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I. Literary.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

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I SUPPOSE most of us would say the Sabbath-school had its origin in the work of Robert Raikes in 1781, in Gloucester, England. Moved by the need of the poor and ignorant children, he employed "four decent, well-disposed women" to gather and teach these boys and girls; for this labor each received a "shilling a week." He is called, therefore, "the founder of Sabbath schools."

But this is true only of the modern work. Raikes was unwittingly restoring the "old paths." He was undoubtedly led of the Spirit of God to bring the church back to God's statutes, in which he had commanded Israel to teach his laws to their children. Dr. Trumbull, in his lectures on the Sabbath-school at Yale, shows conclusively that in each synagogue there was a school for the young. Philo states that "the Jews were by parents and teachers instructed in the law from their earliest youth." Josephus corroborates this by showing it was not new in his day. About 80-70 B. C. Simon ben Shetach reestablished the system of schools in every synagogue in all Palestine. Edersheim states that "there is no reasonable doubt that such schools existed in all the synagogues, and that up to ten years of age the Bible was the only text-book." There was also such a school in the temple. In this Jesus was found asking and answering questions when twelve years of age.

SABBATH SCHOOLS AND THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. A. L. PHILLIPS, D. D., GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SABBATH
SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.

FORTY YEARS' WORK.

1861—1901.

DECEMBER 4, 1901, was the fortieth birthday of the Southern Presbyterian Church. It will be interesting and profitable to take a brief review of its work done through the Sabbath-school.

I. PRINCIPLES.

The principles on which the policy and work have rested may be found in many places in the Bible, as in Deuteronomy vi. and Nehemiah viii. If reference be made to the Confession of Faith, authority for such work may be found in Chapter XXV. 3 and Chapter XXVI. 1. Explicit teaching on the subject is given in Paragraph 67, where these words occur: [It is the duty of the session] "to establish and control Sabbath-schools and Bible classes, with special reference to the children of the church;" and in Paragraph 148, "The church should make special provision for the instruction of its youth in the doctrines of the Bible as set forth in the Catechisms. Hence, church sessions ought to establish, under their own authority, Bible classes and Sabbath-schools for this object, or to adopt such other methods as shall secure the same end." In the Directory for Worship, Chapter VII. is given entirely to the Sabbath-school, setting forth the nature of its exercises, the duties of superintendent and teachers, and declaring that all should attend its services.

II. POLICY.

With these distinct principles in view, the church has proceeded to develop its policy.

Up to 1861, of course, the Presbyterian Church *Prior to 1861.* had but one policy. From the very beginnings of Sabbath-school work in the United States it had taken an active and influential part in all that was done. In

1816 the General Assembly "recommended that in all our churches, classes be formed of the youth to recite the Scriptures in regular order" "as often as once a week." The work went steadily on, gaining in numbers reached and in power for good as the years went by. Organization became more and more effective, and the literature better adapted to the wants of teachers and pupils alike. In 1865 there were reported a total of 276,355 scholars, of whom 163,574 were Old School and 112,781 were New School.

As shown above, both the Form of Government and Directory for Worship make explicit statements as to the nature and purpose of the Sabbath-school. As the work grew in the church the idea underlying it also grew. At first the young of the church were specially held in view. On the part of many there seemed to be an idea it was "intended to do the parents' work." But the Assembly of 1870 said it "is simply an assistant to the parent in the religious instruction of the child." In 1871 the Assembly said: "The Sabbath-school should ever hold forth this as its distinctive and great mission—to present Jesus Christ to the youthful mind so soon as it is capable of receiving knowledge." All classes are to be included in its beneficent work, and the Assembly of 1873 directs that schools be established "for the colored population in all instances, to be conducted by superintendents appointed by the session." That all ages are to be included is set forth by the Assembly of 1880 in saying "that the Sabbath-school is not something apart from the church, but the church, old and young, studying the Bible." This bringing of all classes under its influence is further set forth in Chapter VII. of the Directory for Worship in providing that "the whole congregation be engaged in Sabbath-school work, either as officers, teachers, scholars, or visitors." Bringing great emphasis to bear on this subject, the Assembly of 1888 declares "that the Sabbath-school is nothing more nor less than the church, the whole church, studying the word of God."

