

VARIOUS

THE AMERICAN
MISSIONARY. VOLUME
44, NO. 01, JANUARY,
1890

Various

The American Missionary.
Volume 44, No. 01, January, 1890

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NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

The New Year opens upon this Association auspiciously. The setting sun of our old year went down in a bright sky. Revivals of religion and an increased membership was the joyful record of our churches; by the generous aid of the Daniel Hand Fund, our schools showed a greatly enlarged attendance, and the faithful work of the teachers brought forth most satisfactory results; the threatened debt that darkened several months of the year was happily averted by good showing on the right side of the ledger.

It is from this bright setting sun of the last year that we turn with faith and hope to the opening of the new year. We believe, the work is the Lord's and that he will provide. But our faith alone will not save us. It is our duty to inform and arouse our constituents as to the needs and urgency of our work. We will specify in a few particulars:

1. As to funds. Our last year's favorable showing was due in large part to legacies. These are variable, and we must rely on the gifts of *living donors*. Unless, therefore, the churches and individuals make larger contributions than last year, we have no assurance of an escape from debt, even if the work be maintained merely as at present. We wish most earnestly to press this fact upon the friends of the Association.

2. But this is not all. Growth is imperative. The people at the North are alarmed by the disturbed condition of the South, and are awakening afresh, as they were at the close of the war, to a sense of responsibility to the colored people. The aroused feeling at that time took a practical turn, and money, men and women were sent without stint to enlighten and elevate. Shall it be so now, or will mere sympathy or useless regret suffice? No! Something, the *right thing*, can be done. Fair-minded men, both North and South, realize that all schemes involving fraud, violence, disfranchisement or deportation, are impracticable, but all are agreed as to the value of Christian enlightenment, enabling the Negro to earn property and to become an intelligent and virtuous citizen. This is the line on which the Association has perseveringly toiled since it opened its first school at Fortress Monroe in 1861, and it is not too much to say that nothing more effective has been done in all these years. Can anything of a better sort be done in the future? Amid all the jarring discords at the South, the people there, both white and black, welcome the efforts of the Association. They feel that we are not disturbers, that we have a single honest aim, and are working at the only true solution of the great problem. We ask the people of the North, therefore, to come to the rescue once more by practical, self-denying liberality.

3. but this is not all. a work so vital to the interests of the nation and of the cause of christ needs to be uplifted by the prayers of god's people. deliverance cannot come from political parties, governmental authority or theories of industrial reform. the power of god must be in it. we therefore respectfully but earnestly ask our brethren in the ministry to remember this work in their prayers in the great congregation, and we ask our fellow christians to remember it in the prayer-meeting, at the family altar and in the closet.

"Now, concerning the collection." These are not the words of a begging agent, but of Paul the Apostle, and they come from his pen just after he had closed that wonderful fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians on the glorious resurrection and the victory over death and the grave. These words are fit, therefore, in any assembly and at the close of any discourse however exalted. Brethren remember the "collection."

The Corinthian church seems, like some churches in recent times, to have been remiss in sending on the "collections," and hence we find Paul, a year later, to be "After Money Again." He writes so nobly, so kindly, that we are tempted to quote a few sentences:

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you who have begun before not only to do but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it. As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack."

The National Council has appointed Committees to take into consideration the consolidation of the missionary magazines and the re-adjustment of the work of the several Congregational missionary societies. We are happy to furnish these committees with all the facts in our possession on these subjects, and this Association will, in accordance with its fundamental theory, cheerfully acquiesce in what shall be found to be the deliberate and ultimate decision of the churches. In the meantime, it may not be out of place for us to say that missionary periodicals and missionary societies are growths and not manufactured articles, and that plans for modification should be very carefully considered. We venture, therefore, to suggest that counsel be taken of the Town Clerk of Ephesus, "to do nothing rashly."

