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From John Park Crowens
(NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR)

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Russellville, Ark
(CITY AND STATE)

By me
(NAME OF SPECIAL AGENT)

To Be Returned Yes No

Receipt given Yes No

Description:

2 Co's leaflet
"The NEGRO PARSONS'
FAREWELL SERMON"

(4)

(1)

have here. And I hope and pray you take the ways of this beloved valley with you in your hearts, souls and minds, and you always live up to them. May the Lord go with you wherever you go. God bless you all my children. My Heavenly Master has been so good to me. He gave me life, and a normal body and mind, and no greater gift can be given. He gave me a home in this our beautiful valley, and the many friends and neighbors who have been so loyal, and good to me. And He has spared me to live a long life."

"My Heavenly Father has given me little money, and no diamonds and jewels, but he has given me riches that are all about me. To me this humble building we are now in has always been a palace, and the road from my home to it, and all the roads and trails over this valley are paved with gold. The wild flowers, the songs of the birds, the brooks and creeks, the waterfalls, the surrounding mountains, the voices of children in laughter and play, the growing crops, and the things that make up life in this valley, are precious jewels to me. I cannot enumerate the many good and Godly things of this valley that to me is an earthly paradise and brings joy to me. What can be more inspiring and impressive than some of the sunrises and sunsets of this valley I dearly love to behold."

"I know of no place better in which to find God than right here in this valley, but he can be found in the ghetto of a city, or any place if folks will just look hard enough for Him. Wherever you should go, take a Bible with you, and read some in it every day, and do not forget to pray. Too many of the Negro race are losing sight of God, and the same is true of the White race. The Bible is a precious jewel that all races of America should have in their homes from the lowest to the highest rank."

"I pray the Negro race of America will proceed cautiously, and conservatively, and not act too hastily in demanding civil rights for their race. There is a way for this to be handled so no harm will come to our race, or any other race and America, and that way is the Lord's way in which violence, riots and revolution has no part. Patience has meant a lot to the Negro race in the past century, and patience can mean a lot more. He who chooses haste and violence will surely destroy himself, and will do great harm, and injury to the cause of his people, and to his nation. Violence reduces the rank and power of his nation and makes enemies out of people of his land."

"When I leave this House of the Lord a few moments from now, and walk back to my home, I do not do this with a heavy heart. My road of life has been rugged, but I find happiness in knowing I have left behind me a clear and smooth trail for others to follow, and I have planted many flower and rose bushes on the way. I realize my voice will soon be stilled, but there will be another to take my place just as the songs of the succeeding generations of birds will go on in this valley like they have for thousands of years past. I hope the peace of this valley will be eternal, and as I slumber in my grave where for years I have helped bury the dead so dear to me, that peace will prevail, and nothing will mar the love, the brotherhood, the goodness, the tranquility and the ways of righteousness, and the Lord, in this our Valley of the Angels where there is peace and good will toward all men."

"Let not your ambitions be to seek too strongly after riches, and the material things of life. Such can be a curse to an individual, or to a race. A person had best live a short life full of hardships, and goodness and God, than a long life of ease and luxury full of hedonism, and the Devil. Let your life be as clean and pure as the air of this beloved valley in the coming of the clear dawn as the sun comes creeping over the mountains to cast its golden rays down upon our homes, and lands, and the wildfowl leave their roosts, and begin to sing their songs of appreciation for the lightening up of their world, and the wild animals stir from their homes thankful for the coming of the dawn."

"I love my land, I love my people, and when I die I want my funeral to be held at this church, and I want my casket draped with my nation's flag which to me is the greatest symbol in all things of the whole wide world today and all history. Now in conclusion I wish to pray my last prayer as your pastor."

"Oh Heavenly Father and Almighty Creator of all things, how glorious Thy Love, and How Great Thou Art. I am thankful to you Dear God to be your humble servant, and a minister of Your gospel for many years, and to be able to deliver this my farewell message to those who have been so faithful as members of this church, and in which we have been blessed, and several visitors who are my friends with an appreciation and a love in their hearts for me as your humble servant. I do not have the words to tell them and you the many things I would love to, and the tears flowing from my eyes speak messages of their own from my heart, mind and soul."

