

T W E L F T H
A N N U A L R E P O R T

OF THE

ASSOCIATION FOR THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

OF THE

N E G R O E S ,

I N L I B E R T Y C O U N T Y , G E O R G I A .

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TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT.

FOR 1846.

THE last anniversary of this Association, from the large number in attendance, from the good feeling prevalent, and the interest manifested, was calculated to refresh our spirits and to animate us with new zeal. At the close of that meeting, we felt like one who through much toil and weariness had brought his burden so far and laid it down : and now must he lift it up again and go on, night and day for another year, not knowing what might befall him, nor how heavy that burden might become. Yet we felt no discouragement. Why should we? If this work be of the Lord, He will prosper it. He has prospered it. He has inclined the hearts of his people to love it, and their hands to labour for it: He has given it favour in the eyes of all our kind friends and good neighbours: He has even graciously appeared for it, and in special seasons of mercy has poured out His Holy Spirit, and drawn the souls of many exposed to wrath, to the cross of the Divine Redeemer. God hath sealed it, blessed be His name. He hath sustained the work, and He will sustain it. We would not be faithless, but believing.

With these confident reliances we went forth to the labours of the year, and by the good hand of God upon us, we are brought to its close.

LABOURS OF THE YEAR.

The Reports of different Members of the Association, for the past year, are the following :

First : — From the Rev. J. S. LAW. — Another year has passed, and in reviewing my labours, I am constrained to ask, what good have I accomplished? or what good has been effected in the field of my operations? So far as human observation can reach, perhaps the most appropriate answer to these questions would be, *nothing*. But perhaps through the ministrations of the word during the past twelve months, a single soul may have been saved, and though this may be regarded as little, when compared with the

hundreds that are still walking in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, yet considered in itself, it is a good of immense magnitude: more than a compensation for a life-time of the most arduous labours. Perhaps a backslider has been brought back from his wanderings, a wavering one confirmed in the faith, a sorrowful heart comforted, and some advanced in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Perhaps all the good that has been done consists simply in the prevention of evils that would have occurred had the work not been performed. And if only one sinner has been brought to Christ, or one backslider reclaimed, or any of God's dear children confirmed, comforted and strengthened, or if only greater evil hath been prevented, we feel that we have not laboured in vain, nor spent our strength for nought.

As hitherto, I have given, during the summer and fall months, two-thirds, and during the winter and spring months, one-half my time to the stations North Newport and Hutchinson.

North Newport. — The attendance of this station during the year has been for the most part large, and the behaviour and attention during the services, almost invariably good. So far as we may judge from external appearances, I think I can safely say, that the interest of the people who attend at this station in the religious instructions afforded them, has not suffered any diminution. And though there is no awakening in the congregation, and nothing of very special interest, yet so long as they are punctual in attending upon the ministrations of the word, the heart of the teacher will be cheered with the hope of good to come.

The average attendance of young men and women in the *Sabbath School* during the summer and fall months, has been from *seventy-five* to *eighty*. It was much larger during last winter and spring — the falling off I believe to be entirely owing to the hooping cough — for up to the time of its appearance on our plantations the number of small children in the school was increasing, but so soon as it was known that this disease, so fatal to children, was on some of the plantations, I missed all the younger and many of the older children (I presume those who had never had the disease) from the school. There are a goodly number of the adults belonging to the Newport congregation who regularly recite the lesson with the school, but I do not include them in the number of scholars. I regret to state, that during the past year there has been only four *Inquirers* under instruction at this station.

Hutchinson. — The attendance at this station was very good during the greater part of the year, and we have enjoyed some very interesting and solemn meetings at this place. Since the latter part of the fall the congregations have been very small, not exceeding a hundred — previously, the number ranged from two to three hundred. I know of no cause for this falling off, except my having been compelled, by the providence of God, to disappoint them some two or three times without having it in my power to give them notice that I could not attend. As the attendance was good up to the time of my failures to meet my appointments, I hope this is the only excuse, and that I shall soon get them back again. There was a manifest improvement the last time I was there.

I have so far been baffled in all my efforts to establish a *Sabbath School* at this station. I have made several good beginnings but every year have circumstances beyond my control, operated to break up the school before the end of the year. The prospects were very flattering the beginning of the last year, but the hooping cough came and all the children disappeared from the school, and it will take some little time to get them back.

I have, during the year, performed several marriage ceremonies, attended one funeral and preached two or three funeral sermons. As it respects *plantation preaching*, I have done very little, and though I highly approve of it, yet, from circumstances needless to be mentioned, I do not design doing much of this kind of work.