AFRICA.—ITS SHADOW AND SUNSHINE

The shadow is still broad and dense, well nigh covering the continent. The heroic Stanley has found that shadow as dark as when he first traveled beneath it. The malarial climate and the bitter hostility of the natives are there yet. The accursed slave trade is as extensive as ever, embittering the lives of its victims, instigating wars among the tribes and obstructing agriculture, commerce and civilization. The failures to suppress it are discouraging. Sir Samuel Baker's well-equipped military force, Col. Gordon's intrepid courage, and Emin Pacha's brave endurance have all succumbed before it. Its flow, pushed back for a time, now returns with its old-time flood. Then, too, the Mahdi uprising, seemingly suppressed, still lives and is likely to hold the Soudan if not to harass Egypt. When Emin Pacha, under the protection of the heroic Stanley, abandoned his little sovereignty, it was a farewell, humanly speaking, to a speedy establishment of missions in that territory.

But there is a bright lining around all this darkness. For one thing the eyes of the civilized world are turned toward Africa with increasing intensity. The rainbow fringe of missions around the coasts is still sustained by the gifts and prayers of Christians, and by the blessing of God. The multiplied efforts of the European States to colonize the dark continent are facts full of encouragement. The motive may be selfish; the method sometimes unwise and cruel, and the conflict of contending interests may be hindrances, but the results will be good. All these movements aim at commerce, and commerce can only flourish on the ruins of the slave-trade, and among peaceful tribes with growing industries, intelligence and civilization. The Congo Free State, with its railroad in construction, its steamboats on the rivers and its civilized settlements, is a bright omen of the future.

Surely God's people should pray for Africa, moved by pity and by hope. Christians in America can do more than pray—they can help to answer their own prayers. They can raise up the sons and daughters of Africa, trained in our schools, to go forth as missionaries and colonists to the land of their fathers. The experiment has been tried with success. Missionaries of African descent can endure the climate better, and can more readily reach the people than those of the white race. There is a call in these facts for the means to give special instruction in Biblical truth to those who can thus be prepared for this great mission work.

CONVENTIONS OF COLORED PEOPLE

The proposed National Conventions of colored people to be held in Chicago and Washington are significant facts. They indicate that the colored people are suffering wrongs, and that they feel a call to seek redress. Their right to hold such conventions is unquestioned; the wisdom of holding them will be vindicated, we hope, by their just and reasonable utterances and plans. Intemperate language and rash and impracticable measures will not help, and we have so much confidence in the discretion of our colored friends that we believe none such will be said or proposed.

Our colored brethren must not forget that much is being done for them and that they are doing much for themselves. It would be unwise to overlook this in any attempt to reach something less tangible.

Their appeal to the justice of the Nation, to the Constitution and the laws can be made invincible, but it will be well to keep in touch with the sympathy of the North and with the conscience of the South, for in spite of all the wrongs inflicted on the colored people in the South, we believe there is a large and growing number of Southern people who look upon this whole question conscientiously, and although perplexed desire that the right shall be done.

For the colored people themselves, while conventions are good, yet the accumulation of property, growth in intelligence, and character are better.

SCHOOL ECHOES

A boy in one of the arithmetic classes was given an example which began with the statement, that a man deposited a certain sum of money in a bank. He was asked if he knew what a bank was. He replied; "Yes, it is a place where you dig coal."

"What is the shape of the earth?"

"The earth is square. Pap says so, and he says the Book says so too. He says if there warn't four corners, how could the four angels stand on 'em."

"I hear you'uns have taken your children out of school. What did you do that for?"

"I'll tell ye. I yaint goin' to send my child to any such fool-teacher as that ar. Why, he tole 'em that the world was roun', an' any fool knows better."

A Methodist minister in North Carolina, preaching from the passage about standing at the corners of the streets to pray, told his people that if they wanted to see a "first class hypocrite," see anybody who would stand up to pray. The *standing up* was what he thought Jesus reproved.

A man in the South writes to us as follows, making an unusual inquiry:

"I write you this to ask you do you take married ladies in your school, and if so I want to send my wife at once. Please send me the terms of the school and what she will need. My wife wants an education and my desire is to give it to her. You will greatly oblige me to answer this on return mail."

ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT EATON, AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN CHICAGO

God, who writes his thoughts in the development of a nation, not less than in the grouping of constellations or in the drama of the physical world, has spoken in the birth and history of our land with startling distinctness. In every people we may see an ideal of God embodied, however imperfectly realized by human achievement. Happy is that people who can see God's ideal for them, and those statesmen who have it in their hearts to lead the people along the line of God's thought. To get at something of God's thought for us, we must go back even into those dark Teutonic forests into which the Roman world peered with so much fear and awe, and out of which came those freemen who knew how to leap upon that Roman world in its pride and its weakness and re-assert human liberty.

