

# Africo-American Presbyterian

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

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## HOLDING THE INTEREST OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE TEEN AGE

By Dr. E. O. Woodward.

(Paper read before the last Western District Convention of Southern Virginia Presbytery at Ridgeway, Va.)

In every position in life from the highest to the lowest there are certain requirements that must be met if any degree of success is to be obtained. The boys and girls in the teens constitute or make up a class to themselves. They are the connecting links between childhood and manhood. This is the time in their lives when the pent-up energy begins to manifest itself in many ways and under varied conditions which often tax the patience of the most learned scholars of psychology.

For the most part they are inattentive to instructions, boisterous in their behaviour, and are never ready and willing to accept and do their full share of service in the Sunday school work; but rather choose to sit up and look important. This, I acknowledge, is an awful indictment against those who are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; but it is true, nevertheless.

These boys and girls are not responsible for the present condition of things,—not by any means; but the trouble lies at the door of the parents. An over-indulgence on the part of the parents in dealing with their children, and an utter neglect of their own as well as their children's spiritual welfare is responsible for the present condition of things. Worldliness has taken possession of our homes; and as such its harmful influence is felt in the church, for as the home is, so also is the church.

This, to my mind, is the true condition of things. How, then, may we hope to handle well those of the teen age? To my mind the first and essential qualification is that of good moral character, and, second, regeneration, and the third, a special preparation for teaching.

For one to assume the role of a teacher without moral character is a failure to start with. Character is that quality which gives poise, grace, ease and stamina to the life of anyone who may possess it. When a man or a woman is elected a teacher of a Sunday school class then he or she is discussed around the fireside of every home connected with that church, and if there is an established opinion against him or her, their doom is fixed and sealed.

The successful teacher must teach both by precept and example. There are some who may seek to dodge the responsibility as teachers by saying, "Don't do as I do, but do as I say." That is an impossibility, for as one writer truly said, "What you do sounds so loud that I cannot hear what you say." Character carries with it an influence which always tells; it always enables the possessor to get a hearing. It exercises a power greater than wealth and secures all the honor without the jealousies of fame. Character is a quality which one unmistakably can see in another. It is this which attracts others, and makes it possible for its possessor to accomplish those things which one less fortunate could not hope to do.

The next essential and the crowning feature of any useful life is regeneration. And when I say regeneration I mean all that the word implies. I feel safe in saying that many of those whose names are on the church records have never been changed from nature to grace. No wonder, then, that those of the teen age seem so very difficult to handle. When Jesus met Saul in the way, the latter said to Jesus, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus said, "Go thy way unto the city and it will be told thee what I would

have thee to do." Saul obeyed, and through the preaching of Ananias he was converted, and returned to Jerusalem, not as a persecutor of the Church of Christ, but as an ambassador. Later still, we find Paul going over into the country of Arabia where he spent some seven or eight years preparing for his life's work, and it was, perhaps, during this period of seclusion and meditation that he was caught up into the third heaven and saw and heard things that would be unlawful to utter. I mention the above incident that I may at least illustrate what I mean by regeneration.

Too many of our people who have no knowledge of Jesus, but, with a little education, dare attempt to teach others the way of righteousness, a thing that is impossible. Just as an unconverted minister of the gospel of Jesus is a handicap and a destroyer of a church, so also an unregenerated man or woman as teacher is a great drawback to any Sunday school class.

Book learning is all right, and a thing to be desired; but I fear that in these modern times in which we live there is too strong a tendency to lay all the stress upon education of the head and too little on the spiritual development of the heart. A teacher who has not a message for his class from a prayerful consideration of its needs is out of harmony with the plan of salvation, and the sooner such an one gives up the job the better it will be for all concerned.

Along with the foregoing requisites must be mentioned also a knowledge of the Bible. If it was good for Paul it is also good for us. The colored teachers must recognize the fact that the average Negro home does not contribute much in the way of help to the success of the Negro teacher, for the reason that those family altars which still exist are being slowly torn down by worldliness; and unless there is a return to the God of our fathers and mothers and to true worship then we may at any time expect to find ourselves living in a time like that of Ahab and Jezebel.