2. *Organization of the Work.* In order that this policy might be carried out, and this ideal attained at least in some measure, the Assembly from the date of its organization committed this work to the care of the Executive Committee of Publication. The distracted

state of the churches during and immediately following the civil war made vigorous efforts to reduce the work to a unified plan and harmonious practice exceedingly difficult. The whole business of the South was practically prostrate. As soon as seemed practicable the committee began the work of organization. The Assembly directed the Synods and Presbyteries to appoint committees to look after the Sabbath-school cause, itself appointing a separate standing committee in 1869, and in 1870 it directed "those Presbyteries which have not already done so, to appoint executive committees to take the oversight of the Sabbath-school work in their bounds." These presbyterial committees pushed the work along with varying degrees of intelligence and vigor. From time to time the Executive Committee of Publication brought before the Assembly suggestions and plans for new work. In 1880 the Assembly said: "In view of the fact that fewer presbyteries report this year than last, and for the more thorough and systematic organization of the Sabbath-school work, we recommend that our Presbyteries appoint each a Superintendent of Sabbath-Schools, or a permanent committee, whose duty it shall be to promote the Sabbath-school work." For some reason very few Presbyteries ever appointed such a superintendent, but they did generally appoint permanent committees. In 1887 these superintendents were directed by "correspondence and, if may be, visitations, to ascertain the condition of the schools, stimulate the diligence of those in charge of them, and prepare the reports to the Assembly." For several years there was a growing sense of the imperative need of more careful and direct supervision. The effort was being made to educate and stimulate the *individual school* in respect to its organization, its government by the session, its equipment with our own literature, its benevolent contributions, its use of the Bible and our standards, and its methods of work. For this purpose a demand sprang up in the church from individuals and from at least one Presbytery. In 1891 the Presbytery of North Alabama overtured the Assembly to appoint a "General Superintendent of Sabbath-Schools." This the Assembly declined to do, because it would "require a greater outlay than the funds justify," and directed the Committee of Publication to endeavor to do the work asked for "in connection

with the work of colportage." In 1892 the Committee of Publication reported that it "was unwise to entertain the question of the appointment of a General Superintendent of Sabbath-Schools at the present time, especially in connection with the colportage work," in view of the necessity of retrenchment. But the Assembly repeated this year the instructions of the previous year, and so the idea grew from year to year. In 1894 the Assembly appointed an exceedingly able committee to meet *ad interim* to consider and report "whether or not the time has come to appoint an agent or secretary of Sabbath-schools," and "the condition and needs of the Sabbath-school cause in our bounds." The report submitted by this committee was full in detail and of the greatest value. It is a cause of deep regret that it has been lost. Under the inspiration of this report the Assembly of 1895 overtured the Presbyteries as to whether the "time has not arrived to employ a General Secretary of Sabbath-Schools." The next year it was reported to the Assembly that a majority of the Presbyteries "voted against having a Sunday-School Secretary." At the same meeting the Assembly ordered "that the Executive Committee of Publication be directed to provide for the salary of the Special Superintendent of Sabbath-Schools and Colportage; and to aid in his support, the committee is hereby authorized to appoint a rally-day and ask a collection in our Sabbath-schools each year." In 1897 the Assembly took no action on the subject, because the Committee of Publication reported in effect that they had failed to find a suitable man, that the churches had failed to respond financially, and that many Presbyteries disapproved of the appointment. In 1900 the Assembly adopted the following: "The matter of employing a man who shall devote his entire time to the development of our Sunday-school, Young People's Society and colportage work, the salary and expenses of this office to be paid from the Sunday-School Day collections, is submitted to the Presbyteries for approval at fall meeting, and if a majority of the Presbyteries approve of the institution of said office, the Committee of Publication be, and is hereby, authorized to place such a man in the field, provided sufficient funds are raised by the Sunday-schools and Young People's societies to meet expenses of such office." The Executive Committee of Publication reported to the Assembly of 1901 that a "decided majority of

the Presbyteries approved the institution of the office," but that Sabbath-School Day had not yielded enough money for his support. They recommended that the Assembly elect a General Superintendent, and nominated for the office Rev. A. L. Phillips, D. D., of Nashville, Tenn., and at the same time proposed the following method for organizing his work:

"There shall be instituted a department of church work known as the department of Sabbath-schools and Young People's Societies;" "under the oversight and control of the Executive Committee of Publication;" to be "conducted by an official to be known as the General Superintendent of Sabbath-schools and Young People's Societies"; for the support of which a collection is to be taken in all schools and societies on the first Sabbath of October, which will also aid in "any Sabbath-school mission work that may be undertaken in connection with it." "It shall be the duty of the General Superintendent to secure as far as possible the better organization of the work in the various Presbyteries by the appointment of presbyterial superintendents, by the holding of institutes, by promoting the formation of normal classes, by the introduction of our own Sabbath-school literature, and by any other practicable methods; to organize and prosecute Sabbath-school mission work in such destitute fields within our bounds as may in the providence of God be opened to such effort; to report annually to the Executive Committee of Publication, to be transmitted to the General Assembly. This report shall embody the statistics of Sabbath-schools and Young People's Societies, and the stated clerks of Presbyteries are hereby directed to place their statistical reports on this subject in the hands of the General Superintendent by the 1st of April of each year." (Minutes, 1901, pages 85, 86.)

The Assembly approved the plan as "provisional only, being dependent on the raising of the money for the superintendent's salary by the means provided herein for that specific purpose," but referred the election of a superintendent back to the Executive Committee with power to act. (Minutes of 1901, page 48.)

The Committee of Publication unanimously elected to this office Rev. A. L. Phillips, D. D., at its meeting in June, 1901, and appointed a sub-committee to confer with him about the work and his acceptance. July 12th he met the sub-committee

in Richmond, and after full conference accepted the office, his work to begin August 15, 1901. At the latter date he entered upon the work, and has continued steadily at it.

One of the most important elements of this plan of *Reports*. organization is the system of reports which it involves.

These reports are reports of the Sabbath-school superintendent to the session; of the session to the Presbytery; of the Presbytery to the General Assembly *and to the General Superintendent*; of the Synod's committee to Synod; of the General Superintendent to the Executive Committee, to be transmitted to the General Assembly; and, finally, of the Standing Committee of the General Assembly to the Assembly itself. Year after year the Assembly has called attention to the fewness and incompleteness of these reports. The church cannot afford to be satisfied until every school makes an annual report to the Presbytery, and every Presbytery to the General Assembly.

4. GROWTH OF POLICY.

When our church was organized there was no *Lesson System*. uniform system of lessons in use. In 1872 the International Sunday-school Convention adopted the great International Lesson System, which soon spread over the whole earth. In 1873 the Assembly referred the matter of adopting it for our own schools to the Committee of Publication, which promptly but urgently referred it back to the Assembly in 1894. At this time the Assembly declined to adopt the International Lessons, and directed the Publication Committee to "pursue the course hitherto followed in the selection and exposition of the Sabbath-school lessons." In 1874 this committee reported "the course originally adopted by the committee, and which has heretofore obtained the sanction of the General Assembly, is the study of a book of the Bible in its proper order in consecutive lessons. Matthew's gospel was presented on this plan, and also about one-half of Mark; and we are now drawing near the close of the Acts of the Apostles on the same method." In 1870 the Assembly said: "In all the schools directly under the control of our own church the Scriptures and the Shorter Catechism are committed to memory. The text-books used besides these are *Ramsey's and Smith's Questions*, and in some instances the *Child's Scripture Question Book*." In 1875

