

# Africo-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii, 32.

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## HOW THE DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SHOULD BE CONDUCTED

By Rev. Jesse B. Barber.

(Paper read at the Annual Workers' Conference, held at Brainerd Institute, Chester, South Carolina.)

The problem of presenting this subject would be rendered far simpler for me, had the makers of the program seen fit to give it one more word, so as to make the subject read, How the V. B. S. Should Not Be Conducted, for, concerning V. B. Schools as well as many other ventures, memory's pages abound with glowing and classic examples of that which ought to have been done, but was not, and that which, from every conceivable point of view, ought not to have been even attempted, but was very thoroughly accomplished, notwithstanding.

The point of significance for us, however, is found, not in the failure of our V. B. S's to measure up to our pre-conceived notions, nor yet to our clearly established standards, but that they have been conducted at all, and that each year sees more, larger, longer, and better schools and a more active interest in the movement.

It is of moment, also, to note that the movement is by no means a city enterprise, carried on mainly by our stronger city churches, with their recognized advantage in numbers, leadership and opportunity. The fact is that our larger fields have been, generally, the most derelict. It is the school of average size, or smaller, and in town or rural community, that has contributed most to the adoption of the movement, and to which we look for further advance. I speak of course with reference to those schools that are found within the realm of this Conference.

The salutary effects of this movement are to be discussed elsewhere, but it is pertinent to our subject to consider, for the moment, one phase of this fruitage.

Not inconsiderable among the results attributable to the growth and progress of the V. B. S. movement, is the opportunity given for evaluating the quality of the work we are doing. With the experiences of years before us, and from actual observation and contact with many types of schools, it can reasonably be expected that a consensus of best methods emerge and be formed into a sound, practical program.

The standard V. B. S. program of our Church is typical of the best efforts in that direction. It proposes that a standard school shall have a term of at least twenty-three teaching days, and a daily session of two and one half hours. It shall have four departments: Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, and Intermediate; a principal and at least four department teachers, besides assistants or helpers, and other officers. The minimum requirement for the Principal and teachers of the standard V. B. S. is one year of an approved T. T. course, and twenty hours training in V. B. S. work. An attendance of 85 per cent of the pupils enrolled 5 days or more, material graded for each department in worship, instruction and expressional activities, and the use of standard records are further required.

But the merest glance at this standard suffices to produce the conviction that it is far beyond the reach of the greater number of our schools. This is quite true, but this does not reflect discredit upon the standard. The mark of a standard school is not a gift to be bestowed; it is an achievement, an honor to be won often at the cost of years. But for the winning of it, and in the keeping thereof, there is great reward, and not for the

V. B. S. alone, but for the whole field.

Examples of this are numerous. First, let us say that a school is desirous of attaining the standard T. T. course. It will be found that the most effective way of meeting this necessity is the organization of a T. T. class in the Sabbath School, thereby preparing teachers, not only for V. B. S. work, but for the Sabbath School and Young People's work as well.

Then, too, the standard requires facilities for separate departmental activities. I have observed a number of schools that have adopted permanently the improvements introduced by the V. B. S., as curtains for separate class work, the greater use of instruments, pictures, and in some cases, graded lessons.

Again, the denominational week-day church school plan is a logical and a tremendously effective sequence to an efficient V. B. S. Every year our ministers tell us how loathe they—the ministers and workers—are to end their V. B. S's, and how the children look forward so eagerly each summer to their reopening. I must confess my surprise and no small disappointment at the saddening fact that out of so many progressive fields within the bounds of our Conference, not one, to my knowledge, has even attempted a week day School of Religious Education.

A V. B. S. conducted according to the standard program of our Church, is the goal toward which we set our faces, the aim for which we should constantly strive.

But you will quickly say, "This cannot be done; our fields are too small, our workers too few, our facilities too meager." And this may well be granted. The records will show that few, if any standard schools ever have been conducted in our portion of the Southland. I doubt strongly if there has ever been one. But this does not mean that we can not have standard schools next year. It surely does not mean that we should not expect to have standard schools in the future.

