

# THE ASSEMBLY HERALD

VOL. XV

MAY, 1909

No. 5

## Four Phases of Sabbath-school Work



Seeking the children in the back country settlements



Gathering for the first session of the Sabbath school



Church organized and chapel erected, developed from the mission school



Work for the improvement of Sabbath schools. A Sabbath-school Institute

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

# THE ASSEMBLY HERALD

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

## CONTENTS FOR MAY, 1909

<b>The Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work</b> — <i>Alexander Henry, D.D.</i>	189
Presbyterian Sunday-School Work .....	189
<b>The Board of Home Missions</b> —May Topic: "Porto Rico and Cuba" .....	194
Then and Now in Porto Rico. <i>By Charles Lemuel Thompson, D.D., LL.D.</i> .....	194
First Impressions in Porto Rico. <i>John Wythe Lewis</i> .....	196
The Unity of the Faith. <i>By the Rev. E. A. Odell</i> .....	197
Growth in Grace. <i>By Mr. Frank W. Gloeckner</i> .....	198
That They Might have Life. <i>By E. Raymond Hildreth, M.D.</i> .....	200
Among Porto Rican Hills. <i>By the Rev. E. S. Lheureux</i> .....	201
White Already to Harvest. <i>By the Rev. Arnold Smith</i> .....	202
A Contrast. <i>By Miss Ina F. Scott</i> .....	204
A Plea That Pulls. <i>By the Rev. J. Will Harris</i> .....	206
Cuba—A Study. <i>By J. Milton Greene, D.D.</i> .....	207
Young People's Department .....	215
<b>The Board of Foreign Missions</b> —May Topic: "Siam and Laos" .....	217
The First Laos Believer. <i>By Daniel McGilvary, D.D.</i> .....	218
Pages From a Physician's Notebook in Siam. <i>Dr. E. B. McDaniels</i> .....	219
Bangkok as Seen by a New Missionary. <i>Miss Bertha Blount</i> .....	221
The Prince of Nan and "Lord of Life." <i>Sarah Wirt Peoples</i> .....	222
Evangelistic Work in Chieng Rai Province. <i>By Florence B. Crooks</i> .....	223
Pitsanuloke—A Needy Field. <i>Dr. Carl J. Shellman</i> .....	225
The Laos Evangelist. ....	226
Obituaries—Rev. J. M. Irwin, Ph.D., Mrs. Emily S. Woodside .....	227
<b>The Board of Education</b> — <i>Joseph Wilson Cochran, D.D., Secretary</i> .....	230
<b>The Board for Freedmen</b> — <i>Edward P. Cowan, D.D., Secretary</i> .....	233
<b>The College Board</b> — <i>James Stuart Dickson, D.D., Secretary</i> .....	236
<b>The Board of Ministerial Relief</b> — <i>B. L. Agnew, D.D., LL.D., Cor. Secretary</i> .....	238
<b>The Board of Church Erection</b> — <i>Erskine N. White, D.D., Secretary</i> .....	240
<b>The Permanent Committee on Temperance</b> — <i>John F. Hill, D.D., Chairman</i> ..	242
<b>Officers of the Boards of the Church</b> .....	244

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## PRESBYTERIAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK

**T**HE growing estimation of the work of the Sunday-school must have impressed every one who is familiar with the facts.

On every hand the Sunday-school is being recognized as the most useful and influential agency of the local church.

It must never be regarded as an organization apart from the church, but as the church itself engaged in earnest and definite work.

Through the Sunday-school, the church is leading men and women to read and study the Bible as was never done before.

More than three-fourths of the additions to our churches are of Sunday-school scholars; more than nine-tenths of our church workers are trained in the Sunday-school.

The Cradle Roll, the Home Department, the organized Bible Class bring the church into sympathetic relations with the homes of those who are not church members, and open the doors of these homes to the pastor and Sunday-school visitor.

No wonder the Sunday-school is being called by some "The church's best field for work and best force for service."

It is a notable fact that pastors who at one time felt that they were too busy to have a part in the work of the Sunday-school are now devoting themselves to their Sunday-schools first of all, and allowing other interests to take their proper places.

It is one of the signs of the times that there are in some of our Sunday-schools more men connected with the men's organized Bible class than are to be found in the average Sunday congregation of those churches.

The pastors of these churches are finding that the Sunday-school is the best place to reach the men.

**The Sunday-school Board's Interest**

This is all of the deepest interest

to the Sunday-school Board. We realize that our opportunities and responsibilities are ever enlarging. It is our desire, on the one hand, to be of service to all of our Presbyterian schools; and, on the other hand, to carry the Sunday-school, with its opportunities for religious education, to the thousands of boys and girls throughout our land who are now without these privileges.

When we consider the fact that the religious education of the majority of the boys and girls of America depends upon the Sunday-school, we feel that no expense or effort can be too

great in order to improve the work now being done in our present schools, or to multiply the number of these schools.

Readers of the ASSEMBLY HERALD, especially those who are engaged in Sunday-school work, may be wondering how the Board is going to be able to help our Presbyterian Sunday-school workers. Speaking generally, there are three ways in which this can be done:



TWO MOUNTAIN BOYS IN ONE OF OUR TENNESSEE SCHOOLS.

# BOARD FOR FREEDMEN

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

## WHAT BECOMES OF THE CHILD?

By REV. S. J. FISHER, D.D.

“**H**E shall tell thee what shall become of the child.” I Kings 14: 3.

