**CARVERISMS**

(Statements and sayings used by George W. Carver, 1861-64 to 1943)

J. H. Pickle, Jr., D. R. Chandler and E. Powell

- “You never saw a heavy thinker with his mouth open.”

- “There is no such thing as about right. It is either right or wrong.”

- “O! Sit not down or idly stand: There’s plenty to do on every hand. If you cannot prosper in work like some, you’ve at least one talent. Improve on that one.”

- “learn to do common things uncommonly well.”

- To one of his boys, Johnnie Pickle,“One has to be a master of things: Learn each lesson well, condense it, and then go back over this material as often as you a need to remember it. Once each year should be sufficient. You should then know many things intimately.”

- “Do you know what is inside this flower?”

- “Do you know what this plant is?”

- “Plant these in your dooryard. A flower is God’s silent Messenger.”

- “A good garden will free you from the plantation store!”

- “Mysteries are things we don’t understand because we haven’t learned to tune in and finding true faith in the Creator is solving the greatest mystery of all.”

- “A Negro can!”

- “*On Cigarettes –* If God had intended for the human nose to be used for a chimney, He would have turned our nostrils up.”

- “*On Cleanliness –* Your body is the Creator’s dwelling place. Surely you would not want a landlord who represents everything good to be seated in an untidy house.”

- “*On getting things done –* In back of my workshop there is a little grove of trees. One has been cut down, it makes a good seat. I have made it a rule to go out and sit on it at 4 o’clock every morning and ask the good Lord what I am to do that day. Then I go ahead and do it.”

- “*On opportunity –* There is opportunity enough for anyone prepared to do what the world needs done.”

- “*On preparation for life –* We must disabuse the people of the notion that there is any short cut to achievement. Life requires thorough preparation. Veneer isn’t worth anything.”

- “*On the value of the familiar –* Look about you. Take heed of the things that are here. Talk to them. Soon you will hear them talking to you.”

- “*On nature –* I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting system through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune Him in.”

- “*On death –* One of the things that has helped me as much as any other is not when I am going to die, but how much I can do while I am alive.”

- “I use chemistry in exactly the same way that a housewife uses a cook stove. It is only a tool to get the job done.”

- “The great Creator gave us three kingdoms, the animal, the vegetable and the mineral. Now he has added a fourth –the kingdom of synthetics.”

- “I believe that the creator has put ores and oil on this earth to give us a breathing spell. As we exhaust them we must be prepared to fall back on our farms, which is God’s true storehouse and can never be exhausted, for we can learn to synthesize materials for every human need from the things that grow.”

- “No individual has any right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it.”

- “I would rather live in a country where every man had a chance to earn a quarter of a loaf of bread, than one where a few fatten on whole loaves while the rest of us went hungry.”

- “I am not interested in science or anything else that leaves God out of it.”

- “The ground can only give back as much nourishment as the soil has in it.”

- “Plant these seeds and slips in your dooryard. A flower is God’s silent messenger.”

- Carver to Thomas Campbell a carver student and the first black Agricultural Extension Agent: “Our job is to make them want a cow, their job is to earn one.”

- Carver speaking to his students: “Do not let the world down and you will not let yourself down.”

- Carver speaking to his assistant, Austin W. Curtis, Jr.: “My boy, if you are researching, research, do not grope. It is in your formulae.”

**References:** (#, page)

1. Burchard, Peter Duncan, *George Washington Carver: For His Time and Ours,* George Washington Carver National Monument, 2005.
2. Edwards, Ethyl, *Carver of Tuskegee,* self published,1971.
3. Elliott, Lawrence, *George Washington Carver: The Man Who Overcame,* Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966.
4. Holt, Rackham, *George Washington Carver, An American Biography,* Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1943.
5. McMurry, Linda O., *George Washington Carver: Scientist & Symbol,*Oxford University Press, New York, 1981.