Lastly. The Lord of the Vineyard still withholds the early and latter rain from that part of His Vineyard in which it is my lot to labour, so that all my labours are comparatively barren and unfruitful. The withholding of the early and latter rain from the fields and vineyards of his ancient people, was one of God's methods of correcting that people for their faults, a punishment for their backslidings; and may we not regard the withholding the showers of His grace as an evidence of His being displeased with us, and as a just punishment for forsaking Him, the fountain of living waters, and hewing out unto ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water? May we soon learn, that they who observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies.

JOSIAH S. LAW.

Second: — From the GRAVEL HILL SABBATH SCHOOL. — I now send you a report of our Sabbath School for coloured persons, on

Gravel Hill, for the year 1846. Our school opened on the first Sabbath in May, and continued in operation until the first Sabbath in November. The school consisted of six teachers, four males and two females, and would average about twenty-five scholars. As they had the previous year gone through the catechism, we spent the past season in reviewing. They behave well in time of school, and some of them appear anxious to become acquainted with the word of God, which is able to make them wise unto salvation. But we have to acknowledge, with sorrow, that we do not know of a single case of conversion among the scholars during the last year. Yet as God, in His kind providence, has preserved the lives of the teachers and pupils, we would render Him praise, and feel it to be our bounden duty to pray with and for them, and render them all the assistance in our power, hoping the means used may still be blessed and that they may soon become converted to God.

W E. W. QUARTERMAN, *Superintendent.*

Third: — From the JONESVILLE SABBATH SCHOOL. — Though I know of no conversions among the members of our school, yet are we not left without encouragement in our labours. Our scholars (varying from fifty to sixty-five in number) are punctual in their attendance, orderly and attentive in behaviour, and apt in learning. Number of teachers, seven.

May the Lord strengthen our faith in His promises, and give us grace to persevere in labour for His glory, and the good of souls.

EDWARD QUARTERMAN, *Superintendent.*

I would take occasion to mention, in connection with the religious instruction of the negroes, at this *Retreat*, that one of our Pastors, the Rev. Mr. Axson, has conducted regularly during the summer a *weekly Lecture for the Negroes*, which has been fully and profitably attended.

Fourth; — *The Sabbath School on the Colonel's Island*, in consequence of the absence of one of the families engaged in it, has not been conducted in the same place of meeting, nor in so public a manner as represented in our last report, but it has been continued with good success and with special reference to two plantations only, although people occasionally attended from other plantations.

My *annual visits*, to the several coloured Sabbath Schools at the *summer Retreats*, were prevented, after every preparation was made for the purpose, by sickness and Providential occurrences, a matter of sincere regret on my part, since these visits have always been most encouraging and refreshing to my own spirit, and have apparently been attended with good effects upon teachers and scholars.

The stations which have fallen immediately under *my own care*, have been the same as the last year.

The congregations at *Sunbury*, until the end of August, were good for the population of the neighbourhood. During the autumnal months the number was diminished by rain and prevalent sickness. The black population of this neighbourhood has been reduced by removals, and the number of whites living near and worshipping at the station is small, nor are they supplied by any regular ministry of their own denomination, except once in three months, when they have the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper administered. Under these circumstances, the negroes feel and act, as sheep without a shepherd. They are also destitute of efficient and engaged watchmen. There is no prospect at present of any improvement in the state of the Church in Sunbury. But it will not be advisable to relinquish the station. There are souls to be sought out and saved there: and during the summer months we have a very good and attentive congregation of whites.

The interest of the people in the *Sabbath School* continues unabated, and our average attendance has been *sixty-eight*. The number of *Inquirers*, three. It is but justice to remark, that the congregations of negroes on the Sabbath, have been more than ordinarily attentive to the preaching of the gospel.

The *Midway* congregations have continued the same as in past years, both in respect to numbers and attention. Our appointments were suspended for several weeks in the summer while our house of worship was undergoing repairs. The building has been newly floored, raised higher from the ground, newly seated throughout, and is substantially repaired, and now very comfortable both to preacher and hearers. And one happy result is, that while we have better and larger accommodations for the people, our congregations have evidently increased. The people have felt grateful for this kindness done them.

The *Sabbath School* has averaged eighty-one. It was suspended

from the 1st of September to the 1st of November, on account of the prevalence of the hooping cough on the plantations: and I could but observe at all the stations from the absence of the children, kept at home either on account of having the cough, or from fear of taking it, how very like the congregations were in kind, to those that waited on my ministry when I first commenced preaching to the negroes in the county, *before* the Sabbath Schools were opened. The hearers were then almost all *adults*.