"Several of our Negro young men are away overseas fighting for their country as members of the armed forces of our nation, and dear God please protect them, and may they survive the battles, and may they return to their homes and families in this valley safe and sound. Oh Lord we know the pain and sorrow and grief, and broken hearts caused by the deaths in battle of our valley's sons who went away in past wars as members of our nation's armed forces, and are buried in our local cemetery."

"As thy humble servant my Dear Master I pray that there will be peace, in all the cities, and other places of our great nation like there is in this beloved valley, and there be peace on all the earth, and good will toward all men. Dear God, bless and save America." Amen.

Slowly Parson Ravenfane came down from the pulpit with his old Bible in his gnarled and feeble hands, and walked unsteadily to the entrance door. There as the congregation filed out one by one he shook their hand and said "God Bless You." The entire congregation had remained on the church grounds, and immediately after he had shaken hands with the last one, he started walking toward his home. When he had gotten a part of the way down the lane he turned and waved to those watching his footsteps, and great and loud cheers came from them. Then with a smile upon his face he turned and continued on down the road to his humble home.

Within a few months after Reverend Ravenfane preached his farewell sermon due to his health condition he had to become a shut-in, and a few weeks later one of his friends of the White race called at his home to visit with him. In the course of a conversation between them Brother Ravenfane said, "God loves all people of all races, and the colors of their skin has no bearing upon their treatment by Him. And God is in the little church of the wildwoods of this valley, the same as the churches and cathedrals of the cities of America."

A month later Parson Ravenfane passed away, and I often think of him as being a living example of a great and true American leader who stood for the right in all things. I think of how if the life's work and teachings of this humble man that has taken root as a vine of righteousness covering Angel Valley, could continue to grow and cover all of America, what a blessing to our nation and its peoples it would be.

John Park Cravens
March 24, 1968
Russellville, Arkansas, 72801
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THE NEGRO PARSON'S FAREWELL SERMON

— By John Park Cravens —

The congregation began to gather at the Negro folks humble combined church and school house located in the beautiful rural sector of a valley they loved surrounded by mountains, and inhabited by descendants of American slaves who had been given their freedom many years before.

The valley was known by the Negro people as "The Valley of the Angels," because of its rugged beauty, its forests, fields and streams, and its law abiding citizens, and their religious and peaceful attitude. Its folks had to toil very hard because they were farmers-stockmen combined with gardening, trapping, hunting and fishing. Irregardless of their humble homes and toil, and hardships, they loved life, and were happy, and satisfied with their lot, and were in no way prejudiced, and had no hate for any other race of people.

The focal point of the valley was the combination church and school house, a battered type of old building that in the pioneer days amateur carpenters of the Negro race had managed to build with their hearts in the work, if not the skill required for proper construction. The lack of money to pay for the paint prevented the building being painted, and its general appearance for many years has been a symbol of ruggedness, and humility, and a gesture by people who had heired the fruits of bondage, to recognize God in all His Glory, and to live their lives in accordance to the customs of Christianity, and the ways and teachings in their nation, and as they only know it.

The Reverend Lucius J. Ravenfane, recognized as the sage and leader of the valley, and known as The Parson, was a self educated man of many talents, and was born with a gift for leadership. For over fifty years Brother Ravenfane faithfully served as pastor of the church, and as the school teacher of the valley. The time had now come when infirmities had forced him to announce his retirement, and many people had gathered to hear him deliver his farewell sermon. It was a beautiful day, and practically all the folks of the valley were on the church-house grounds awaiting his coming. For sometime they watched the road he used, and by foot had trod over it from his humble home to the combined church and school house for countless times over half a century, to preach the gospel. Some of his White folk admirers and friends had come from a town many miles away to hear his farewell sermon.