the Publication Committee reported to the Assembly "a great falling off in the circulation of our two papers. This has been caused chiefly by the refusal of the last Assembly to order the committee to adopt the International course of lessons." At this meeting, the Assembly adopted a plan of joint publications for the use of Sabbath-schools with the Reformed Church in America, which was already using the International System, and so the Assembly approved its adoption. Various means *Literature.* have been used for adapting this system to the different grades in the schools, and for this purpose the committee now issues the *Earnest Worker*, the *Lesson Quarterly*, *Primary Quarterly*, *Lesson Papers*, *Bible Lesson Pictures*, and *Lesson Picture Roll*. In answer to many *Lesson Helps.* requests for a journal to aid teachers, the Assembly authorized such a publication, and in October, 1870, the *Earnest Worker* was first issued, Rev. S. J. Baird, D. D., preparing the expositions and questions. To its columns the Publication Committee was advised by the Assembly in 1872 "to add a brief abstract of religious news." But in 1877 this provision was withdrawn, and ever since it has been "devoted exclusively to the exposition of Scripture lessons and other subjects promotive of Sabbath-school work." It now ranks among the best journals of its kind in the country, and has reached the substantial circulation of 240,000 copies yearly, under the editorship of Rev. J. K. Hazen, D. D.

In 1865 the Assembly appointed a "Committee on *Music.* Psalmody," and instructed them to prepare a "Hymn-Book which will be adapted alike for social and public worship, and for the use of Sabbath-schools." The church adopted in 1866 *Psalms and Hymns*. In 1872, under authority of the Assembly, the Publication Committee issued *The Voice of Praise*, for use in the schools, which was followed in 1875 by *Songs of Praise*. About this time the *Gospel Hymns*, as used by Messrs. Moody and Sankey, came to great popularity over the whole country, and were extensively used in our schools, and so continue to-day. In the fall of 1892 the committee issued *The Songs of the Covenant* for our schools, but for various reasons it has never been widely used. It is claimed by the compilers that the *New Psalms and Hymns* contain a large selection of music specially adapted to the use of our schools.

A general use of the book for this purpose will greatly promote the service of praise.

Papers for the Young. To Rev. R. McIrnis, of the Presbytery of New Orleans, belongs the honor of moving, on December 5, 1861, the second day of the first Assembly, that the question "of establishing a Sunday-school paper be referred to the Committee on Publication." In 1862 this committee reported to the Assembly that not being able to secure illustrations in Richmond because "most of the engravers were fully engaged by the Confederate Government, and many called to the army," they had contracted with the Methodist Publishing House, in Nashville, Tenn., to print the new paper, to be called the *Children's Friend*. This plan failed because of "the political misfortune befalling that city." The first issue of three thousand copies came from the press in August, 1862, and by 1865 had increased its circulation to about twelve thousand copies. After the fall and burning of Richmond, its publication ceased until January 1, 1866, during which year it was changed from a monthly to a semi-monthly paper. For a year at least the committee had the coöperation of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school Society of Richmond, which materially increased its circulation. Its circulation is now 1,120,000 copies a year.

Pearls for the Little Ones. In 1876 the Assembly said, "Information has been received that many persons have expressed a desire for the publication of an infants' paper," and authorized the Publication Committee to produce one, and the circulation of *Pearls for the Little Ones* is now 950,000 copies a year.

PRACTICE.

The School Itself. The Form of Government, Paragraph 67, explicitly charges the session "to establish and control Sabbath-schools and Bible classes." The same duty is set forth in *Control.* Rules of Discipline, Paragraph 148. The Assembly has more than once interpreted the word "control." In 1870 it said that churches are "to establish schools directly under the control of the session." In 1872 the Assembly thus emphasizes this matter: "So profoundly are your committee [the Assembly's Standing Committee] impressed with the importance of holding the Sab-

bath-school, as a church agency, absolutely under the control and direction of the church, that we invoke your authority in an injunction upon all our churches so to regard them, and in practice, so to control them." In 1874 the Supreme Court of our church spoke thus: "The supervision and control of sessions over Sabbath-schools should be exercised, even in the minutest details, so far as to enable sessions promptly to correct any evils that may arise, and make any necessary changes for the well-being of the Sabbath-school." In 1880 sessions were "encouraged to institute teachers' meetings and normal classes"; "instructed to use our own publications;" "to encourage the attendance of the children upon the preaching of the word, and train them to give by system." The most definite and comprehensive statement ever made on this subject was that of the Assembly of 1871, as follows: "*This Assembly deems that the Assembly of 1870 intends that the church session shall elect the superintendent, who shall nominate, with their approbation, the teachers, ordain the methods of instruction, and direct the selection of books.*"

In 1871 the Presbyteries were "enjoined to urge greater fidelity upon the part of pastors to preach to the children," and this injunction is renewed in 1893 with the warning that the "general tendency seems to be to allow the teaching of the Sabbath-school to take the place of pulpit instructions."

