

# The Assembly Herald

VOL. XIII

AUGUST, 1907

No. 8

## EPARTMENT OF CHURCH & LABOR :: :: :: General Object

To interpret the Church to workingmen, to interpret workingmen to the Church, and to interpret employer and employee to each other, through education, inspiration, mediation, evangelism and twentieth-century methods of Christian work.

## “Labor Sunday”

*By the Rev. Charles Stelzle, New York, N. Y.*

Just as Memorial Day and the several “Birthdays” show our appreciation of those who rendered patriotic service, and just as the Church’s holy days do honor to those who have served mankind spiritually, so Labor Sunday should be observed by the churches in honor of the millions of toilers who daily serve mankind in the humbler places of life.

As the result of an appeal made by the Department of Church and Labor through our local Presbyterian ministers, more “Labor” sermons were preached on the Sunday before last Labor Day than on any other single day in the history of the Christian Church. More workingmen attended church on that Sunday than on any other day since the advent of the modern trades union movement. On the following morning, which was Labor Day, the daily press in practically every city gave columns of space to the sermons, which were eagerly read by workingmen who would natu-

rally be interested in knowing what ministers had to say with regard to their problems. The favorable comments of the labor press of the country indicated that the impression made was good. In several cities the labor editors secured entire sermons from the pastors, printing them in full. Literally millions of leaflets were sent out among workingmen on that day.

Central Labor Unions passed resolutions to attend church in a body. In many cases they met in their halls and marched in procession to the churches. Preachers were invited to repeat the address to local unions. Invitations were received to come to the shops for noon-hour meetings. Special workingmen ushers and special workingmen choirs assisted in the service. For the first time some Christian workingmen came out in their shops as church members as they invited their fellows to the “labor meeting” in their churches. Some ministers discovered the great opportunity they had been missing, in mingling with the men in the shops, the mines and the mills. Many were

\* The Home Mission topic for the month is Our Workingmen.

# Board for Freedmen

EDWARD P. COWAN, D.D., SECRETARY

## The Negro and the Presbyterian Church

*By W. H. Franklin, D.D., President of Swift Memorial College, Rogersville, Tenn.*

The Freedmen's Board represents a race which less than a half century ago emerged from more than two hundred and fifty years of abject slavery. It represents a race which substantially occupies the same geographical location with the same neighbors and the same environment which obtained in their servitude. It represents a race whose enslavement was once regarded as absolutely necessary to the well-being of their owners. It represents a race whose emancipation was bitterly opposed and resisted unto blood. It represents a race which has been handicapped by custom, by society, by legislation, by public sentiment, and by irresistible power. It represents a race which has been discriminated against in both Church and State. It represents a race whose physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual status strongly appeal for aid and sympathy to the Christian, to the philanthropist and to all friends of humanity. It represents a race that must be made a blessing or a curse to this great nation of ours.

But there is another side, and to my mind a most significant side. The other side represents what the race has achieved through the help of the Freedmen's Board and like agencies. It represents what it has been enabled to accomplish by its own efforts, and the sympathy, co-operation and help of all individuals and organizations friendly to the race. Let the facts speak for themselves.

In less than a half century this race under the most trying and adverse circumstances has produced ten thousand blacksmiths, fifteen thousand masons, five thousand shoemakers, twenty-one thousand carpenters, dressmakers, one hundred and fifty architects, two hundred typewriters, five hundred book-

keepers, four hundred stenographers, two hundred electricians, four thousand musicians, ten thousand engineers and firemen, one thousand lawyers, two thousand physicians, over five hundred editors and authors. The race operates more than seven hundred and forty-six thousand farms and possesses twenty-one per cent. of them. It has more than four millions engaged in gainful occupations. It operates banks in Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi and other States. It has accumulated more than five millions of dollars. It has scholars representing the leading colleges, universities of Europe, England and America. It has graduates from industrial and technical schools of the highest grades. It has over thirty thousand teachers and professors and many principals and presidents of colleges and universities. It has many thousand ministers and churches representing millions of dollars. Nearly half of the race are professed Christians.

These facts speak for themselves and show that the race has not been altogether idle: that it has not confined its labors to the common work of life, but it has representatives in the trades and the professions, in business, in commerce, in science, and in all the useful occupations and callings of life. They should plainly and convincingly declare the capabilities and possibilities of the race.

The following enumeration will show what the Presbyterian Church has done, through its Freedmen's Board, to produce the marvelous result. It has through its Board established three hundred and sixty-nine churches, with a membership of twenty-two thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, and twenty-one thousand seven hundred and six in their

Sabbath-schools. It has founded and carried on one hundred and ten schools of low and high grade and has taught thirteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-six pupils in them. It has educated and trained two hundred and twenty-two ministers and three hundred and thirty-two missionary teachers to conduct their church and school work. It has given instruction and training to thousands besides in the Bible, in the Westminster Catechism, in domestic science and in industrial and practical duties of life. If you add to these facts the silent, the potential and dynamic influence going forth from them, you will have some conception of what has been accomplished by your Board for the race. While it is not commensurate with your ability to do for the race, it is an achievement of which any organization might well be proud.