"There he comes," exclaimed one of the church deacons, and everybody awaiting him looked down the road. They saw a man stooped from the toll of time who was very feeble walking slowly along with the burdens of his age, and long years of service bearing down upon him. But in his stride he showed he still had a pride, and a determination, and a spark of fire he had always had within him as a teacher and preacher, and a servant of his people for almost sixty years. His long white flowing hair made one think of a lion and its mane. His wrinkled and weather-beaten face, and his knarled hands showed the results of his toil besides his work as a teacher and preacher. Under his arm he was carrying his much worn old Bible just as he had done for many decades. As he ended his walk down the road there were tears in his eyes, but a smile upon his face. And those awaiting him, followed him into the church, and he soon began his farewell sermon. "Brethren and sisters, and children," he begun softly. "When I walked down the road from my home to this house to deliver to you this my last sermon, I did not walk alone. Jesus held my hand, and walked with me all the way just as He has in all the journeys and paths of my life for many years past. This my farewell message, I shall deliver to you now, is inspired by the Creator of all the peoples of all races, and is not only about the world of today, but the world of the past, and the future, and is about Gods Kingdom and His children. The subject I can only touch upon in a humble and small way, and only the Lord knows the many things covering it, but as His obedient servant I will do my best."

"I now stand before you as one of the many billions of creatures in His image that have been created by our Divine Creator since the dawn of time, and with your blessing I will use my forefathers, and my life as examples in bringing my message to you this beautiful day, and the last time I shall stand in this pulpit, and to you words inspired by Our Heavenly Father to whom I owe my life and everything dear to me."

"As you know time moves swiftly, and our days on this earth are numbered, and every generation has its day, and another moves in and takes over. Always remember as long as you walk with God you are safe from Satan. And the same is true about nations, and races and civilizations."

"Now let us go back to the beginning of me as an example of the Negro race. Far beyond this valley of my birth, the home of our American forefathers the last 300 years or more, and beyond the seas is that land called Africa that is known as the cradle of civilization, and is inhabited by races of peoples of various types. Some of the races were highly civilized, and had cities of culture, and some were in a barbaric state compared to the Indians of America and worse, and composed of various tribes with different dialects, languages and customs as were the peoples of Spain, France, Germany, Italy, The British Isles, and other lands, when they were barbaric."

"The greater number of our American Negro African forefathers raided and captured, and sold into slavery, were members of African tribes compared to those of American Indians of that day and age. The treatment of our African Negro forefathers was far more barbaric, and worse than that of the Indians of America who had the advantage of living and dying in their own land, and although discriminated against, they are recognized by the White race as the First Americans with racial social equality, and those of the Negro race are not. Our African forefathers were driven from their homes like so many cattle, and were sold into slavery as if they were animals, and taken in chains in ships under inhuman and Ungodly conditions across the seas from their native land to America where they had become the property and slaves of white people. And for over 300 years they had to live in this barbaric and bondage state until President Abraham Lincoln declared them to be free."

"During the centuries of American slavery by our African forefathers, the greater percent of the number of slaves were born in The United States, and all members of the Negro race of today, and their forefathers for the past three centuries, are native born Americans, and America is our heritage, and the only one we know. At the time our forefathers were set free, some of them were owned by, and were slaves of American Indians. Family ties, love, customs, and all things were as dear to our African forefathers as those of the American Indians, and the White peoples of America."

"Africa and other lands the home of the American Negroes forefathers of 300 to 400 years ago, means nothing to the American Negro of to-day, and we are a thoroughly Americanized race. And besides there are a great percent of the numbers of the American Negro race who have white blood flowing in their veins, and the laws of heredity in this respect cannot be denied in its coming to the fore. Our American Negro forefathers, and their descendants, have had many influences and White and Indian owners and masters, and have meant much to its life and progress. They accepted the religion of the white man, and became Christians when their

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being slaves and in bondage was one of the greatest sins and injustices in all the history of civilization and Christianity."