In a tobacco town of Virginia, with its busy factories, where men, women and children are employed, two little colored girls were born. Their parents were hard-working, partly educated and desirous that their children should grow up respectable and useful. The colored pastor of the Presbyterian church was wise and earnest, and active in his spiritual care and watchfulness. With his intelligent and sympathetic wife—one of those true products of Brainerd, Scotia or Mary Potter and others of our noble seminaries—he established a parochial school, into which he gathered the younger children of his congregation and community. Among these were these two girls of the same age, acquiring side by side the rudiments of an education. Childhood soon passed; the age of peril and temptation for all, and especially for the poorer classes, approached. The alert and thoughtful pastor, watchful for souls, guarding his lambs, knew the danger. He tried to awaken the respective parents to their child's need. But one family felt the lure of the wages the girl might obtain in the tobacco factory and feared the loss and expense if an education at a distance were sought. They could not realize the critical time or the poison of companionship on the street. So their young daughter turned from this brief schooling to the contagion of work among the low and sensual.

The other family trusted the guidance of their pastor, and though they could not altogether comprehend his wisdom, were willing to have him interest their daughter in a higher education and sacrifice their comfort that she might pursue her studies at a boarding-school. There she learned

from Christian teachers more than the books give, more than a quickened mind. She saw true ideals, Christian graces, cleanliness, truthfulness, a love of purity, the presence of God; and slowly she realized what is the best and noblest life, and what a Christian home means. In these sheltered years she had time to learn of virtue and godliness, and when she returned to her home it was with a horror at vice, a pity for the ignorant, a desire to be of use and blessing to her people. She was fit for work, fit for church life, fit for motherhood, fit for life's battles.

And what of her childhood friend? The streets of such a town in the long evening are no help to refinement or virtue. The companionship of the vulgar, coarse and often vicious is contaminating. The devil is as alert in those busy little towns as he is in the lighted streets of a great city, and a poor home and limited pleasures are slight barriers to the tide of sin. Every intelligent colored pastor dreads the street companionships, the rude amusements, the roaming life of the children in the evening in the town. And he longs and prays that each girl and each boy at the critical periods of life may be placed where morality and refinement and intelligence shall have a chance to mould and fix a character in such a degree of purpose and righteousness that these youth shall be conquerors over vice and false pleasures.

This is the great need and opportunity of our boarding-schools. They crown and complete the parochial school, not in education merely, but in character building, in the formation of true ideals, in the impression of real virtues and strong resolutions, and sheltering for a time the immature and susceptible and pliable young hearts from the

polluting contact with the street populations. You, fathers and mothers, who have enjoyed and are enjoying refined and beautiful homes, you who have lived for generations amid noble restraints and in a careful segregation and separation from vicious companions, you who watch over the grammatical accuracy of your growing child more carefully than thousands do over the health of theirs, you who shudder at the thought of your dear, sweet daughter walking unattended after nightfall, can you not realize the dangers which surround the children of the negroes in the streets into which they so readily and surely stray?

If the Presbyterian Church had done nothing more than develop such parochial and boarding schools it would have done a mighty work for this race in purity and

true living. And to-day, if we had a hundred such seminaries, each with its ten-score of pupils, taught by such earnest men and women as are now devoting their lives to this great task, we should be doing no more than is needed, but we should be certain of more hearts won to Christ, more lives made complete, more homes made pure and true, more children rescued from evil, and more young men and maidens made clean and useful and influential guides and leaders for their people. And you, traveler in the South, be not surprised if you see unkempt, dull-eyed, rude girls loitering along the streets. Think of their homes. Think of the need of true pastors and Christian training. Think how few have parents alert to their need or wise to give them the protection at life's critical time.

## HOPEFUL VIEWS OF THE NEGRO PROBLEM

By REV. S. J. FISHER, D.D.

A recent number of the *Nation* contains an article on the Negro Problem which has so much that is encouraging that we quote a portion. The writer says: "Although Abraham Lincoln the emancipator is now less spoken of than Lincoln the man of the people, the statesman and the President, there must be many thousands of people whose minds have turned to the extraordinary progress of the American negro since Lincoln struck the shackles from his limbs. An illiteracy cut from 95 per cent. in 1865 to 87 in 1870, and in the three decades between 1870 and 1900 to something over 40; the ownership of vast tracts of land; the invasion of the industries and professions—these things would strike with amazement those who gave their lives for the liberty of the slave, could they but see the results of that great sacrifice. For to most Northerners in 1860 the negro was a mere beast of burden; often, as in the case of the Sea Island blacks among whom the first negro regiment was formed, but little changed from African

habits of thought and life; always pitifully ignorant and ragged; and, often enough, with lash-torn flesh and mutilated face." Then alluding to Lincoln's great hopefulness under discouragement, and quoting his words in 1856, when there was much to cause faintheartedness, "Under all this seeming want of life and motion the world does move, nevertheless," the writer goes on to say: "Not even Lincoln himself, however, would be so optimistic as the latest student of our negro problem, Sir Harry Johnston, the African traveler and historian of African colonization, who has just contributed six articles on 'The Negro in America' to the *London Times*. In his summary of our perplexity he says, 'While we are theorizing on this side and on that, predicting one extreme solution or another, in all probability the difficulty is gradually thinning out. In twenty years' time there may be no more need to discuss the color question in the United States.' If this view seems almost fantastic the standing of the writer, and