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HOME MISSION LESSONS,

ISSUED BY THE

WOMEN'S BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY.

PREPARED BY

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Lesson III. Negroes

1. When, where and how were Africans introduced into America?

1620 is a year made memorable in American history, by the landing of the pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, in pursuit of religious liberty. But, perhaps, it is not so well known that in this same year, or one year earlier, we find a record of this fact—"A Dutch vessel, sailing up the James river, landed at Jamestown, Va., and offered for sale, at auction, twenty Africans. These were purchased by planters and made slaves for life."

2. What can you say of the growth of the system thus inaugurated?

At first it gained ground slowly, but by the end of fifty years after its introduction the system of slavery was fairly established in the United States. The sun of 1776, another year rendered famous by the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and bearing in our minds, as a nation, the impress of freedom, shone upon 300,000 slaves. Later, the victory at Yorktown struck no shackles from their limbs, and as the years went on, they multiplied, until 1862 recorded more than 4,000,000 sons and daughters of Africa, whose lives were made bitter by hard bondage in America.

3. What was the status of the negro while in slavery?

"The slaves were regarded as chattels. They had no legal redress for injuries received; no power to receive or hold property, except in some cases, with the master's permission; they were legally disabled from entering into the marriage contract—marriage (so called) resting wholly on the master's consent, and dissolvable at his pleasure; they were without right to the services, or even the persons, of wife or children; incompetent as witnesses against a white man; and visited with severe penalties for the crime of learning to read or write, these penalties also extending to any daring thus to teach them."

4. What opportunity for religious culture was given to the negro while in bondage?

"The native African, fresh from his fetich worship, seems an unpromising subject, even for the Christian philanthropist. But, though degraded, he was recognized as human, sinful, accountable, in need and capable of redemption through Christ. The obligation to bring him to a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Christ, was practically recognized by many ministers in the South, as well as by pious masters and mistresses. In many Christian families the domestics were called in at family devotions to hear the Scriptures read, and kneel as prayer was offered to

God. On Sunday, masters and slaves usually attended service in the same meeting house, the latter generally occupying seats in the rear or the galleries. In the case of Baptists, when slaves gave evidence of conversion, they were, upon relation of their experience, received into the church, after baptism, and sat at the Lord's table with their masters. It is estimated that in 1850 the whole number of negro Baptists in the country was about 150,000. In some cases the negroes were also gathered in Sunday schools for instruction, which was necessarily entirely *oral*, as the eyes of a slave could not gaze upon, nor his hands handle, the pages of a book."

Leader.—These statements are made in justice to a considerable number of Christian slaveholders, who were not indifferent to the religious welfare of their bondsmen.

5. When and how were the slaves at last freed?

Jan. 1, 1863, there went out from the city of Washington a proclamation bearing the signature of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, and declaring *free* those hitherto held in slavery in our land. It was a *war* measure, so men say, but who, that believes in God, does not see in the liberation of these slaves the hand of Him who sees the afflictions of the oppressed, and whose ear is ever open to the voice of those who cry unto him by reason of their bondage?

6. After their emancipation, by what popular name were these people known, and where do they live?

They were called Freedmen, and although a number have removed to other sections, the masses of them continue to live in those states known collectively as "The South."

7. Notwithstanding what has been said of the attention given by many Christians to the religious training of their slaves, what was the condition of the negroes generally during the period immediately succeeding the emancipation?

We can not answer this question better than by quoting from the report of Rev. H. C. Fish, who, soon after the proclamation of emancipation, was sent by the Board of the "American Baptist Home Mission Society" to Washington, D. C., to inquire into the condition of the freed people, who, by thousands, had flocked thither. He brought back a gloomy picture of their situation, temporally and spiritually, telling of 15,000 "contrabands" in Washington and Alexandria, often half-clad, lodging in shanties, sheds, old slave pens, tents and barracks, seven to fifteen persons occupying a room about twelve feet square, men, women, and children crowded



together in these close quarters—a sight to make one shudder.

"The distinguishing traits of humanity," he wrote, "are nearly effaced. Most of them have no more self-reliance or capacity for self-help than children, and no idea of economy or accumulation.