"Since the great Emancipator President Abraham Lincoln issued his proclamation to free the Negro slaves, the barrier has remained between the white and black race, but this has greatly decreased down through the years. I say let there be peace, and let time and progress take care of what the Negro race of America deserves, and also what the underprivileged class of white people deserves, and let all races of America in seeking civil rights not resort to violence, but keep in touch with God, and be true Christians, and patriots, and united Americans, and have no hate in their hearts, and above all be patient, and let the pure water of liberty and freedom seek its own level in time, and in an evolutionary manner."

Slowly, with open hands, Patson Ravenfane raised his arms upward, and over his head "You see these arms of mine," he said, "In them is the flowing blood of my Negro forefathers who knew the terror and bondage of slavery for centuries, but thank God I was born free, and this valley in which we live is one of peace, and it is a far cry from those days when white slave owners owned the land. The cries of the slaves when they were beaten unjustly, and unmercifully are no more, and the weeping caused by the breaking up of families, and mothers being torn from their children, and children created by God in his inmost having to live in hell are no more. It took time for God to render His justice, but He surely did, and our slave forefathers were set free."

"Because of our patience, and our living close to God, this is a valley of peace and love, and in time greater and better things will come to us here of the Negro race, and the same will come to all the colored people of the cities, and the ghettos, and slums if they will have patience, and peace, and cause no trouble of any kind. It takes time to work out the many problems of a great nation, and its wheels of justice and operation turn slowly, and it is necessary that harmony prevails, and the Negro race cause no trouble as to civil rights, housing and other problems, less these steps forward for the race be delayed. Riots and revolution certainly will not solve the problems."

"Several hundred years ago the Indians lived in this valley, and it is possible some of their homes were located where this building now stands, and it may be on the site of a battle with an enemy tribe. The white man came, and made war upon the Indians, and forced them to leave for other lands, and took this beloved valley over, and used Negro slave labor to till the soil, and to do all kinds of work necessary in the agriculture operations, and the income derived from them. The Indians loved this land as we love it, and it was their home, and Indians in fighting for their homes, and their lands killed many white people, but the Negro had no chance to fight for anything, and the Good Lord in time in a peaceful way gave us colored children this valley for our homes, and only the graves of the white folks, and the Indians remain, peace be to their souls. Patience and time gave us of the Negro race this valley just as such will give to the Negroes of the cities a better standard of living in all manners and respects."

"When I was a boy I would search the fields, the forests, and the shoals of streams for Indian relics, and I would day-dream about their past, and in my mind would re-create their owners, and the valley as it was when they lived in it with no thought of their ever being driven from it by a race of people other than their own. Three races of people have lived in this valley, and it is now a valley of peace, and my hope is that it always be kept this way, and I want our great American nation as a whole to be kept this way, and I pray for peace, and harmony to always prevail, and respect for law and order to be foremost in the minds, hearts and souls of my race throughout our nation."

"Like millions of my race, I am a native born American, and I only know my country, and I have no ties to Africa or any foreign land. Our United States of America is the only home the American Negro of today has ever known, and all of our race love their homeland the same as the Indians loved this valley that was their home in the days of long ago. When you look at and consider the present day problems of life, you must not judge the things of life of now, but also those of the ages past that had its roles in the lives of your ancestry, and now has a bearing upon your lives. Hate and revenge and jealousy should have no part in any persons life or any race of people for another race. Some of my dearest friends are white folks, and I know of many members of both white and Negro races whose brotherhood and friendship has meant much to their lives."

"I say to you my Negro children of the Lord, do not forget that first you are Americans in all things, and the flag of our land is the banner of all races, and creeds of our Great Republic, and you must honor this flag that is our heritage. The twenty million Negroes of America cannot stand alone, but must live in peace and harmony with the other races that are far greater in number. Let us do nothing to defile and desecrate the names of those of our race who are now fighting and dying for America their country, and let the same be about the heroes of other races who are giving their lives in battle in foreign lands."