In 1897 "sessions and parents are urged to see that the children of the church attend regularly upon the preaching of the word and other services of the sanctuary."

It is essential that every school shall have a superintendent and teachers. We find that our Directory for *Officers.* Worship, Chapter VII., Pars. 2 and 3, give definite teaching as to their duties and characters. In 1873 the Assembly spoke thus: "We recommend the efficiency and increased zeal of pious women, to whom is due, under God, a great measure of the success already attained, and without whose continued coöperation our Sabbath-school work would be greatly crippled," and "urged the sessions to secure, as far as possible, exclusively the service of pious teachers."

Organization. Up to the present, the approval of the Assembly has been given to the organization of the school into the following departments: Primary, Inter-

mediate, Junior, Senior, Normal and Home. This seems to be the best organization known to our day.

The exercises appropriate to the school are named *Exercises*. in general in the Directory for Worship, Chapter

VII., Par. 1, and consists of prayer, singing, study of the Bible, Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Book of Order, and offerings for religious purposes. In 1875 the Assembly records its "solemn testimony against all that is purely sentimental, sensational, or formalistic, as well in the music and literature, as in those devices which are invented merely to popularize the Sunday-school work." In 1893 the Assembly said as to responsive readings: "Responsive readings in the exercises prepared for our Sabbath-schools in the Missionary Festival for Children's Day, and in the *Earnest Worker* for ordinary use in the school, in which instruction and missionary intelligence are given by question and answer, are not unsuited to the purpose, nor, as used in our Sunday-schools, inconsistent with the spirit of our mode of worship."

From time to time the Assembly has added *Course of Study*. one after another subject of instruction. At present its approbation rests upon the following: Bible study through the use of the International Lessons and each pupil's own copy; the Confession of Faith, Book of Order, and Catechisms; the memorizing of hymns. In 1896 the General Assembly instructed a special committee, without disturbing the International Lessons, "to proceed at once to prepare a supplemental course of study for use in all the grades of our Sunday-schools, in which shall be developed more fully our denominational doctrines and principles of government." Certificates and diplomas are provided for all who complete and pass a satisfactory examination on this course. In 1900 the Assembly appointed another committee on the same subject, the results of whose labors are printed in the appendix to the Minutes of 1901. The great need of the church at present is to combine all the approved subjects of instruction into a complete, thorough, symmetrical and practical graded course for all our schools. Such a system would have to embrace at least the following topics: Doctrine, History, Geography, Literature and Memory Work.

Offerings. The Directory for Worship, Chapter VII., Par. 1, declares that one of the exercises appropriate to the school is "offerings for religious purposes, especially for the work of missions." The Assembly has directed that all the schools be trained to give to its benevolent schemes under the direction of the session.

Library. As early as 1864 the Assembly began to arrange for the supply of its schools with interesting and instructive religious books, to be provided by the Publication Committee, which is now prepared to fill orders or make selections at very reasonable rates, as may be desired.

Separate Rooms. The need for better facilities for class-work became evident, and in 1888 the Assembly "suggested that, wherever it is practicable, separate class-rooms should be provided for the very young children, and also for the advanced classes." Experience is everywhere proving that the best results in this vital work can be secured only by providing a suitable room for each class, and that such provision should be made first for the primary and intermediate departments.