The boys and girls about this time of life usually begin to form ideals of their own. One's appearance in dress, his ability to command respect from others, his knowledge and ability to handle the various subjects, all come in for a large consideration in influencing the young minds.

There are many today who claim that this scheme of handling those in the teen years will be accomplished only through social functions. That may be so, but it seems to me that the same Christian life lived by Jesus and His followers is all-sufficient today as it was in the drifted centuries of the past. We know that with the ongoing of years everything becomes more modern except religion and we fear that there is a disposition on the part of some to modernize religion itself.

With all the changes that have taken place in the world since the purchase or redemption by Jesus, the plan of salvation has not changed an iota; but stands today as it did eight-hundred years ago with all of its beauty and freshness when uttered by Jesus Himself. Solomon in his writings said, "Train up a child in the way it should go and when it is old it will not depart from it." I believe if that is not true today, then it was true when uttered many centuries before Christ's time. If this be true, and I believe it is—then all I have to do and any other true follower of

Christ, is to live the life and prayerfully recommend it to my family with me.

One of the most beautiful pictures of all my life was noted in connection with the demise of the late William Jennings Bryan when I read of the young Bryan of California coming to assist his father at Dayton, Tenn., against those who would dare assail the writings of the Old and the New Testament Scriptures.

Bryan lived for something. Let us go and do likewise.

Now, in conclusion, I wish to say that if those of the teen age are ever made to see and understand the real purpose of life they must see it through us. We must live the life ourselves; establish the family altar, and see to it that we and our families rigidly observe the Sabbath day; and as sure as the night follows the day, God will bless our efforts.

## LETTERS TO THE TEACHERS OF THE STATE

Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of North Carolina

Raleigh

September 12, 1925.

To North Carolina Negro Teachers:

I have just learned that the North Carolina Negro Teachers' Association will meet in Greensboro on November 25, 26 and 27. As you know, this Association has tremendously in-

creased in membership during the last four or five years and is more and more becoming a professional body.

Please let me urge all Negro teachers in North Carolina to attend this meeting if possible and to take part in the discussions. There are many things which the Association can do from time to time in helping to perfect a system of schools in the State for the Negro children. I hope you can make your plans to be present.

With best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

N. C. NEWBOLD,

Director Division Negro Education.

September 14, 1925.

To the Negro Public School Teachers in North Carolina:

The Association of Negro Teachers in North Carolina has been of great service in improving the conditions under which instruction in the Negro Public Schools has been given. A large number of patriotic and earnest teachers have been attending this Association for many years.

Whether a teacher is able to attend the meetings of the Association or not, she should become a member and thereby lend her influence and strength to the professional improvement of all the Negro teachers in the State. Membership in this Association might be considered a fair test of one's loyalty to the cause of public education. A wrong attitude on the part of one teacher reflects upon the whole body of teachers and weakens, to some extent, the power and influence of all the others.

It appears to me, therefore, that it is incumbent upon every teacher who has accepted work in the public schools, to join this Association at the first opportunity. It is a duty she owes, not only to her own professional improvement, but also to the good of the entire teaching force.

I am,

Very truly yours,

A. T. ALLEN,

State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

## DR. HARRIS WRITES AGAIN TO CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN VIRGINIA PRESBYTERY.

Crewe, Va., Oct. 21, 1925.—Relative to the article appearing in the Africo on the date of August 13th under the head of "A Fund For Ministerial Relief," I wish to say that the responses have been everything but encouraging.

The chairman of the Laymen's Committee is asking for a report on what has been accomplished so that the committee will be enabled to develop plans for its future activities.

To this time, I have heard from less than half the churches in our Presbytery. The thing the committee asks us to do ought not to be considered a hard task. We are asked for a tabulation of names and addresses of those members or friends of our congregations who are willing to subscribe to this very important program, or even probable supporters. We are not asked the amount of subscriptions. This seems plain and easy.

I do not believe we can do a more creditable thing in the way of "Lifting the Level" than by supporting this timely movement in our Church.

I believe most ministers and many laymen are subscribers to the Africo, but to be sure of getting in touch with all the sessions I sent to every minister and clerk of session a copy of the issue in which the article appeared.