"When I was a child in this valley, I liked to gather wild flowers, and give them to my mother which brought much joy to me, and when I grew up it also brought to me much happiness to gather souls for the Lord, and members for this church. In this building now being used as a church, I have used as a school, and taught many members of this congregation, and your children and grandchildren, and generations beyond. God bless you, I love you all and I love all creatures of the Lord's creation. God forgets no people who do not forget Him. He moves slowly, and in mysterious ways, but He surely deals out punishment for man, woman, child and nation and all races for their sins. And good folks have to suffer for the sins of others, but the rainbows of life always come. What is more beautiful than a rainbow over this valley after the passing of a storm cloud and rain? The thunder and the lightning, and the roaring winds are the voice of God, and the darkness of the storm is the work of His hands, and so is the sunshine, and the glory and beauty of the good things of life that are far in excess of those obnoxious to us."

"When we take stock of this our beloved valley, and our lives let us look to the past of the world, and the future, the same as the present. The spirit of your forefathers cries out to you, and let not your thoughts, and your visions of life be of you alone, and those of this day and age, but from the beginning to now and on through to eternity."

"I consider this combined church and school building, and general meeting place of folk as a jewel in the heart of the valley as dedicated to Jesus Christ our Blessed Savior and His teachings. To God, it was only yesterday prehistoric animals were roaming in this, and surrounding sectors of the land. We are here today but gone tomorrow, and the ages will roll on, and the wild roses will continue to bloom, and there will be birds to sing their songs, and life will continue to go on, and God will continue to reign."

"Like many of you, I have several times in my life climbed up to Eagles Point the highest place in the mountains overlooking this valley to view the glorious scenes below me, and upon the horizon which are so awe inspiring, and seems to bring a person closer to God. This reminds me of the time I went to visit relatives in a big city several hundred miles from here, and they took me to the top of its tallest building. As I looked out over the city extending for miles, I saw the work of man in the vast construction, and it greatly impressed me, and in this I realized it was a part of the Glory of God the same as what I saw from Eagle Point that overlooks this valley we love so well. And I thought of

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how the Good Lord is in all parts of a great city, the same as this valley, and anybody can find Him there, and people of all races, for live true Christian lives no matter how humble the conditions in which they have to live, and they do not have to resort to riots, burnings and murder, and to become traitors to their country. I believe in time the living conditions of the downtrodden of all races of America will get much better if violence does not take over about it."

"As you know, we of the Negro race have the same sun, moon, stars, air, weather, and many other things the same as the white and other races. We have the same flag, and the same nation, and we have freedom of worship, and we are free to travel, and live where we want to, and I know we have racial handicaps that time and patience, and non-violence will overcome, and I know that a great percent of the white folks of our nation is in the same position."

"In this valley are the graves of the Indians, the white folks, and the Negroes, and I hope all are resting in peace. God meant that the people of all races of our entire nation live in peace with each other the same as the dead of this valley. Let there not be seen any bloody and dark clouds upon the horizon, but only those that have a silver lining that bring forth gentle rains that are followed with sunshine and rainbows. Let the eagles whose homes are on Angel Point, and other places overlooking this valley continue to fly high, and calmly in the skys above, and in peace as they have for thousands of years past."

"Let not God be defiled in any way or manner by any member of any race or creed, for any just cause, and patience and non-violence be exercised in letting righteousness take its course in the Lord's own way. God loves the weak, the humble, the meek, the pure in heart, and the lowly of all races, and colors, and they shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven according to His Word. And should any of them commit violence with the desire, and belief it will be of personal benefit to them, and their race, they are committing acts of sin, and hurting their cause."

"Let us live lives that will build to the strength, the glory and the power of our nation, and when the time comes the Golden Chariot sweeps down, and takes us away, folks can truly say your life was well lived, and your work well done, and you justly deserve eternal peace and rest. Let us live by the Ten Commandments, and never stray from the road of righteousness, and never do anything to wound the pride, and power and glory of our America, the greatest land of all history, and an honor to the Negro race to be a part of its citizenship, and who are native born and justly proud of it."