The average number of *Inquirers* at this station has been five, and we have had as high as eleven. There have been some new cases of awakening. Time only can determine the genuineness of these impressions. Some have been received into the church.

On the 9th of August, the junior Pastor of Midway Church, the Rev. Mr Axson, held his *Pastor's meeting with the coloured members and congregation of his church*. Due notice was given of the day, and at his request I attended with him: and he had also the attendance of a number of his white members, male and female, who came with a view of partaking in the benefits of the meeting and testifying their interest in it. The attendance of white members and friends would have been much larger had a more extensive and timely notice been given them of the contemplated meeting.

At 11 in the morning, a *public prayer meeting* was held and conducted by the Pastor. The house was well filled. Two of the coloured male members were called upon to pray, which they did — as it is customary with them in our prayer meetings — with great earnestness and humility and to edification.

After an intermission of ten minutes, *morning service* was opened. The house was now literally crowded and not a seat to spare. The whites occupied the seats on either side of the pulpit. There must have been 300 persons in the house, and a gentleman who was obliged to go out, on account of the intense heat, estimated the number that could not get in at 100. Mr. Axson preached a sermon with an application both to the members of the church and to the men of the world, and the uttermost order and stillness and attention prevailed throughout.

The congregation being dismissed, Mr. Axson then called together *the Watchmen* and held a *watchmen's meeting*. Each watchman, when called upon, gave in a report of the state of religion on the plantations under his care, and the manner of life exhibited by

the members of the church. The reports were on the whole favourable. He then addressed them on the nature and duties of their office, giving them suitable cautions and exhortations, and dismissed them, after offering up prayer to God.

In the afternoon he assembled the *children* and *youth*. They occupied the front seats. The house was as crowded as it was in the forenoon. It was an interesting sight. There were full two hundred children, youth and adults, who came forward as members of the Sabbath School. They were all fresh in health, decently dressed, and animated by the occasion. At the request of the Pastor I examined the school, on the Lord's Prayer, the commandments, the creed, and about one half the doctrinal catechism, making a selection of the more important questions; although the scholars had not been over this catechism for some months, yet their answers were gratifying to their Pastor and showed that they had not attended the school in vain. Mr. Axson then addressed the school and closed with prayer and the Doxology.

Then followed an *Inquiry meeting*, which completed the work of the day; and I believe that all who enjoyed the privileges of this day could at the conclusion say, it was good to be there. The effect upon the people themselves both old and young, was decidedly beneficial.

What a wide-spread and happy influence would Pastors in Southern churches exert over the Negroes, were they to adopt some such method as this of calling them together at stated times? surely it is their duty and how easily may they perform it? How cordially will the people respond to their call? How can a Pastor remain a stranger to any portion of his flock, however distant or poor or despised? what saith the Master? "To the poor the Gospel is preached: and blessed is he who shall not be offended in me." It is the glory and the joy of the disciple "to be as his master."

There have been about six persons received into Midway the past year, who have been from time to time in our Inquiry meetings. The appearances at this station have been more favourable of late, and since re-opening the sabbath school the number of scholars has increased.

Pleasant Grove has been our most prosperous and interesting station during the year. The number attending Divine Service has been as large as ever it was, and we have frequently had over-

flowing Congregations. The Sabbath School has averaged 73, but suffered diminution in the autumn (and up to the present time) from the hooping cough.

In the month of January we observed an unusual attention and attendance at this station, which continued through February, March and April; the number of inquirers increasing to an average of seven. We enjoyed some sabbaths upon which there appeared to be a peculiar impression upon the people. The addresses of our venerable Elder Mr. John Ashmore to the Sabbath School, increased the seriousness. At our communion in May we received eight persons on profession and one who had been for some years an excommunicated member of one of the churches in the county. Besides these, there were nearly as many more recommended to apply for examination to other churches with which they preferred uniting. At our last communion we received two more on profession, whose serious impressions commenced the last winter and spring; some cases still remain over. The seriousness declined during the summer months and we have now nothing more than ordinary interest in our services.

But we desire to be grateful to God for this refreshing season, this quiet ingathering of souls into His Kingdom; we hope that they may continue to adorn the profession which they have made, even unto the end.

I have preached at *Newport* twice, and met the children and youth there in the Sabbath School. On one of these Sabbaths there were 120 present, on the other 90. I spent also, an interesting sabbath at *Hutchinson*.

Meetings of Church members, with special reference to their good, have been held at Sunbury, Midway and Pleasant Grove. One feature in our religious history for the past year deserves to be recorded: there has been an unusual number of *backslidden*, *suspended* and *excommunicated members, restored* to the communion of the churches. This is an indication of good to Zion.