Those old ancestors of ours knew what freedom was; but as they came against that Roman world, they themselves were in part conquered by it, and they lost something of that freedom. But God set apart one corner of the European world for them, and called over the English Channel in the fifth century those forefathers of ours, there to watch for a century and a half that tremendous conflict in which the very plow-share of the Teutons went through the roots of the Roman life in Britain and left nothing but Teutonic fields remaining. And then God brought into this Britain, thus set apart, the gospel of Christ, and our forefathers became Christians—not Christians such as there were in other parts of Europe, but having that free and independent Christian life that shone forth in men like Wyckliffe, denying the power of the keys to Rome except where Rome spoke with Christ's voice, and in men like Latimer, before whom the proud Henry trembled.

All over England were sown these seeds of a free Christian faith; so that when Luther came, it was in England as in our country when the forest fires have ceased, and suddenly there spring up from the sod a new forest because the seeds lie in the prairie from age to age. So in our English soil there were those seeds of Christian freedom that sprung forth and gave us a free and Protestant England. And then, in the reaction, when Mary was on the throne, and the fire at Smithfield was kindled, the Christian men of England went to Geneva and there met John Calvin, whose system of Christian thought set the soul of man forth, in his awful agony of sin, and in God's redemption for him—set him forth independent of kings and rulers, and in whose sight a king was but God's vassal. When Englishmen had to come in contact with John Calvin, the iron of his free spirit became steel, and then Puritanism was born, and at that time God raised the curtain that hung over a whole hemisphere, and gave that hemisphere to these free Teutonic English people. We know how they conquered the country for this free spirit, and how the Revolutionary War came on, and Samuel Adams, awakening to the sound of those cannon at Concord on that spring morning, said, in spite of all the forebodings of a long and deadly struggle, "How glorious is this morning," because he foresaw what God could work here in a free Christian land. And so on that following Fourth of July those men assembled in Philadelphia and put forth the Declaration of Independence. There is no better commentary on it than Lincoln's words when he said, in those dark days just before the war: "In their enlightened view nothing stamped with the divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on or degraded or imbruted by its fellows."

They set up a beacon for their children and their children's children. Wise statesmen as they were, they knew the tendency of prosperity to breed tyrants, and so they established these great self-evident truths, that when at some remote time some man, or faction, or interest should arise, and say that none but rich men, or none but white men, or none but Anglo-Saxon white men were entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, their children's children should look back to the Declaration of Independence, and should take heart to begin again the battles their forefathers fought, that thus

truth and liberty and righteousness and justice and all the Christian virtues might not be lost in the land; and none might dare limit and circumscribe the principles on which the temple of liberty was being built. Thus, by these centuries of growth and life God said to our people, "I have given you this key to your history, the union of liberty and an enlightened faith—faith and freedom. Be true to these. This do and thou shalt live." It seems plain enough. And yet, in this garden of liberty there were sown tares. In the bosom of this free land the deadly foe of freedom, slavery, was here. In slavery was the evident and necessary foe of all that God had foreplanned for our Nation, because slavery denies the rights of men. Men tried to deal with this problem; they tried to circumscribe it; they said it was a local question, and Webster stood in the Senate and boasted that he had never spoken of slavery on that floor. How the way of liberty was choked, how the tree of liberty withered! And then God spoke in the earthquake, and the fire, the war came on, and the slave was set free; and it seemed as if again we had come into sight of God's plan for the race, that liberty and Christian faith should be the watchword of our national life.

Now again, at last, it seems as if that which we are accomplishing and that which God has spoken in all these ages is again jeopardized, and as if this human right shall be denied in the South. Men doubt whether there is in the Negro more than the capacity of a subordinate race, and say that to educate him is to lift him out of his sphere. Brethren and friends, there is manhood in the Negro race. There was humanity in those slaves who toiled their way over mountains and through swamps before the war, with their eyes focussed upon the North star of freedom. And there was humanity in those mothers who clasped their babes to their breast and fled before the bloodhounds that they might escape the enslavers of men. There was manhood in those one hundred and seventy-eight thousand Negro soldiers who seized their muskets and went to the front and fought for us, and with us, in those dark days of 1864, when the draft was failing and when volunteering had failed, that there might be soldiers to stand in the front and to dig in the trenches, and of whom eighty thousand gave their lives for us. There was manhood in those cabins in which all over the South, our fleeing soldiers, escaping from prison, never failed to find support, help, and guidance. Oh! how disastrous a business it is that that manhood, which all those years of slavery could not extinguish, should now be extinguished by the priests of a proud, arrogant, and selfish aristocracy.