"As I look into the sky, and see the eagles flying in peace, and for above the troubles and tribulations of humanity on the earth below, it makes me hope and pray the time will come when on the earth and throughout all lands, there will be a brotherhood and happiness, and no strife, but harmony and good will prevail in all things of all races and lands. I know the Good Book says 'Man born of woman days on earth are few, and to make the most out of life as a true Christian. And one must take the words of the Bible as a whole, and not just a chapter or a few verses specially picked out so one can use them in beating around the bush about their wrong doings. If the scriptures in any way confuse you, all you have to do is read the Ten Commandments which all folks can understand, and if you will live up to them your heart and soul will be on the right track."

"Brethren and sister and children, I say to you, America is the Promised Land, and it is on the Road to Glory for all its peoples, and let none of the Negro race do anything to side-track it, because if we do we are just hurting our own selves. Let us not forget the blessings we have received the same as the sacrifices we have made, and the great costs of the white race in sacrifices in building our nation from a small land of oppressed people to the greatest and mightiest nation on earth you and me are a part of."

"I say to you my children, when the burdens of life get too heavy for you, go to the fields, the forests, the brooks, the streams, and mountains, and see the face of God in the open bloom of the wild rose, and not see the thorns of their face. See the handiwork of the Lord thy God in the trees, the waterfall and all things about you, and when night comes, and you lie down to begin your slumber, do so with a happiness and with no burden in your mind, heart and soul for anybody or any group or race with a sliver of a different color than yours."

"Flowing in the veins of all races of people of today is the blood of their forefathers back to Adam and Eve, and the story of this bloods path down through the ages is one of death, sacrifice, tribulations, sorrow, and many other things only God knows about. It was a miracle for you to be born, and for you to be the last link at the end of a long chain of life preceding your considering war, diseases, and the many things of life that brought death to the people of all races and lands of the many centuries of the past. The blood of the forefathers of all the inhabitants of the world of today, followed many paths in its flow, and we folks of the Negro race are fortunate it flowed to this valley, and you now sit before me as part of life, and as citizens of America, our Great Republic, and in a great percent of the twenty millions of the Negro race of the United States, flows the blood of other races besides the Negro race. There are countries of Europe, and Africa is not only the home of their ancestry. There are countries of Europe and other lands that are numbered among the various countries where your ancestors lived."

"On its staff near this house flies Old Glory our nation's flag, the emblem of the greatest land of all lands, and an emblem created by the spilling of blood, and of death and sacrifice of thousands of the past. I say to you with all my power may Americas flag fly forever, and more power to it, and let not the Negro race put any stains upon it."

"Soon after the close of The War Between the States, a Southern plantation mansion, a slave owners home in this valley, was struck by lightning and burned. Today all that remains of that home mostly built by Negro slaves who have passed away, is the rock foundations grown on in trees, and wild rose vines. My grandfather as a slave workman helped to build that mansion for his master, and when I was a boy I used to go to the site where it stood, and think of how wonderful it was for me to be free, and not be a slave like my grandfather was. In my make-believe imagination, I would talk to my grandfather, and the mansion stood before me as it did during those days of slavery. But like slavery it was no more."

"I say to you my sons and daughters of America, let you build the mansions of your lives so Gods wrath will in no way destroy them, and only the ruins remain to be forgotten except by a boy because of his joy, and reverence for his slave grandfather. I thank God for the privilege of being a Christian and an American. There was a time when it was dangerous to be a Christian, being true Christians should be the first things of our lives. I know there are a great percent of the number of Negro people of America who have no dignity in their birth, and they should not resent or hate such as judging by social and custom standards, and this is no sign they should not have dignity in their lives, and their deaths. When children of all races are born, they are creatures of God's own image, and in this alone is a dignity of birth that cannot be denied."

"As the years go by, there will be a number of you Negro folks move from this valley to places far away to make your homes. Some will move to over-crowded cities, and will be faced with many problems different from those we

AFTER FIVE DAYS RETURN TO

John Paul Conway,
317 S. Alameda,
Russellville Ark,
72801
ZIP CODE

To the Director,
Office of the Director,
Headquarters, The Federal
Bureau of Investigation,
Memphis, Tennessee, 38100

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