It means that we should plan our schools to serve the present as best we can, and as well plan for the future. Two methods of building churches are popular: one, to erect a temporary structure, or to adapt an old building to church purposes, with a view of doing away with it at a more convenient season, which sometimes never comes. The other plan is to begin the building with a part or unit which is designed to be permanent, and which forms a harmonious and an integral part of the completed edifice. The advantages of the latter plan are obvious. We would do well to pattern after it. Let us build our V. B. S's on the unit system. Let us do away with the makeshifts and shacks.

Some adaptation is necessary, for while holding that we should have standard schools as the years pass, we must have schools during the process and the only method we have is that of remodeling or remodeling the standard program to fit our needs and our weaknesses. And so we have adapted and adapted, and at times with woeful results.

A good lady of my acquaintance of yester years, who was our church organist, suffered from this malady of "adapting." The choir never practiced, and so on Sunday morning when the minister would announce a hymn, there would be a scramble to see if they knew the tune. If they did, and especially if it was one of the grand old inspir-

ing airs, great would be their amazement and consternation to find her strumming the preliminaries of some strange, weird thing, which no one knew, and which few, if any, cared to know. Some of our efforts at adapting the standard program have been as clumsy and as wretchedly ineffective.

Adaptation of the standard program usually takes the following courses:

First, the length of the five weeks term is shortened. While the full term is always to be preferred, and should always be our aim, such is found often impracticable. This should not be discouraging, however, for a long term is not necessarily an indication of efficiency. Certainly a short term school is far better than none at all. And, too, short term schools can be made very effective. Two of the best V. B. S's in the Synod of East Tennessee during the past summer lasted only one week. Whatever the length of the term, every endeavor should be made to carry out the full program as thoroughly as possible.

In the second place, as sufficient well trained teachers are not always available, the faculty is generally under-manned, and consequently, one or more departments are combined. This, in many cases, is most unfortunate, and especially where the attendance is large, as it is difficult, almost impossible, to avoid the attendant confusion and loss of effectiveness. A certain amount of "doubling up" is permissible in smaller schools, and in these it should be very carefully done.

Third, the standard lesson materials are frequently substituted for V. B. S's, and worship, instruction, and related activities are grouped around central themes. The fact that the substitute materials cost little or nothing is perhaps the chief cause of their popularity, but in reality their cost is greatest in the loss of effectiveness they bring to the school. The standard lessons should be used.

A word about records. Each school is expected to keep an accurate record of each of its pupils. This is generally considered sufficient. But in almost every school we find boys and girls whom we do not know, and who vanish after commencement. If these names and addresses are given to the Sabbath School at the end of the V. B. S. term they can be sought and found, and saved to the school.

The activities of the V. B. S. day are divided into seven units or periods. Besides the preparatory and closing periods there are periods given to devotions, memorizing Bible passages and hymns, singing, Bible stories, and related expressional activities.

It is well stated that "one of the most important items in the success of the school is the preparation which is made for the session of the first day, and the first day itself." The materials to be used should be on hand. Plans and arrangements for equipment should thoroughly be worked out. A meeting of all who are to help carry on the school should be held some days preceding the opening. In this way the work can be gone over, step by step, and each person know clearly and definitely his or her duties.

The day begins with a preparatory period for teachers, at which time the materials are set in order, the rooms arranged, and the final plans for the program adopted. A significant feature of this period, and one which should never be omitted, is the teachers' prayer service. To us the words of the Bulletin, "This may take only a few moments, but in those few moments of time, all the workers in the school should be gathered together in order that the work may be carried on in a real sense of dependence upon God, the Father."

(Continued on page 4)

## HAPPENINGS IN LINCOLN PRESBYTERY

Rev. H. W. McNair, Stated Clerk

From all indications Lincoln Presbytery is forging to the front. The General Council of Lincoln Presbytery held its last meeting before the Spring meeting of Presbytery, on the campus of Fee Memorial Institute, February 27, with all of the members present save one. The following were present: Revs. P. J. Coxe, R. M. Moore, R. L. Hyde, H. W. McNair and Mr. M. Frierson. The meeting was of much interest and one long to be remembered for the spirit of brotherly love which characterized it.

