

The Story of the Negro Retold,
by Carter Godwin Woodson and Charles H. Wesley.
1959.

CHAPTER XVII

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION ANALYZED

HISTORY AND THE NEGRO

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The Task of the Historian. This is the task of the historian. "The historian," one has said, "is the prophet looking backward." "Truth conceals itself in the details of human affairs, but becomes unveiled in the generalities of history." "Truth comes to us from the past, then, like gold washed down from the mountains." "We may gather out of history a policy no less wise than eternal by the compari-

son and appreciation of other men's forepassed miseries with our own like errors and ill deservings."

"History," another has said, "is the witness of the times, the torch of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life, the messenger of antiquity." "It is clarified experience." According to Cervantes, "History is the depository of great actions, the witness of what is past, the example and the instructor of the present, and the monitor to the future."