"In some sense these contrabands are a very religious people. They are excitable, impressionable, seemingly devout in a very high degree, and there is, no doubt, much real piety among them. But it often has with it a strange mixture of ignorance, superstition, and even downright immorality. The moral feelings are benumbed. As to conscience, the whole thing seems rubbed out. While very religious, their religion is destitute of morality."

8. What provision was early made for the education of these freed people?

"The education of the negro," says Dr. Haygood, "began even before the close of the war. The government expended large sums of money through the Freedman's Bureau; northern benevolence poured millions of dollars into the south to teach, enlighten, lift up, and Christianize the emancipated people; and in due time the southern states began to make appropriations of public money to institutions that best prepared colored men and women to teach in the common schools. The churches of the north, through organized societies, raised money to carry on among the colored people the work of Christian education."

9. What can you say of the number of colored youth attending school and of progress in education?

Dr. Morehouse, in the *Home Mission Monthly* for March, 1894, basing his statements on the latest government report, states that in the former slave states the colored school enrollment is 1,289,944, or 18.5 per cent of 6,954,840 colored population in these states. There are probably a million boys and girls of school age not in schools of any kind.

The number of colored public schools is estimated as about 22,000 with 24,000 colored teachers; of these about 15,000 are males and 9,000 females. The average of monthly wages paid in six states is \$27.35. In nine states colored schools, including those in the city and country, are maintained on an average of only three months in a year.

Dr. Mitchell, in his address, "Higher Education and the Negro," says that this inadequate provision is due, not from want of will, but of means. The poverty of the south is yet great. He adds, the work of teaching in the colored public schools of the south has all been relegated to negro teachers.

Dr. Morgan, in the *Home Mission Monthly* for December, 1897, says:

"Besides all the philanthropic work inaugurated by Northern capital, there has been established in all the Southern states a public school system for the equal benefit of white and colored children. In the North, colored youth can attend white schools, colleges, and universities, but in the South there are separate schools, and colored pupils are not permitted in white schools. . . . Their public schools are, as yet, not of a high order, being taught almost

entirely by negro teachers, very many of whom are but poorly prepared for their work. The schoolhouses, especially in the country, are poor. The schools are not well equipped with books or apparatus, and continue but a few months in the year. Nevertheless, they are accomplishing much good, and are being improved from year to year. . . . The Southern states are entitled to great credit for what has already been done."

We have only to say "Tuskegee" to remind us of the magnificent achievements along the line of intelligent and scientific *Industrial Education* under the guidance of Booker T. Washington, himself a notable example of the possibilities of the race.

Dr. Haygood, whose familiarity with the subject makes him excellent authority, refers to the introduction of *Industrial Training* into all their leading educational institutions as "an unmixed blessing to the colored people, helping their scholarship, discipline, and the building up of self-reliant, self-maintaining manhood and womanhood."

Nor may we omit to mention the fact that connected with some of the best educational institutions for the negro are *professional departments*; most numerous and popular are the theological schools, next the medical, and last and thus far least, the law department. The negro preacher has most abundant opportunity, the negro doctor is winning his way, and the negro lawyer has made his appearance. The editor of the *Nashville American*, referring to the American National convention of colored Baptists held in 1890, says: "Bodies of colored men like this often surprise us in the general intelligence, dignity, and appropriateness with which the business of the body is transacted, and we do say that for people held in slavery for more than two hundred years, and without educational development, the negroes are indeed surprising close observers in their advancing steps."

Leader.—All this is true, and written for our encouragement, but let it not be forgotten that the masses still remain in pitiful and alarming ignorance and degradation. Let the good work go on. Much remains to be done.

10. What may be said of the religious tendencies of the American negro?

"The negro is a Protestant Christian," writes A. D. Mayo, in the *Forum* (Dec., 1890), "and this fact is of profound significance in his adjustment in Southern society, which still remains the great Protestant stronghold of the nation. The Catholic church has lost a greater number of colored adherents in the Creole country of the Southwest during the past thirty years than it has gained among the colored people elsewhere. The religious character of the negro, crude and half pagan in the lower regions, and still not quite sure of complete junction with the common moralities, is still one of the most hopeful elements in the evolution of this people to good citizenship in a nation founded in prayer and reliance on Almighty God.

