

THE NEGRO AND RELIGION

Is the Negro losing his stronghold on religion? A writer in the Boston, Mass., Evening Record, Philip A. Holmes, seems to think that this is the case:

The growing indifference of the Negro toward Christianity is becoming very apparent. This indifference is especially noticeable among the Negroes of the younger generation. Indeed, so strong is this spirit of indifference to Christianity that it is bordering on agnosticism. But why Christianity does not appeal to the younger and thinking Negro is not difficult to explain.

First, the Negro has reached the conviction that Christianity, as preached and practiced, is not the great moral force or agency for good that they are asked to believe it is; it has, therefore, utterly failed to instill effective good and noble thoughts in the minds of those under its influence. The younger Negro points with alarm to the persecution of his race under the influence of Christianity. The Negro argues further that the Christian Church has watched with vacant unconcern the burning alive of his people at the stake—men, women and children—and their persecution worse than man of the Middle Ages. And in view of these inhumanities perpetrated against the Negro, the Christian Church has remained passively quiet. It is, therefore, preposterous to expect the Negro, in virtue of his education, to subscribe to Christianity when the very agency of Christianity beckons his persecution. These are facts that cannot be ignored.

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Mr. Holmes, however, seems to feel that agnosticism will prove a definite factor in the Negroes' advance:

Upon the Christian Church, then, rests the responsibility for the Negroes' drift into the realm of agnosticism. But the growing agnostic tendency of the Negro is emblematic of increasing racial intelligence, for as intelligence spreads, superstition and fear will be dissipated; and in superstition and fear, Christianity is deeply rooted. It is common knowledge that religious superstition and fear have kept not only the Negro, but many other peoples of the world in both physical and mental slavery. Well might Shakespeare say that "fear is the dagger of man's mind and superstition the instrument with which he assassinates his soul."

The American Negro has always been a devout subscriber to Christianity, but, as a result, he became indifferent toward his earthly welfare; he has submitted to every kind of human persecution, believing, as it were, in the Christian teaching: "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay thee." Consequently the Negro "turned the other cheek." So it is, then, that the Negroes have been the most indifferent people on earth toward their human rights, except possibly peoples of the Middle Ages. The Negroes' belief in the Christian teaching, "Servant, obey thy master," became a part of them. So the growing agnostic tendency of the Negro should not be wondered at.

The Negro is beginning to see for himself that the Christian Church has failed to preach and practice that noble theory of human brotherhood and the right action of man to man.

NEGRO SOLDIERS AND LABOR

What assurance has the returning Negro soldier that he will be given work? He should never have occasion to doubt it. S. P. Thorpe writes in the Philadelphia, Pa., Public Ledger:

The position of the Negro in the reconstruction of the world has been sincerely and widely discussed by the ablest minds of our great nation, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to the Gulf. There need not be any great revolution of thought nor storm of debate concerning the place which the Negro is to occupy in the reconstruction of this country or the world. When circumstances threw our nation into the whirlpool of material destruction and human slaughter, the ruling mil-

lions lost no time in declaring that the "world must be made safe for democracy" and that the combined forces and resources of the United States, to the last dollar and the last man, would be drawn upon to carry the war to victorious conclusion and guarantee to every people throughout the world the right to life, liberty and the undisturbed pursuit of happiness. In accordance with this democratic spirit, 11,000,000 people spoke with one voice and said, "We'll plant the future peace and freedom of the world upon the tested foundations of political liberty." Then ever red-blooded American caught the fever of "preparedness" and its temperature ran up 7,000 degrees. Every man and woman in every nationality under the Stars and Stripes was mustered into military or industrial service, and every one strained every nerve every day, until the greatest generals that military science has ever produced declared that "It's finished," thus guaranteeing to the nations of the earth the greatest blessing since the babe was born at Bethlehem.