Some of the ministers, I find, are a bit timid about presenting such matters to their congregations. Where the congregations

are not conversant with the vital problems of the Church either the minister or some other person possessing the ability must give the needed information without hesitancy. If the minister has done his whole duty among his members why should he hesitate in presenting to them any program of the Church soliciting their support? Don't let us fall down on this matter.

To recapitulate: tabulate the names and addresses of those persons of our congregations or friends of our congregations who are willing to contribute to the program,—not only known contributors, but probable contributors. We are not asked in this report for any amount of subscriptions; so do not bother your heads about that.

Now, I beg of you, please let me have these lists asked for, if you can, not later than November 15th, or you may send list direct to the chairman, Mr. Will H. Hays, Room 800, 522 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Yours for the success of this program,

EDWARD B. HARRIS.

Box 584,

Crewe, Va.

In whatever light we view religion it appears solemn and venerable. It is a temple full of majesty, to which the worshipers may approach with comfort, in the hope of obtaining grace and finding mercy; but where they cannot enter without being inspired with awe. If we may be permitted to compare spiritual with natural things, religion resembles not those scenes of natural beauty where every object smiles. It cannot be likened to the gay landscape or the flowery field. It resembles more the august and sublime appearances of Nature—the lofty mountain, the expanded ocean, and the starry firmament, at the sight of which the mind is at once overawed and delighted; and, from the union of grandeur with beauty, drives a pleasing but a serious devotion.—Blair.

Give us that calm certainty of truth, that nearness to Thee, that conviction of the reality of life to come, which we shall need to bear us through the troubles of this.—H. W. Beecher.

## YADKIN WESTERN DISTRICT CONVENTION.

The 35th annual Sunday School Convention of the Western District of Yadkin Presbytery met at Mount Vernon Presbyterian church near Woodleaf, on Thursday, August 20th, 1925. The Convention opened with a short song service. The opening prayer was by Mr. Wallace Gibson. Then there was music by the choir, after which the welcome address was delivered by Mr. C. F. Phifer, who, in a most cordial manner, welcomed the Convention to the church and to the homes of the people. This address was responded to by Mr. Jno. A. Smoot of Mocksville.

The annual address was delivered by the retiring President, Mr. Wm. A. Cowan. He selected for his subject, "Why I Attend the Convention." He spoke of the many benefits to be received by attending the Convention, and why each Superintendent should attend.

The roll of the Convention was called by the Corresponding Secretary. The superintendents and delegates were enrolled. The following ministers were present: Revs. J. A. Ramseur, W. A. Hawkins, W. T. Byrd, J. M. Morton, B. F. Murray, D. D., and Rev. J. G. Murray. Rev. and Mrs. Mayberry were accorded seats as corresponding members. Short, but very interesting addresses were made by each.

The following persons were elected as officers: Mr. Jno. A. Smoot, President; Mr. W. A. Howard, Vice-President; Mrs. Samuel Massey, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Senora Payton, Assistant Secretary; Mr. Jno. H. Smith, Corresponding Secretary; Rev. W. A. Hawkins, financial Secretary; Mrs. S. M. Murray, Treasurer.

After the report of the local committee the collection was taken by Mr. L. W. Ellis. The amount was \$5.25.

The meeting adjourned to open Friday morning at 9 o'clock.

The Convention opened on Friday morning at 9 o'clock with a short song service. Rev. J. A. Ramseur made a short talk on the "Good Shepherd." After this Bible Study was conducted by Rev. B. F. Murray, D. D. He selected the first chapter of Genesis as a chapter for study. This was a very interesting and helpful study. Rev. Murray made a brief but interesting talk on evolution, outlining the origin of man, and showing that man did not come from the ape nor the monkey, but was created by God in His own image. This seemed to be a very profitable meeting.

At 10 o'clock the business of the Convention was taken up. The appointment of committees and reports from the schools were made. Some very interesting talks were given by the Superintendents.