5. Methods of Work. The General Assembly has approved various methods of work as designed to carry into effect its policy. In 1874 it enacted "that Presbyteries enjoin upon church sessions to have in each school regular and stated meetings of superintendents and teachers held, and where practicable, that the pastors and sessions meet with them for prayer and conference, in order that great efficiency may be secured in the prosecution of this work, and a deeper sense of responsibility awakened in looking to the conversion of the children and youth as the great object of Sabbath-school instruction." In 1880 the idea of "more thorough training of teachers" was added; in 1886, "the study of the lesson, and teachers' prayer-meetings before the opening of the school;" in 1896, "the study of the school itself."

Special Days. In 1888 the Assembly appointed "the first Sabbath of June, 1889," to be observed as "Children's Day" in the interests of Foreign Missions according to programmes to be prepared and sent out by the Committee on Foreign Missions. In 1891 it was changed to the last Sabbath in May, and so continues.

In 1897 the "last Sabbath in September of each year" was set apart as "Children's Day" for Home Missions, to be celebrated under the direction of the Committee of Home Missions.

In 1900 the Assembly provided "that the first Sunday in October of each year be observed by all the Sunday-schools of our church as the day when special effort shall be made to bring all the forces of the individual churches to the support of their schools, and when definite plans shall be presented for reaching the children and young people of the community who are not in any Sunday-school." It is proposed that this day be called "Sabbath-school Day."

More than once the Assembly has enjoined upon *Institutes*. Presbyteries to hold at least once a year an institute for the study of methods of study and teaching and work. Detailed plans may be had by writing to the Committee of Publication.

Likewise has the Assembly encouraged the holding of *Conventions*. of conventions for educating the public on the subject of Sabbath-school work, and of creating enthusiasm in its behalf.

The Assembly early conceived of the *Sabbath-School* as a missionary agency, and in *in Missions*. 1868 resolved "that our Presbyteries be enjoined to see that mission schools, under care of the churches, be established in all cases where it is practicable." As a direct result of this policy, many churches have been established over the whole South. Every vigorous church to-day has its mission school. The church at large has grown to the idea that the Sabbath-school may be used in a large way as a mighty evangelizing agency, through the employment of missionaries, whose work, directed by synodical or presbyterial committees in connection with the General Superintendent, shall be to visit spiritually destitute regions, to establish new schools, and to stimulate old ones to better work. In the colporteurs there is already an available force which can be easily converted into missionaries.

Thus has been traced the history of the principles and policy of our church in its Sabbath-school policy. In no single respect is the *theory* under which we are working behind the best progress of our times. What is needed is a serious purpose to use

the Sabbath-school to its utmost capacity for bringing our children to Jesus for salvation, for building them up, and the whole church, in the knowledge of God's word, and for reaching the millions of every race and condition amongst us who have never been under the direct influence of the church of God.

III. PRODUCTS.

It is not in the power of mere figures to tell the results for God's kingdom on earth, for the family, for the State, that have resulted from these forty years of faithful work among the young and old. Thousands and thousands have been led by it to faith in the Son of God. A goodly multitude of officers and teachers have had their spiritual lives immensely quickened.

Yet it will be helpful for us to glance at the following table, which gives the facts as to our growth by periods of ten years each. The first statistics available are for the year 1863.

	1863.	1873.	1883.	1893.	1901.
Number of Sabbath Schools,	721	1,760	2,178
Number of officers and teachers,	7,050	7,706	16,647	29,280
Number of scholars enrolled,	Incomplete. 9,998	47,787	78,725	119,754	142,988
Average attendance of officers and teachers,	11,077	14,107
Average attendance of scholars,	75,716	84,896
Scholars admitted to communion,	2,828	4,848	4,679
Contributed for current expenses,	\$28,547	\$58,462	\$54,778
Contributed for other causes,	13,035	30,173	34,435
Total contributions,	\$25,819	\$41,582	\$84,635	\$92,066

The total amount contributed by our schools from 1871 to 1901 is \$1,376,289.

Since 1874 our statistics show that 249,960 persons have joined our churches on confession of faith. Of this number 95,400 came from the Sabbath-schools. About 40 per cent. of the additions to our church on profession since 1874, twenty-seven years, have come from our Sabbath-schools.