But the problem produced by the presence and condition of the race in America has not been solved. The work accomplished, the progress made, have been marvelous. Unmistakable steps in the direction of the solution of the problem have been taken. I do not despair concerning the solution and completion of the huge task. The work which has been so grandly and successfully carried on so far may be hindered and delayed, but it can never be arrested. The vindication of the justice and righteousness of God and the confident faith of his followers will appear in its completion.

Much has been said about the difficulty of the problem. Various methods have been proposed to solve the problem. Because some of the methods have failed some have been disposed to despair and to become discouraged. They have produced more or less of indifference and neglect. But in my judgment the reason why some methods have failed is because they were radically wrong. They sprang from wrong motives; they aimed to accomplish unrighteous purposes.

This problem cannot be solved by wicked discrimination. It cannot be solved by suppression of natural and confessed rights. It cannot be solved by arbitrary legislation. It cannot be solved by Jim Crow laws. It cannot be solved by lynch law. It cannot be solved by segregation. It cannot be solved by expatriation. It cannot be solved by extermination. It cannot be solved by oppression and

injustice. All of these methods have failed, and are bound to fail, because they are wrong in principle and demoralizing and destructive in application.

Permit me to remark that the Presbyterian Church, while it has not been perfect, did not make a mistake in undertaking this problem. It started right at the first. It began with the only rational conception, the right kind of principles and the right sort of methods. It took the right view of their duty to God and to their fellow beings in great distress and need. It recognized in him the "creature" debased and degraded, to whom the Gospel was to be preached. It saw that the dark and benighted African at their door needed their attention and help as well as in far-off Africa. It seized its God-given opportunity and went forth to discharge its duty.

The Presbyterian Church took the right view of the Negro as a man. It looked upon him as a man even if he were black. It rightly considered that he had retained his humanity. That he had all the attributes which belonged to other men. That servitude had not robbed him of his ability to feel, to think, to know, to reason. That he came forth with like feelings, desires, tastes and choices as other men. That bondage had not destroyed these essentials in them any more than it had destroyed them in the cultured Greek, the proud Roman, the haughty Anglo-Saxon, who in their turn had been slaves.

They had been greatly degraded and debased, but they were still men. They were still human beings, still capable of being restored to true manhood and womanhood and the glorious image of God by the preaching and application of the Gospel of Christ.

It therefore established churches, built school houses, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, commissioned their consecrated sons and daughters and whosoever would to preach the Gospel, teach the Bible and the Catechism, and to give instruction to thirsting minds. Those consecrated men and women went and helped at a time when help was absolutely necessary. They were God's pioneers in a noble and far-reaching work. They by their labors caused the dark cloud of ignorance and superstition which had mantled the race for centuries to uplift and recede and let the light of God's truth and Spirit flow in upon

their minds and hearts. They have ushered in the dawn of a day which is to grow brighter and brighter until it shall reach meridian splendor. The Presbyterian Church took the right view of his capabilities and possibilities. It had faith in his ability to become something and to do something. It believed that the hands which had done so well in slavery could do better in freedom. That the mind which had said so many wise things without cultivation was capable of development in the school room. That the conscience which had been so grossly perverted could be trained to respond to right motives and good impulses. That the soul which had been so sadly misguided and neglected in bondage could be resurrected and restored to its Redeemer. It believed that his hands could be taught to do skilled labor, his mind to think and reason on the great problems of life and his soul to glorify God by living a righteous life. In short, it believed that he had in him all the elements essential to fulfil the end of his being.

In proof of its faith it not only established schools for his training, but opened wide the doors of all her institutions and bid him enter. It threw wide the doors of the Church of Christ and said, "Come in and worship with us. It is God's church, and it is your church through us if you will have it."

Time has vindicated the principles and the policy of the Presbyterian Church, notwithstanding the slight changes which have taken place. The soundness and wisdom of its course became more convincing and apparent in the trend of affairs and in the light of recent events. It took the awful Atlanta riot to teach the lesson with which the great Presbyterian Church had begun. It took that dreadful event to awaken the thinking and conservative men of the South to the fact that the only way to deal with this ugly problem is to go back to the eternal principles of the common Fatherhood and brotherhood of man, of right and justice, of truth and holiness. Such men as ex-Governor Northern of

Georgia are now willing to adopt your principles and policy in the main. Even the secular papers of Atlanta have declared that the Gospel treatment of the Negro is the only possible solution of the situation.

They thus bear testimony to the justice and righteousness of your principles and the means which you have adopted for doing your part of the great work. The rest of the world shall succeed in solving the problem in proportion as they follow right and just principles. They have the assurance of final success. They who find the right trust in God and do the right cannot fail. The right will continue to recur until matters have been decided in harmony with right and justice.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;  
The eternal years of God are hers."

I think that there is every evidence that the principles and plan adopted by the Board accord with the mind and purpose of God. The Church has but followed the dictations of his Spirit and the guidance of the Divine providence in its conception, undertaking and work. They who have followed in the only right way have only to listen to the voice of God which speaks to them in the silent chamber of their hearts, "Ye shall reap if ye faint not." "Be not weary in well-doing." "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for all the multitude that is with them: for there be more with us than with them; with them is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles."

To succeed in the solution of this problem then is to persevere in the plan and way of God. To succeed is to follow the way which has been adopted and pursued thus far by our grand old Presbyterian Church. It is on the right road, and if it turn neither to the left nor to the right, but goes straightforward with its well-begun work, a glorious success awaits her.