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THE
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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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OUR CHURCH, ITS BOARDS AND OFFICERS

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Collections for the Boards, Months, etc.

For churches that have not yet adopted the scheme of weekly offerings set forth in the Directory for Worship Chapter 6, it is recommended that the first Lord's Day of the following months be set apart for contributions to the Boards:

1. Home Missions, November or other opportune time; 2. Foreign Missions, January and April; 3. College Board February; 4. Sab.-School Work, May; 5. Church Erection, July; 6. Ministerial Relief, September; 7. Education, October 6; 8. Temperance, October 26; 9. Freedmen, December.

The money so received to be sent to the Board's Treasurer as designated above.

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NOVEMBER, 1914

Thanksgiving

W. P. WHITE, D.D.



ALL WILL probably agree that in no previous year has the nation had one such fervent cause for thanksgiving as at present. It is our freedom from the cruel barbarism of war now being experienced by the nations of Europe. Its awful effects in destruction of property and loss of life, in homes bereft, in widowed mothers and fatherless children will convince all, as it has Mr. Andrew Carnegie, "that we Americans should be the most thankful people in the world."

The feeling must be accentuated by recalling how in the early part of the year we trembled for a time upon the verge of war with a neighboring republic.

If thoughts of suffering humanity abroad at times saddens us, as it must, we may be gladdened by remembering that our God is on the throne of the universe and can make the wrath of man to praise him and may possibly through the present contention of nations find the occasion to henceforth make wars to cease unto the end of the earth.

As a people we have also great cause for thanksgiving that the labor of the husbandman, during the year, has given abundant return and that field and orchard and vineyard have yielded their bounteous store, to which has been added in great abundance also the products of the forest, the mine and the herd; that industries have continued to prosper and the factory and workshop and store have afforded to mechanic and artisan, salesman, saleswoman and clerk a means of livelihood, and that we have been saved from great disasters of fire and flood and epidemics of disease and wide-spread internal feuds and strifes.

Additional thankfulness may well be felt in the prosperity of the Church and the school during the year; that there has been no interruption in the preaching and teaching of the word and in the carrying of it to the ends of the earth; that nearly 100,000 have been added to the membership of our own Church from the ranks of the world and that many millions of dollars have been freely contributed for sustaining the work at home and abroad.

As there is added to the above causes for thanksgiving thoughts of the joys of the family and home and all the tender and blessed felicities of domestic and social life experienced during the year, there may well burst forth from multitudes of grateful hearts on Thanksgiving Day the chant of the Psalmist:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things."

clates this great work and supports it so generously. True as it is that the many opportunities and needs make the Board desire larger resources and still greater giving, it is cheering that so many Christians recognize their responsibility and take an increased interest in the development of this people in our land. Some friends of this race have feared a loss of interest—an increased prejudice—an indifference created by the entrance of other problems and a stronger materialism in our views. There is always a danger of such a decline, but it is evident from the support still given that there is a large number of the most intelligent and consecrated Christians who realize this is not a work of one day or two, and who will be faithful unto death.

We are grateful for the evidence of want and the requests for increased means on the field. A healthy man is full of true desires. A growing child is hungry. An institution without wants is a body without life or feeling. Schools ask for another teacher. Communities ask for school or church. Seminaries ask for another building. That is a sign of life. It is cheering, even if the Church through its Board must decline some and postpone others.

We are grateful that it is such a hopeful work. There are signs of promise—signs of growth everywhere. It is no easy task. No religious work ever is; no work of a high civilization ever is. Sometimes like Galileo in the cathedral at Pisa, we have to watch long and carefully the swing of the great chandelier to see if the world does move. But as visitors go to our schools and among this people and take wide views, they always are cheered, and like Joshua and Caleb are encouraged even if others think the giants are unconquerable.

It is a time of thanksgiving. Shall we not help others to be grateful? Shall we not spare from our comfort to cheer them? And for the troubled heart, poor Cowper's words are always suggestive:

"Have you no words? Ah, think again;
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill a fellow creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

"Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To heaven in supplication sent,
Our cheerful song would oftener be
'Hear what the Lord has done for me!'"

The Songs of Slavery

BY REV. S. J. FISHER, D.D.

Oh, strange and quaint are the slaves' sad songs,
Rising from hearts so weary and forlorn,
Sung in the twilight—where rude cabins shelter
Cheering the toiler 'mid cotton and corn.
Some flowers when bruised a rich fragrance yield.
Quartz that is smitten may flash with fine gold.
Chords that are stretched will ring with sweet music,
Hearts that are crushed, heaven's secrets unfold.
Listen! the slaves in their darkness are singing.
Listen! the dark lips seem touched from above.
Solemn and sweet floats the slaves' wondrous chanting
Chant of rapt hearts with their glimpse of God's love.

"Swing low, sweet chariot,—Comin' for to carry me home,"
Here 'mid earth's sorrow and awful injustice,
Here where no hope beckons where'er they roam.
Still do they dream of chariots so radiant
Flashing to earth to bring them safe home.
"Swing low"—for low are the hearts that are waiting,
Worn hearts and bodies God's chariot must bear,
Stoop to such rudeness, lift the tired toilers
Up from the slaveland to the angels' kind care.

"Send down dem golden slippers!" hear the cry
Of hearts that long to walk the streets of gold.
Feet that are sore with life's thorny way
Yearn for the ease and the comfort untold.
Feet clothed in beauty shall walk the fair city.
Limbs now so halting shall spring with delight.
"Lord, send down those slippers, give hope to our eyes
And help us to pass from this gloom to thy light!"

"Steal away, Steal away to Jesus!"
When the toll is ended, when the tasks are done,
Then the worn face brightens, at the day's long close.
This the song they're singing, and sweet peace is found
Softly seeking Jesus—for He knows.

No more the songs of slavery fill the evening air.
No more the weird, sad music floats across the field.
And yet the old, old longings rise and call
And still the same old truths their promise yield.
May those who sang such songs in a strange land
Give to the world a grander music still,
And touch the world's dull lips with nobler song—
The song of those who trust and do God's will.