

Re: OT:Thanksgiving

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Cobol/comp.lang.cobol/2007-11/msg00567.html>

- *From:* "Pete Dashwood" <dashwood@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 30 Nov 2007 15:32:07 +1300
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<docdwarf@xxxxxxxx> wrote in message [news:fimmjs\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:fimmjs$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

In article <[ZMA3j.19766\\$K27.16492@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:ZMA3j.19766$K27.16492@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>, Judson McClendon <judmc@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

[snip]

Most early Americans fled oppression in Europe, and did not like the idea of a powerful central government here.

(The primary reason for the U.S. Civil War was to reverse this, not to free slaves, as is commonly thought. Freeing slaves was the tentative excuse, but not the reason.

Mr McClendon, several people have disagreed with this assertion... one of them was Alexander H. Stephens, who addressed this very matter in a speech he gave on 21 March 1861 in Savannah, Georgia, USA.

From <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=76>

--begin quoted text:

But not to be tedious in enumerating the numerous changes for the better, allow me to allude to one other – though last, not least. The new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution – African slavery as it exists amongst us – the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.

[snip]

The prevailing ideas entertained by him (Thomas Jefferson – ed) and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and

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politically. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with, but the general opinion of the men of that day was that, somehow or other in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away.

[snip]

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery – subordination to the superior race – is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.

--end quoted text

Slavery was 'the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution' and the corner-stone of the Confederacy was 'the great truth tha the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery – subordination to the superior race – is his natural and normal condition'.

So asserted Mr Stephens... who was the Vice President of the Confederate States of America. What would *he* know about the reasoning behind the Civil War, anyhow?

Thanks for that, Doc.

Like Judson's piece, I read it with great interest.

I was quite surprised by the revulsion that the last quoted paragraph evoked as I read it. Obviously, the world in 1861 was quite different from the world in 2007, and I don't doubt that Mr. Stevens was sincere in his belief. He was probably a thorough Southern Gentleman in every way, gracious to ladies, God fearing, and honourable in battle. We are complex creatures...

Sadly, I have encountered people in the US, even recently, who genuinely believe that Negroes are an inferior species and should be tended like cattle, as God requires us to take care of them. (Southern Baptist... although I'm sure (hopeful) not ALL Southern Baptists can believe this...). These are not wicked, evil people. (In fact some of them were kind, decent, and generous.) They are a product of their environment and we should just be thankful that environment is being eroded by education.

(In my opinion, it still has a way to go, but I am encouraged by the legal dismissal of "Intelligent Design" and such cases... I have no problem with people believing whatever they want to, until they get commands from God to suppress the search for knowledge and understanding and to believe that the "unchosen" are inferior and should be treated as such...)

Pete.

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"I used to write COBOL...now I can do anything."