All churches in the Presbytery are supplied save our church in Paducah, and we hope to supply it soon. Ferguson Memorial church, Louisville, Ky., is making history under the strong preaching and powerful influence of Rev. Coxe.

Cecelia church, Bowling Green, Ky., is also striving to take the first place, and from what we learn from Bro. Byrd, this will be one of the strongest points for our great Church, if the interest is kept up. When Lincoln Presbytery robbed old Yaddin of Revs. Coxe and Byrd she took one of the greatest steps of her history.

Ray Moore, who came to us from Catawba, and is retiring Moderator of Lincoln Presbytery, is bringing things to pass in Danville. Revs. Miller and Haynes, ministers of Westminster and New Hope, respectively, are making things go. Dr. Ewing, although not a member of Lincoln, but has kindly consented to take care of our extreme mountain work, is always interesting and the people over whom he watches think he is the only man who can preach.

Our slogan is: Better preachers, harmony in the work, a high type of ministers, and more funds raised for all purposes. We shall throw our strong arms around the ministers of our Presbytery and work and live together as a family.

Any man who wants to work in harmony and abide by the laws of the Church, will find no better field than Lincoln Presbytery. On the other hand, if he hopes to override law and order and live a life of laziness, he had better seek other fields of labor.

Presbytery will meet with the Ferguson Memorial church, Louisville, Ky., Thursday, April 8, 7:45 P. M. All who wish to attend will please notify Rev. P. J. Coxe, 2505 W. Magazine St., Louisville, Ky. Bro. Coxe and his flock tell us that this is to be one of the greatest meetings ever held.

Bro. Coxe, we are with you and shall do our part in helping to make it a great gathering.

Just here we are taking the opportunity to invite our own Dr. Henry L. McCrorey, President of Johnson C. Smith University, to be with us. We read much of his visits to near-by gatherings, but why not launch out and give us a visit? To be certain Dr. McCrorey is properly invited, we are inviting him in a personal letter and hope he will be with us. We are sure that the bodies near him, although meeting about the same time, will be willing to spare him once in a decade. Dr. McCrorey, we are looking for you!

To close our remarks without mentioning the women of the Presbytery would be out of the question. Our good women are felt as never before and we feel justified in saying that they will rank with any of the older and larger bodies. The budget they were asked to raise has been raised and several dollars beyond. They are to have a popular meeting on Friday night, April 9, and the meeting promises to be the best ever held.

Power is the agent of all progress. With intellectual power we work out new ideas.

## LINCOLN ALUMNI TO RAISE FUNDS.

Washington, D. C., Feb. 22.

The Washington Branch of the General Alumni Association of Lincoln University is sponsoring a movement to secure substantial contributions for the school. The plan is to get the graduates to open both their hearts and their purse strings in behalf of their Alma Mater as they have never done before. They will advocate the adoption of their plans by the General Association at the coming June Commencement.

The first consideration will be the erection of an annex to the present dining hall to accommodate two hundred and fifty students as the McCauley refectory is inadequate for the present student body of two hundred and eighty-five. This is known to be an urgent need and many loyal Lincoln men are ready and willing to help relieve this condition.

Another prominent issue in the minds of the Lincoln men is the electing of an honored graduate to the Trustee Board. The men feel that the Trustees should show the same spirit along this line as other institutions have shown their graduates.

The local alumni feel that the graduates should be called upon for a larger share in the support of the school's athletic sports. For the past forty years Philadelphia has been considered as "home-town" for Lincoln, and efforts should be made to buy or control a park there for football games, etc., and play the home games in that city.

Loyal men all over the country have agreed to support such plans when they are convinced that the leaders really mean business.

In order that such an advanced step may be carried out successfully, the Washington branch is advocating the appointment of a National Organizer whose duty will be to visit the men and associations throughout the country.

