

THE ASSEMBLY HERALD

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PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

December
1908

Blow, bugles of battle, the marches of peace;
East, west, north, and south let the long quarrel cease;
Sing the song of great joy that the angels began,
Sing of glory to God and of good-will to man!

WHITTIER.

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THE ASSEMBLY HERALD

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
A. W. HALSEY, D.D., JOHN DIXON, D.D., WILLIAM H. SCOTT, Committee.

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* Syria's Response to the Presbyterian Church

Rev. F. E. Hoskins.

A Contrast

The contrast between the two lonely workers, Fisk and Parsons coasting along the shores of Asia Minor in 1820 looking for a resting place, and the Syria Mission in 1908 with its network of agencies is a striking one. During these eighty-eight years of its history it has developed from small beginnings in everything to one of the most complex and complete missions of the Presbyterian Church. Fifty years of its history was in connection with the American Board at Boston which once represented the missionary element in most of the American churches. Since 1870 it has been the mission arm of the Presbyterian Church in the Turkish Empire. Its field is the Holy Land of human history, the nexus of three continents, the birthplace of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Its people the most diversified in blood, tongue and religious faith of any mission field in the world of like size. Its friends the "pure in heart" from all lands and races. Its enemies the most formidable and implacable that have ever opposed Christianity,—the Jews, the persecuting spirit of the old Roman Empire and the living active foe of Mohammedanism. The Syria Mission has penetrated the central citadel of them all, touching the hearts of Jew, Turk and Moslem with its ministrations in the name of Christ; molding their intellects through the power of Christian education, speaking their language in every form of literature from the nursery rhymes to the most exalted treatises of science, philosophy and theology.

Condensed History

The outstanding facts of these eighty-eight years are the unbroken lifework of 150 American missionaries whose services within the Kingdom of God include the translation

* Foreign Mission topic for the month: Syria.

and distribution of the Arabic Bible; the production of a Christian literature in Arabic; the planting of the Syrian Evangelical Church; the development of an educational system; the founding of the Syrian Protestant College; with brilliant contributions to every department of Biblical geography, history and archaeology, all the natural sciences, medicine, theology and the philosophy of Christian missions. These constitute as honorable a record as God has given to any mission of the modern Christian Church.

The Syrian Evangelical Church

The growth of this church in the first fifty years of its life was exceeding slow, but not slower than was necessary under the surrounding circumstances. It cost great patience and great faith to keep it clear of the worldly policies which have marred and defaced the form of Christianity as reflected by the decadent Oriental Christian sects. Three native presbyteries with thirty-four organized churches are working along evangelical lines with the Bible, the pulpit and schools; their influence upon the life and reformation of the ancient divisions of Christendom is exceeding great, but the total effects of their leaving process will be known only in eternity. Every sect and religion in Syria is better today than they could ever have been without this spur and inspiration. A shrewd native friend said recently: "You Protestants are a small sect and a weak one (politically) but you have changed us all!"

Note the rugged faces of the pastors, preachers and teachers of one of the presbyteries which met during the past summer.

Cooperation

To a remarkable degree the Syria Mission has interlaced and interlocked with many great Christian enterprises other than our own

Board for Freedmen

EDWARD P. COWAN, D.D., SECRETARY.

The Christian Lighthouses of the Presbyterian Church

Rev. S. J. Fisher, D.D.

The traveler on St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea, as night comes on, sees a row of lighthouses along the shore of Wales and England.

Each has its own characteristic. One is fixed; another revolving; another intermittent, and others vary in coloring and changes. But all have a work of kindness and mercy, for they warn the sailor of the dangers of the shore, and protect from shipwreck, loss and death.

The Presbyterian Church has placed a line of lighthouses among the colored people, that they may be preserved from the dangers of ignorance, lust and sin. Through its Freedmen's Board it has established a line of boarding schools which are well calculated to warn the colored youth of life's dangers, and throw a light across the dark and treacherous ocean of a sinful world.

Beginning at Burkeville, Va., and ending at Mary Allen Seminary in Texas, it shows a line of well-equipped higher schools, where the light of Christian knowledge is ever shining. Going southward you pass from Burkeville to Danville, Va., to Oxford, N. C., to Franklinton, N. C., to Scotia at Concord, N. C., to Biddle at Charlotte, N. C., to Brainerd at Chester, S. C., to Haines at Augusta, Ga., to Gillespie Normal at Cordele, Ga., to Kendall Institute at Sumter, S. C., to Abbeville, S. C., with its Harbison College, to Rogersville, Tenn., with its Swift Memorial, to Anniston, Ala., with its Barber Memorial, to Cotton Plant, Ark., to Mary Holmes at West Point, Miss., to Crockett, Tex.

