

# TWENTIETH CENTURY NEGRO LITERATURE

OR  
A CYCLOPEDIA OF THOUGHT  
ON THE  
VITAL TOPICS RELATING  
TO THE AMERICAN NEGRO

BY  
ONE HUNDRED OF AMERICA'S  
G R E A T E S T N E G R O E S

EDITED AND ARRANGED  
*and illustrated*  
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ness qualities of the pulpit. These beautiful edifices exert a refining and uplifting influence upon the lives of men.

The spiritual power of the pulpit—this is the chief power that it is expected to wield in the world, for its mission is spiritual, and this great fact should ever be remembered. Our deepest needs are of a spiritual nature, and the pulpit offers to supply these deep-seated needs and to assist us to rise to the rank of “the sons of God.”

The Gospel is the divinely appointed means to elevate men in Christian character. The promulgation of the Gospel and the exhibition of practical Christianity are the essential elements to an onward and upward progress.

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#### FOURTH PAPER.

#### TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE NEGRO PULPIT UPLIFTING THE RACE?

BY REV. I. D. DAVIS, D. D.

The influence of the Negro pulpit on the race is immeasurable. It is to the race what the lighthouse is to the ship laden with human souls upon the tempestuous sea. At the close of the war when the Negroes were in darkness, the Negro preachers were the first to come forward to lead them to the light, and whatever may be said to the contrary, the Negro preachers have done more for the Negro's uplift since his emancipation than any other class of persons. We delight to boast that the Negroes pay taxes on \$400,000,000.00 worth of property, that they have thousands of well educated men and women, that their illiteracy has been reduced forty-five per cent, that they have hundreds of newspapers, that they have four hundred or more skilled physicians who are making good money, that they have hundreds of men who are engaged in business enterprises, that they have thousands of honest, sober, upright Christian men and women.

Now, to whom are we more indebted for all this than to the Negro preachers, who have faithfully taught their people to save their money and buy homes and lands, who have constantly advised them to send their sons and daughters to the schools, who have urged their people to patronize Negro business enterprises and Negro physicians and lawyers, who have shown their people the importance of taking Negro papers, who have enjoined them to be honest, sober, industrious citizens?



*Rev. J. D. Davis, D. D.*

## REV. I. D. DAVIS, D. D.

The subject of this sketch was born at Laurens, S. C., in 1858. His parents were Nelson and Sarah Davis. In 1870 Rev. Charles Thompson (a Presbyterian Missionary from the North) came to Laurens and began services in a part of the town known as "Tin Pot Ally." The first to be enrolled in his Sunday School was the subject of our sketch.

After Rev. Thompson left Laurens our little hero went to school to another veteran, Mr. Wright, who soon learned to regard him highly. The late Rev. D. Gibbs now took charge of the church, and our subject was the first to enter his Sunday School. While the Rev. Gibbs was boarding at his father's home, the seed of the Presbyterian ministry was planted.

He now entered school under Rev. and Mrs. McDowell, and began the study of the Shorter Catechism. A polyglot Bible was offered for the most perfect recitation of the Catechism, and he won the first prize. In 1874 he took the examination and won the county scholarship for the State Normal at Columbia. From this examination he was given a teachers' certificate and taught his first school in the country; at the close of this school he accompanied Rev. and Mrs. McDowell to Statesville, N. C., and in November Rev. McDowell had arranged for him to go to Biddle University, Charlotte, N. C.

He returned home every summer and taught. So acceptable were his services that scholars were offered to him and held until his return from school. In 1877 on account of failing health he remained out of school, and was chosen as the principal of the city school at his native home. He was always known as the "Mocking Bird" of Laurens. He was the chorister in Sunday School and church. Returning to Biddle University in the fall of 1878, was taken under the care of Catawba Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, and graduated with the degree of A. B. in 1881. In October, 1881, he entered the seminary of Biddle University, was licensed to preach the gospel in 1883, and was placed in charge of the Pleasant View Church, Greenville County, South Carolina, where he served so acceptably that he was desired as a settled pastor. In 1884 he graduated from the seminary, and was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry the next day after graduating.

He took charge of the work at Lincolnton, N. C., where he served six years and six months, conducting both church and school, and was then re-elected principal of the city school.

The new church at McClintock was built under his administration. He was chosen moderator of the Presbytery of Catawba at Monroe, N. C., and in 1887 was sent as a commissioner from Catawba Presbytery to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, which met at Omaha, Neb. In 1888 the degree of A. M. was conferred by Biddle University. In 1890 he accepted the call to Winnsboro, S. C., continuing in the church and school work here for four years very acceptably. In 1892 was sent as commissioner to the General Assembly at Saratoga, N. Y. In 1894 he accepted the work at Goodwill, Sumter Co., S. C., where he now serves the largest Colored Presbyterian Church in the United States. He administered communion to 2,000 communicants.

In connection with the church he has charge of the Goodwill Academy, with an enrollment of about 400 students. In 1895 he was chosen stated clerk of Fairfield Presbytery, which position he fills with accuracy and ability until to-day. In 1900 the degree of D. D. was conferred upon him by Biddle University.

He has been Moderator of Fairfield Presbytery and Atlantic Synod.

He is the secretary of the Sunday School Convention, chairman of the Committee on Vacancies and Supplies of the Fairfield Presbytery, and chairman of the Committee on Foreign Mission, Atlantic Synod.