But, my friends, as we felt in those days, and feel to-night, there is still no help for us but in the Christian solution of this problem and in the Christian destiny God has given to us. Liberty and faith, the two elements, must be conjoined. For us to deny the rights of the Negro now is to say that God did not make man in his image. It is to say that liberty is not a sacred right, but a selfish acquisition; that government does not exist to establish rights, but to protect privileges, and that mankind are not brothers, but foes. It is to turn the shadow upon the dial of human progress backward toward the ages of oppression and chaos.

And just there is the problem that confronts us, South and North together. What shall be done in this dire extremity? I remember years ago hearing of a fire in Charleston in which that beautiful spire of St. Michael's took fire and some one had to be found to go up beyond the reach of the hose to put out the flame kindling and flickering there. No one was found until a Negro stepped forth and climbed that tower, taking his life in his hands, and put out that flame. And when he came down again, one man said, "Name your reward," and he replied, "Let me but be counted a man." And that we have got to do, or God will shake down our civilization and our Nation as he shook down that spire of St. Michael's in the earthquake three years ago. It is certain to come unless we follow the line of God's appointing that this must be a free Nation, absolutely free, free everywhere. As yet, emancipation is but an outward and formal thing. What we wait for now, is the emancipation of a true and an elevated will in the South, and Christian citizenship. Into that, this Association pours its strength, its money, and its life. It took half a million lives to emancipate the slaves outwardly, and it may yet take hundreds and thousands of lives—our lives—our children's lives—poured in upon this problem, that so we may lift the Negro to that point where he feels himself, and where we feel him

to be, a man—taught to labor, protected in the enjoyment of the fruits of his labor, without which the strongest arm grows palsied, trained in a strong, self-reliant Christian manhood, holding the reins firmly on the neck of all passion—a man. And that we will do; and the very greatness of the problem, I believe, is our redemption. It was the greatness of the crisis that thrilled the Nation's heart when the war burst upon us. It is the very greatness of our present problem that calls in trumpet tones to men and women and children all over the land; "Come and help solve this problem for Christ."

A few weeks ago, in one of the beautiful towns of Northern Illinois, a young man, the only son of his father and mother, hearing at Sabbath evening the alarm of fire, sprung forth and took his place upon the burning building and there did the work of a fireman. In the attempt to put out the fire he was hurled headlong and in one moment his life had gone hence. A few weeks afterward, as a friend was talking with his mother about it, she said, "Our son was always so swift to heed any call of need or duty, it seems to me as if he heard suddenly some call from God from some farther clime and sprung forth and was gone from our sight." Blessed, heroic faith! But, brethren and friends, fathers and mothers, we need that same faith for our living sons and living daughters, to send them forth into this work of God. When the Christ child was on the back of the giant Christophorus crossing the stream, how heavy he grew as the giant plunged his way through the waters. God weighs heavily upon this Nation this greatest of all national problems, what to do with these despised ones. But bear the burden we must, and bear it through we must to the farther shore of a Christian solution, or we and it will go down the flood together. There is no help for us except in this solution which makes brothers of these men.

I see a possible issue in this large Christian faith of our land; and I see the time coming when the black and the white shall dwell together in a mutual helpfulness, with a more complete national feeling, a deeper dependence upon him from whom alone comes strength, less display of material resources, but more faith in God. That time must come. And then I see the army enlisting for the conquest of that dark continent of Africa, shrouded in gloom, so long robbed of her children, but now at last finding that, like Joseph, they were taken from her that they might come back to save life. So our Nation shall be not a mirage awakening the hopes and aspirations of mankind but to mock them, and leaving the sands of human experience still more arid and barren; but it shall be a mountain of God, its base resting on the eternal foundations of law and liberty; its summit drawing down from the willing heavens the streams of prosperity which shall enrich all the lands of the earth.

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