## EDISTO ISLAND, S. C.

Edisto Island is still on the map of South Carolina and our Presbyterian church and school are still on Edisto Island. We have been planning for some time to let you hear from us other than through "Uncle Billie," who seems to be too modest to tell what is going on among us.

Our school has an enrollment of 104, and our daily average attendance is about 90. We are seeing results from the labors being put forth for the education of the children, and the betterment of the community by the influence of the Presbyterian work here. The children are becoming more interested each year, this being verified by the average attendance. The parents find it hard to keep the children home to care for the younger ones while they go to the farms or lodge meetings.

The young men home from Johnson C. Smith University for the holidays were Messrs. Jonathan Williams, Michael Knights, Jr., Arthur Campbell, Paul Morrison, W. L., Jr., and Perry Metz. No one needed to ask where they were from. Every one could see the great change and influence college life has made with these young men. We hope to have some more to go on next term.

"Uncle Billie" Christmas when his six boys were home from J. C. S. University you would have thought he was just 16 years old himself—the youngest of the bunch.

Our church is taking on new life, and every one is working hard to have the church repaired and everything ready to entertain Presbytery in April.

The Missionary Society could be called the "Busy Bees," as quite a number of women can be found every Saturday from 1 to 4:30 P. M., making quilts

to be sold to help with repairs.

Our church now has a vested choir, the second in Atlantic Presbytery. Since the reorganization of the choir the members have realized it is absolutely necessary to be punctual at services and to attend choir practice. They are doing excellent work under the management of our organist, Mrs. Estelle Campbell, leader of the Women's club of our church.

A very creditable program was rendered the second Sabbath afternoon, entitled, "The 23rd Psalm in Song and Story." It was enjoyed by all and a neat sum was raised.

Our senior elder, "Uncle Billie," as he is affectionately called by many, is energetic and loyal to his church. He believes in going his daily duty and is desirous of seeing others do the same. He believes in progress.

Mr. W. W. Campbell, Jr., our junior elder, is a live wire and follows in the footsteps of his father. He is a chip off of the old block.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Jackson have the sympathy of the community in the loss of their daughter, Edna. Mr. Jackson is our faithful Sabbath School Superintendent, but has been ill for several months. We hope for him a speedy recovery.

You will hear from Edisto Island again.

"A MEMBER."

## ZION HILL CHURCH, AND FRASIER ACADEMY, BAMBERG, S. C.

We are delighted to report up to this time the success of the work along several lines. During the visit of our Synodical Evangelist, Rev. J. E. Jackson, we had several of the young people to join the church, and, in fact, they have proved very faithful. We have noticed also that our Sunday evening services are better from a numerical as well as a financial standpoint. This is due largely to the screen lectures given by Rev. Robinson every Sunday P. M. since the purchasing of his stereopticon machine.

The Sunday school is also in a splendid condition. Even the inclement weather does not interfere with the attendance to a great extent.

The Mission Study class has helped the young people to see more clearly their duty as Christians.

The three additions to the school this year are as follows: a basket ball outfit, a volley ball outfit, and a sewing department. Frasier is proud of having won two games of volley ball from the Bamberg High school.

Our mid-term examination is over. Some of the students are happy as to their standing, but we have some sad ones also.

Rev. H. M. Scott, S. S. M., with headquarters now in Ocala, Fla., was the pleasant week-end visitor on the campus several weeks since. We were delighted with his presence and are hoping for him much success in his work.

The Williams Silver Tone Quintette Singers rendered a pleasing programme at the Frasier auditorium, Saturday P. M., February 20, to a full house of white and colored people.

Rev. Robinson's text Sunday morning was taken from Joel 3:14. His subject was, "The Valley of Decision." All present, we believe, were uplifted as well as benefitted by his inspiring discourse.

Rev. Robinson is a splendid worker. Yet we do not wonder at his success during these years with such an energetic wife as he has to help him to push the work in the person of Mrs. M. A. Robinson. We hope for them continued success.

A MEMBER OF THE FACULTY.

To be happy in business you must have the feeling that you are doing something to help your customers move forward.