic. Here I stand. I can not do otherwise. God help me.

I am now engaged upon my autobiography which I hope will be ready within the next year or so. A picture of the type of life which I have striven to live in its relation to the racial and general movements of my day and generation, it seems to me, ought to make an interesting story, if not a worthwhile one.

The Extension service in North Carolina is receiving much praise these days from Negro newspapers which call attention to the fine support and recognition given Negro workers.—Extension Farm News.

AN APPEAL TO REINSTATE THE ENGLISH BIBLE AS A CODE OF MORALS

FOR CHURCH, SCHOOL, STATE AND NATION

(Reprinted from a booklet by the Rev. Robert Elliott Flickinger, D. D., Rockwell City, Iowa.)

AMERICA PRESERVED FOR FREEDOM

Article VII

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof."—Leviticus 25:10.

This Jubilee Proclamation of Liberty by Moses for the children of Israel was put on the Liberty Bell, obtained by William Penn, the Governor, in 1682, for the tower of the State House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Bible Suppressed

The Bible is the common inheritance of all mankind. It was given not merely for the children of Israel as at Mt. Sinai, but for the Jew and Gentile, for rich and poor, master and servant. Our Master's last and Great Commission was to preach the gospel to every creature. This Great Commission was given to the Church, that might have knowledge of God, the Sabbath and his holy word. The Bible is the light of the intellect, the forerunner of civilization, the charter of true liberty, the secret of national greatness. It is the one important book for both old and young and individuals and nations.

"It contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. Search the Scriptures for they testify of me, said Jesus, our blessed Redeemer. "Let there be light," and "I, God, we trust."

Are familiar watchwords of patriotic Protestantism in America. Protestantism emphasizes the Sovereignty of God and the supreme authority of the Bible (Authorized Version), as the inspired and infallible Word; the brotherhood of man, and the sanctity of the Sabbath as a day of holy and sacred rest—the Lord's day; and the mutual relation of protection and support, but complete separation of Church and State.

The protest of America against Roman Catholicism as expressed in the constitution at the birth of this nation, means: Common justice and equal rights to all; an open Bible in the churches, schools and homes of the people; the sobriety, health and longevity of the individual; the purity and virtue of the home. It means exultant songs of praise and patriotism, instead of the ribald songs of paganism and dissipation.

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,

With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me: As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free, While God and truth are marching on."

"Let there be light," and "In God we trust," are familiar watchwords of protest by patriotic Protestants in America. Protestantism by its protest, emphasizes the sovereignty of God, and the supreme authority of the sacred Scriptures.

If instead of the Protestant exiles—the Pilgrims, Scotch-Irish Puritans, the Huguenots of France and the Protestant Exiles from Germany and Switzerland—who came to the shores of America as colonists, there had come those who were prompted by greed for gain like those who migrated to Mexico, Central and South America; how different would have been the result! What, if Spain had sent to our Eastern Coasts colonists of the same kind that went and settled in Peru, Yucatan, and Mexico? Or, if Portu-

gal had unloaded her colonists in our land, instead of Brazil? Instead of the civil and religious freedom established by the Protestant American colonists, who brought the open Bible with them, there would have been the ignorance and repulsive superstition of Roman Catholicism. There would have been no free speech, liberty of the press, or Declaration of Independence.

God, in his own good providence, did not permit the warlike and oppressive nations of Europe to cast lustful eyes upon America, until he had prepared a lot of intelligent, God-fearing people to take possession of it. While adherents to the papacy at Rome grasped Mexico and the West India Islands, including Cuba, the best part of North America was settled by Bible reading exiles and colonists, who represented the best blood and strongest nerves of the world—people of whom the old world was not worthy.

America Preserved for Freedom

The discovery of America in 1492 was one of the most signal events that followed the beginning of the Renaissance, or educational awakening in Italy, that followed the dark period of the Middle Ages (476-1500), from the defeat of the Roman Empire, at Constantinople to the revival of learning in England, Scotland, Italy and Switzerland.

The early settlement of America, two centuries after its discovery was by a few brave souls, who, emerging from the darkness, superstition and cruelty of the Middle Ages, in Europe, made their way to this new continent and founded in America a form of civil government, based on human rights and individual liberty.

The Renaissance, the new period of learning, due to the people's receiving their first knowledge of the Bible, though it was under the ban of the papacy of Rome, gained immediately by the discovery of the new lands and great riches in this new world. The French Revolution of 1798, with its reign of terror, was an outgrowth of it in Europe.

Think of the remarkable fact that half of the inhabitable surface of the earth was kept from the knowledge of the people on the other half, 5,500 years.

When one thinks of it, it must seem strange or providential that the very early settlements along the Atlantic Coast of America, with the exception of those of the Pilgrims and Puritans, had a distinctly selfish aim, and their progress was disappointing. The early Spanish settlers in Florida and the English Cavaliers, who brought with them to Virginia the servile notions of the political aristocrats of England, were alike lured by the hope of gain, which they soon found they could not attain.

The motives that prompted the early Swiss and German settlers of Pennsylvania to come to America were altogether different. They were Puritans and Protestants, a product of the Protestant Reformation. Fleeing from a tyrannical, political and persecuting ecclesiastical oppression, they sought the privilege of founding homes, schools and churches of their own in this new world. Proving true to their moral and religious convictions, their work in a wonderful manner has received unmistakable marks of divine approval.

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