Of the ten millions of negroes in the United States, a large proportion are members of Christian churches. One million six hundred

thousand are reported in 1899 as members of Baptist churches; nearly as many are enrolled in Methodist churches, and there are also Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and others.

When the war closed the negroes had very few and very poor houses of worship, but now, all through the South, may be found meeting-houses which they have built chiefly with their own money. Many of these are comfortable and convenient, and some commodious and costly. It is remarkable, and to their credit, that out of their meager earnings they have been willing to devote such relatively large amounts to the building of houses of worship.

11. What can you say of Catholic missions among the negroes?

The *American Ecclesiastical Review* presents a tabulated statement of the work in progress in the Catholic missions among American negroes (1890). The returns are incomplete, but they account for 138,213 colored Catholics, 25 churches, 31 priests, and 99 schools with 6,093 pupils. There were christened in 1889, 4,907 negro children and 852 adults. There were then 40 students in training for the negro missions. In Arkansas there were five communities of religious women, whose sole work was in negro schools, and their work has been aided by generous donations from Protestants.

Leader.—The writer previously quoted closes his article in the *Forum* of December, 1890, with a statement of opinion which is at least suggestive. He says: "The progress of the negro is bound up with the advancement of at least a third of the lower white population of the Southern states. In this great body of several millions of uneducated white people is found the most obstinate hindrance to the rise of a superior class of the colored folks. A national aid to education that would give to every white child of this class a good six months' schooling annually for six years, would in a generation lift the most grievous burden from the back of the negro. Now the colored man is at the bottom of a deep ditch and the lower stratum of the whites above him determined to keep him in his old position. Higher up the superior race is getting off the back of its lower brotherhood. The sooner the whole American people in the most practical way help the lower Southern white man in his emergence from his present condition, the better for him, for the South, and incomparably better for the negro. Not over the heads of the Southern people, but along with the nobler and progressive elements of the new Southern life, must proceed the mighty national mission work of training this great and rapidly increasing multitude of new-made citizens for their final position in American society."

THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY AMONG THE FREED PEOPLE. (1862-1902.)

[Compiled mainly from the Jubilee Volume and the Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Society and *Home Mission Monthly*.]

From 1832 to 1862, or during the first thirty years of its existence, the work of the American

Baptist Home Mission Society in the South was very limited, and after the organization of the "Southern Baptist Convention," in 1845, almost nothing was done among either whites or blacks, until in the fullness of time Jehovah burst open the long barred doors, letting in light and liberty. Several missionaries and fourteen assistants were appointed for the Southern field before April, 1864.

The method of the society contemplated three things: (1) General missionary work; (2) ministers' institutes; (3) educational work proper upon which the chief stress is laid.

From 1869 the work of the society among the Freedmen may be regarded as *established*. At this date the higher schools planted and supported by the society numbered four. From time to time property was purchased, and buildings were erected, and school added to school, until the report for the year closing March 31, 1902, gives twenty-five schools for the colored people, supported wholly or in part by the society.

The number of teachers for the school year 1901-02 was 274. Of these 132 were white, 142 colored. The enrollment of pupils for the year was 6,198; young men, 2,703, young women, 3,495. Of those preparing to preach, 486; of those preparing to teach, 1,833; 258 in the missionary training course, 44 in the nurse training course, and 2,614 have received systematic training in some line of industrial work.

The "Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society" (Boston) co-operates with the American Baptist Home Mission Society in supporting, in whole or part, teachers in its various schools.

The result of the labors thus put forth during the past thirty-seven years is seen in the growth in numbers, intelligence, and efficiency of our colored Baptists in the South.

The 4,000,000 of slaves are now represented by about 10,000,000 freed people, while the 400,000 Baptists have grown to 1,600,000. In 1862 there were no general organizations of colored Baptists. At this time there is in every state a convention for missionary, educational, and Sunday-school purposes. In 1862 the colored man in the South who could read was a curiosity; in 1899 thirty-two religious periodicals were published by and for the colored Baptists, while other papers have large circulations. Educated pastors and teachers are coming to be counted by the tens of thousands, and intelligent men and women by hundreds of thousands.