Friday afternoon the music for the meeting was furnished by Mt. Tabor Junior choir. Their music was enjoyed by all. The first on the program for the afternoon was the departmental Conferences—Children's Division. Mrs. J. L. Hollowell being absent, Mr. Jno. H. Smith made a brief talk on the Children's Division. Mrs. A. D. Lord spoke on the Young People's Division. She stated the ages that are included under this heading and the principles by which she thinks a Sunday school might be improved, mentioning loyalty and spirituality.

Mr. W. A. Howard made a very interesting talk on the Adult Department showing how the adults of today are being improved by the Sunday school, and the necessity of having the adults in the Sunday school.

Short talks were made by Mr. Smith and Mr. Marsh on forms of Organized Classes.

"How to Keep a Constant Supply of Workers in the Sunday School" was the subject of a splendid paper by Miss Lore-

na Stevenson of Freedom Sunday school. "The Importance of the Devotional Service in the Sunday School" was the subject of a paper read by Miss Anna Rankins.

A D. V. B. S. demonstration, conducted by Mr. L. W. Ellis, was very interesting and helpful. Mr. Ellis is well experienced in the D. V. B. S. work and his service deserves commendation.

Rev. A. B. Moseley, of the A. M. E. Zion church, was accorded a seat as a corresponding member and made a short talk.

A collection of \$6.00 was taken for Miss Lorena Stevenson whose home had been destroyed by fire.

Paper, "The Value of an Organized Class," by Miss Mattie Harris and an open forum conducted by Mr. Jno. H. Smith, followed. Many Sunday school problems were discussed and suggestions as to how to solve them were offered.

Friday night's session was opened with music by the Mt. Vernon choir. Prayer was offered by Rev. J. G. Murray. This being a popular meeting some interesting papers were read. The subjects of the papers were as follows: "What is the Main Business of the Sunday School?" by Mr. James Waddell. Miss Esther Conner beautifully illustrated The Qualifications of a Good Teacher. Mrs. Senora Payton read an inspiring and helpful paper, "Can the Sunday School Reach Its Goal Without the Religious Training in the Home?"

Paper by Miss Edith Tatum, "Why Should Special Attention Be Given to Our Catechism?" Solo by Mr. Jno. H. Smith.

"The Way to a Prosperous Land is to Your Soul," his own composition.

Address, "Enlisting the Young People in Christian Service," by Rev. J. A. Ramseur. He said that the Church needs young men volunteers who will work willingly and who will come to the church because it is the house of God. We also need cultured men.

Mr. G. R. Marsh made a very interesting talk on the work of the School of Methods. Dr. A. D. Lord and Rev. Dr. Dockery also made short talks.

A collection of \$6.20 was taken by Mr. H. C. Cowan and Mr. W. A. Howard.

Saturday morning the Convention opened with a short praise service. The Bible Hour was conducted by Dr. Murray, subject, "The Birth of Christ," Scripture, Matt. 1:16-25. The talk made by Dr. Murray was very interesting and helpful.

Mr. G. R. Marsh made a very helpful talk on "Standard Records and How to Keep Them."

The Catechism contest was conducted by Mrs. Murray. The winner was Miss Helen Phifer, of Cameron Sabbath School, of Elmwood.

Sunday morning, August 23, at 9:45 the Model Sunday School was conducted by Mr. G. R. Marsh. A large number of delegates and members of the church and school were present on time. The officers for the whole Sunday school were as follows:

Supt., Mr. G. R. Marsh, S. S. M.; Assistant Supt., Mrs. Senora Payton; Secretary, Mrs. Samuel Massey; Supt. Adult Division, Mr. Jno. H. Smith; Supt. Young People's Division, Mrs. Lucy Dulin; Supt. of Children's Division, Miss Maggie L. Knox; Usher, Mr. Enoch Knox; organist, Miss Martha L. Smith.

The teachers were Mr. Jno. H. Smith, Mr. W. A. Howard, Mr. J. A. Smoot, Mrs. Lucy Dulin, and Miss Maggie L. Knox.

There were 95 persons present at school and the collection was \$3.10. The lesson was reviewed by Mr. Jno. H. Smith and Mr. W. A. Howard.

At 11 A. M., the annual sermon was preached by Rev. J. M. (Continued on page 4)