It is a glorious line of lighthouses, set up at the Saviour's command to protect this great mass of youthful travelers on life's ocean, and to help them to a safe voyage and their desired haven.

There are a hundred other lesser lights, small schools each of them shining as a light

in a dark place, and helping these boys and girls to escape ruin and death.

It is an inspiring task to one who traces on a map this line of lighthouses, as on a dangerous shore, to think what daily and yearly blessings they are producing, that hundreds of youth of both sexes are being taught right living, clean living, industry and purity of heart.

It will rejoice every man and woman who knows the dangers surrounding these boys and girls in their homes, in their associates, sometimes in their so-called churches, in the vices and passions of the human heart, that at the formative period of life so many are being reached and taught the truth as it is in Jesus.

It is a heart-warming thought that the noble and devoted teachers in these schools are holding up Christ's light; are telling these children the dangers of sin; are not only trying to sweep these hearts clean of sin, but fill them with Christ and a desire for usefulness; trying, in Chalmers' great expression, "The expulsive power of a new affection."

There are shipwrecks. All do not see or heed the light. More lighthouses are needed. More schools are wanted to penetrate the darkness of regions where sin, superstition, ignorance and want are unreached by a single preacher of righteousness, by one Christian teacher. There are tens of thousands of Negroes unreached by our own, or any other true schools.

So these boys and girls by hundreds of thousands are growing up illiterate, Christless, exposed to impurity, idleness, vice and their fruits—ruin and death.

It is said that once when Xerxes looked out over his vast army and fleet, he wept to think that in a few years so large a number would lie dead on battlefields or be buried in the sea. Is it not a moving and saddening re-

flection for every patriot and every lover of mankind, and every intelligent person who knows the value of a Christian education and training, that in the Southland there are two millions of youth of school age who are illiterate, and who will soon be beyond guidance, influence and change.

Who will set up a new lighthouse on that coast? Who will help us to make the old more complete and far-reaching?

"Throw out the Life-Line across the dark wave,
There is a brother whom some one should save!

Soon will the season of rescue be o'er,
Soon will they drift to Eternity's shore.
Haste then, my brother, no time to delay,
But throw out the Life-Line, and save them to-day."

A careful observer in the South notices a great reduction in the number of rollicking banjo-thrumming Negroes. The need of self-support and the better ambitions have taken away the sense of irresponsibility from many. The *Farmer's Courier* of Darlington, S. C., published by Negroes, says:

"We reproduce the article from the Columbia, S. C., *State*, entitled 'Sunshine Darky,' because it makes interesting reading.

"The Sunshine Darky is not so numerous as he used to be. On the farm he is supplanted by the thrifty Negro who owns and operates his own farm. In the cities he is being supplanted by the Negro of education and business capacity. In the religious world he is being supplanted by the Negro who quietly sits in his church of modern architecture, and listens to sermons as full of thought and spiritual edification as can be heard in many of the best churches in the country. The Negro who hangs his bucket on the buckra gate and sings, 'You think I'm working, but I ain't,' is fast being put out of business."

December Collections

The suggestion of the General Assembly is that the annual contributions from the churches

to the cause of Missions among the Freedmen be taken during the month of December, except in cases where some other time is found to be more convenient.

In order that the good people who are asked to give to this needy cause may have some idea of the pressing needs of the work, attention is called to the fact that last year the Board suffered a loss in income of more than \$16,000, and not knowing how much the friends of the work might be disposed to contribute this year, the Board has adopted measures looking to the restrictions of the work within such limits as will avoid an embarrassing indebtedness at the end of the year.

Not wishing the work to fall behind, and not daring to plan for any expansion, the Board found it necessary at the beginning of the year to hold itself down to certain restrictive measures, until it could be seen whether or not the friends of the work were disposed to come to its relief in its time of need.

The restrictions are as follows:

First: In reducing expenses the curtailment is to be made as far as possible this year in real estate expenditures rather than in closing of schools or in the reduction of salaries.

Second: That no new schools are to be opened that will entail additional expense upon the Board.

Third: No additional teachers are to be employed in any of our schools at the Board's expense.

Fourth: No extension of any school term is to be granted this year beyond the time allowed last year.

Fifth: No salaries are to be increased over the amount granted last year.

Sixth: All congregations and schools occupying buildings belonging to the Board are to look after their own repairs as part of their running expenses.

We place these facts before the Church in this December number of the *ASSEMBLY HERALD* in the hope that when the Church realizes the situation the many pastors who are our friends will lay these facts before their people and secure from them a generous response.