

# The New Negro Faces 1926

**A Reply to Dr. Hubbard  
By Rev. Wm. Rutledge**

The Rev. Hubbard, white, pastor of a Methodist Church at Wilmington, Del., in a recent speech before a ministers' meeting in that city extolled the virtues of the anti-bellum Negro and regretted his passing. The following is the reply made by Rev. W. R. Rutledge, pastor of the Gilbert Presbyterian Church and representative of the Philadelphia Tribune at Wilmington

### The New Negro in 1926

"The years have gone by three score since a race of mankind, actually a part of the human family, was, according to the decision of Abraham Lincoln and his Administration and the Christian citizenship of the United States, allowed to throw off their old garments and shoes of bondage and plunge into the deep, swift running stream of Freedom. This stream had flown by them for a long time since 1621, but they were only allowed to hang their uncomfortable garments of slavery on the willow tree but not go near the water.

"Into the swift running and deep waters of Freedom, with its powerful currents of physical, social, intellectual, moral and religious power, carrying before it ignorance, superstition, and human misfits, the Negro plunged. The world held its breath. Would he choke, strangle, live or die, survive or perish? Other races under the sun already were in the stream; their heads were lifted above the flood. Would the Negro do likewise or would his struggling body sink to the bottom? Why should the Negro drown, sustained as he was by an indomitable courage to rise up and be a man and encouraged by many white friends? Was not his Biblical origin, like the white man's, to be found in Adam and Eve? Was he not included in what Paul said to the Athenians, "God that hath made the world and all things therein, hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth?" Is it not a fact that race, color and a previous condition of servitude did not erase the fact that any way you choose to diagnose or analyze the Negro, he belongs to a part of ethnology, philology, history, prophecy and religion as much as other men and races?

"After a half century he is still abreast the winds and the waves; still retains in 1926 his vigor of mind and body, his energy and bravery, his industry and religion. The pulpit, the forum, and the press will still hold the Negro race problem among the foremost problems in this United States of America in 1926. The ante-bellum Negro and the Twentieth Century Negro differ as the night from the day. The ante-bellum Negro had many sterling qualities; he was dutiful, honest and could be depended upon, but his intellectual life was meagre.

"The Negro of today is religious and not more pious than other men. He is studying out American ideals of patriotism, politics, economics, war and peace and citizenship. He is thoughtfully looking to the courts for justice. His race consciousness is causing him to cry out for fair dealings in civic affairs. His position and treatment of the past has aroused in him a dissatisfaction. The Negro of 1926, 12,000,000 strong, is calling for more interracial gatherings that the whites and blacks may understand each other according to true American principles. He has a slogan, "Know each other better and the troubles all will end."

"The thinking new Negro is telling the political world, "We were never wider awake than now in 1926 and we are seeking political justice." The new Negro was never more ready than now to have all men come to a more enlightened understanding of him and to expect no more from others than the treatment of one aspiring to uphold the American ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and to substantiate the truths of Christianity, that together we may sing, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," and where the Stars and Strips wave to keep the Grand Old Flag from trailing in the dust.

"Thanks be to God for those Southern laymen and Northern laymen and the philanthropists and clergymen who are entering 1926 with the Negro with a desire to help make right and correct what has been wrong in the treatment of him in the past. Thanks to our local press and church for a decided stand to give the Negro an American chance to fill a man God has for the Negro, in His universe and for the United States of America."