"GET ON THE FARM"

This is the season for the farm. A farm is a gold mine for any farmer, who gets there with his heart and his soul in the soil. The farm is the foundation upon which civilization rests. More of our people should leave the city for the farm at this time. We see in the distance a famine for the city people. Unless there is enough produce made upon the farm to supply the needs of the city folks, something serious must happen. There is nothing to support the over-crowded city but the farms and for some time rich men will not be in a position to put their money out in factories and other industries on account of the high prices for lumber, material and labor.

Men with money take little risks, but it is the men without money who take large risks. The man who buys lumber and labor at present prices is bound to find himself in the hole, twenty-four months hence, or sooner; for prices have begun to fall now. No man can pay one dollar and a half per day for ploughmen and make money out of the farm; if he could all of the farmers would be rich. Seventy-five cents a day is an equal price to the farmer and ploughhand. When the farmer is paying one dollar and fifty cents per day to the farmhand cotton must sell at twenty-five cents per pound. What if the farmer pays one dollar and fifty cents per day to each ploughman, now on his farm, and when he goes to gather, cotton is selling at twelve and one-half cents per pound, the farmer simply meets with the calamity of having thrown away his money. The condition ought to be guarded against now. The high cost of food and other materials should cause some kind of an alliance formed as a safeguard around the farmer. There should be some kind of an agreement between the farmer and the government for the assurance that the prices of foodstuffs and cotton be the same on the market as it was when they started.

It is now March and the time for everyone to go to work, and make a farm. The farmers should begin planting corn on the 7th of March, and cotton on the first of April. To pay higher prices for labor and fertilizer, and not receive a price in comparison at the end of the season would make it very bad for the farmer.—Charleston, (S. C.) Messenger.

NOTICE TO SOLDIERS

In order that colored soldiers and sailors may be duly informed as to their rights under a recent law passed by Congress, and thereby be in a position to promptly take advantage of the Government's plan to extend financial help to all soldiers, etc., who have been honorably separated from military or naval service, Emmett J. Scott, Special Assistant to the Secretary of War, who, during the war period, has been advising in matters affecting the interests of colored soldiers, has requested the Negro Press of America, Negro clergymen, teach-

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ers and others, to give the widest possible publicity to the fact that the United States Government, by Act of Congress approved February 24th, 1919, grants to all soldiers, officers, female nurses, etc., who have either resigned or who have been honorably discharged since April 6th, 1917, or who may resign or be honorably discharged before the expiration of their enlistment period, a \$60 bonus in cash.

The way and manner in which the cash bonus of sixty dollars may be obtained by honorably discharged soldiers, officers, sailors, female nurses, etc., is fully set forth in War Department Order, issued by the Adjutant General of the Army, February 25th, 1919, and sent to all Department and Camp Commanders, General Hospitals, etc.

This amount shall not be paid to any person who, though appointed or inducted into the military or naval forces on or prior to November 11, 1918, had not reported for duty at his station on or prior to such date; or to any person who is entitled to receive retired pay, etc.

All persons separated from active military service from April 6th, 1917, who are entitled to the sixty dollar bonus, and who have received their final pay, will forward claim for such bonus direct to the zone finance officer, Lemon Building, Washington, D. C., who is hereby designated to settle such claims.

Such applications must contain the discharge certificate or order for discharge or relief, if no certificate was issued, the paper bearing indorsement of final payment being required.

A statement of all military service since April 6, 1917, showing place and date of reporting at first military station and stating the address to which check is to be sent.

(It is suggested that these papers and data be sent to said zone finance officer by registered mail to insure their safe delivery).

When settlement is made, all personal papers will be returned to applicant with check.

No further correspondence is necessary to advise of change in address of applicant.

No other disbursing officers are authorized to pay claims covered by this paragraph.

Agencies that work among colored people, including teachers, college men and others are specially requested to communicate the above information to colored soldiers and their families, in order that they may take the necessary steps to secure the \$60 Bonus which the government has set aside for the benefit of those brave and loyal men who came to the rescue of their country in its crucial hour of need.

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