A movement is now in progress looking toward the organization of Negro State Educational societies to co-operate heartily with the Home Mission Society in organizing, unifying, and rendering efficient all negro educational work. This plan is already in successful operation in Virginia and Tennessee.

There is also a plan of co-operation which unites the Home Mission Society, the Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, the white State Convention, and the Negro State Convention in carrying on especially missionary work among the Negroes. A very important series of "New Era Institutes" are being held, where lectures are delivered by both white and colored

pastors, and where a great deal of good is being done in fitting pastors, Sunday-school superintendents, teachers and others for more efficient work. This plan is now in successful operation in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Alabama, and it is hoped that before long all the Baptist forces, North and South, will be working together to promote the highest intellectual, moral, and religious interests of the negroes.

THE WOMEN'S BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY. (1877-1902.)

The work of the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society among Negroes was inaugurated three months after its organization, by the commissioning of Miss Joanna P. Moore, who had already devoted the greater part of fourteen years to work in Arkansas and Louisiana. From this beginning the work has steadily grown, until with the opening of 1900 the missionaries of the society among the colored people number fifty, of whom thirty-one are white and nineteen colored. There are stationed at thirty different points in eleven states and one territory.

In the beginning the society employed only white missionaries, it being impossible to find colored women qualified for service, but the fifth year of its history is signalized by the appointment of three "Bible Women," or colored assistants. By 1892 the terms "Bible Women," "Helpers," and "Assistants" had disappeared, and we find all referred to in the annual report as missionaries. This means that the time has come when the society can and does employ only such colored workers as are qualified to bear its regular commission, having received special training for the work required.

The term *Missionary Teachers* appears first in 1882, and is used to designate appointees who, in accordance with a plan of co-operation between the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society, are assigned positions in the schools under the care of the first-named society. Such a missionary is called, sometimes preceptress, sometimes lady principal, and sometimes matron. But by whatever title designated, she is expected to be to the girls an intelligent, wise, faithful, Christian mother, instructing and training them to take proper care of their bodies and their souls, as well as their minds, impressing the principles and practices of Christian girlhood and the development of Christian womanhood, including a knowledge of domestic duties.

A notable feature of the sixteenth year (1892-93) was the inauguration of the Missionary Training Departments for colored workers, in connection with schools of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, that society agreeing to provide and equip the buildings, and the Women's Society to support the teachers and secure financial aid for needy and worthy students.

The report for 1901-02 shows that 58 missionaries were employed by the society among the negroes; of these 4 were in charge of Missionary Training Schools, 13 were preceptresses and matrons, and 51 field missionaries.

In the *house to house* visiting, missionaries carry sunshine into many gloomy and desolate places, and often gain an influence over women who do not attend meetings and could not in any other way be reached. *Women's Meetings* are conducted with excellent results, and have often proved training schools for church workers. *Mothers' Conferences* are bearing blessed fruit. The *Fireside School* is a power for good. *Industrial schools* are crowded with children, who are not only greatly benefited personally by the lessons in industry, purity, and religion there taught, but who carry these lessons into the homes whence they come.

We have not time to tell of the great work done by these missionaries in behalf of education, mainly by creating sentiment and encouraging and helping parents to send their children to public schools; they have also been instrumental in persuading many older boys and girls and young men and women to attend the schools of the "American Baptist Home Mission Society." Many *conversions* among the children and young people in their Industrial Schools and Sunday-school classes, and of adults in the homes visited, gladden their hearts from time to time.

At the foundation of every method used in the *Bible*, the great need and value of which, even to the present day, cannot be overestimated. "Bible truths," writes one, "are transforming *mothers*, and thus making easier and more hopeful our work with and for the *children*."

Joanna P. Moore says: "The more I see of these people the more anxious I am to tenderly and patiently encourage and strengthen the good that is in their hearts, and with all my little store of wisdom and strength lift them into the bright sunlight of purity and intelligence. Our work is not understood. I do not know that it can be described so that it can be understood. We reach society at every point, permeating every part with Gospel truth."

Afro-Americans, 2c.

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Twenty-five Years' Work Among Negroes by the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society, by Mary G. Burdette, Price 5c.

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