The usual number of *Plantations* were served with evening meetings in the winter, but in this necessary part of my labour I have been more than ordinarily interrupted by absences, indisposition and domestic afflictions.

I have solemnized a number of *marriages* and attended *funerals* on different places.

CENSUS OF COLOURED MEMBERS OF THE DIFFERENT CHURCHES.

I have, through Divine favour, during the year, been enabled to visit a large majority of the plantations in our District, (the 15th) and to obtain on the plantations from the drivers, watchmen, or owners, an accurate return of all the negroes who *now are*, or *have been*, in membership with our churches. From the plantations which I have not visited in person, I have been careful to obtain returns, either from the owners, managers, drivers or watchmen. I do not say that the returns are perfectly accurate, I believe them to be very nearly so; perhaps the most accurate returns that have ever been made of the coloured membership of our churches. Some have died and some have removed from the District during the progress of the census. Some names may be omitted through forgetfulness or inattention: some returned that ought not to have been returned, as the individuals are members of no church at all: and some of the names themselves may not be correct. I shall have the members of each church drawn off in a neat form, in a suitable book, and properly arranged, and presented to the clerks of each of our churches.

In a population so large, so scattered, so frequently removing from place to place and changing hands and undergoing division from estates, it will require no small degree of labour and care and very frequent inquiry and revision, to keep these rolls of coloured members, in a state even approximating to perfection. I am satisfied that too little attention has been paid to this necessary part of our duty, and hope that the churches will hereafter give more time and attention to it, as it has an intimate connection with their order and prosperity.

There are two or three plantations from which I have not yet received returns. The number of Church-members upon them is not large.

I now have returns from *one hundred and forty six Owners*, including estates. There are one hundred and twenty five plantations of all sizes; and of these, ten or twelve are in the form of estates for widows and children. I find the number of plantations upon which the owners or managers *reside permanently the year round*, to be about *twenty four*: and the number upon which owners or managers reside, *one half, or a part of the year, forty-*

one ; and the number of plantations upon which *no white persons reside at all the year round, sixty.*

By which it appears that nearly *one half* the plantations in the District are without any resident owner or manager *the whole time*; being visited during the day only for business purposes, and many of them not oftener than two or three times a week. Let me add, that in consequence of the owners removing for health, entire neighbourhoods of plantations in the heart of the District, are wholly abandoned, not having a *resident* white person upon them from May to November : nor is there in the whole District one regularly organized and active *Patrol*. Now when you consider these facts, it must be admitted, that the people, if they were so disposed, have ample opportunity of doing evil, and our surprise should be, not that there are here and there transgressors, but that the wicked and unprincipled among them do not indulge themselves more frequently. There is unquestionably an influence for good resting upon the people : we should be grateful for it, and pray and labour that it may continue and be of the right kind.

As accurately as I can make out my returns, (and from some plantations the names of the drivers were not designated) there are *seventy drivers who are* members of the different churches : of these sixty are in *good standing* and ten are *not*. Many of these drivers are intelligent, faithful and decidedly pious, whose influence on their own plantations and in the community, over their own colour, is of the most satisfactory kind. We are well aware, that as a class, they are exposed to peculiar and strong temptations and have great opportunities of leading improper lives. That they are, in so remarkable a manner brought into connection with the churches, and under the restraints of Christian profession and principle, should be matter of thankfulness to God.

The number of negroes belonging to *Sunbury Baptist Church*, as far as our returns go, is one hundred and sixty-one : the number to North Newport Baptist Church, five hundred and forty-three : the number to Midway Congregational Church, three hundred and seventy-seven : to Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church, thirty-one : to Hinesville and Mount Olivet Methodist Churches, twenty-one : to South Newport and Darien Baptist Churches, M'Intosh County, four : to Bryan County Baptist Church, two : making a grand total of one thousand one hundred and thirty-nine. Of this number *six* are *free* persons of colour.

As nearly as I can ascertain, there are eighty-nine either excommunicated or not in good standing, being a proportion of *one to every twelve or thirteen*. If the discipline of the churches was more *prompt*, this number would be diminished, since the cases sometimes lie over for months, and even for years. The carrying out of the discipline of coloured members, so as to secure a general and proper supervision, a just return of those who are delinquents, and a speedy settlement of cases, requires much time, patience and activity.

There are six hundred and ninety-three females, and four hundred and forty-six males, being *over one-third more of female than of male members* of the churches.

The whole number of *Congregationalists* is three hundred and seventy-seven; *Presbyterians*, thirty-one; *Methodists*, twenty-one and *Baptists*, seven hundred and ten.

The profession of one form of doctrine or another, by the negroes, judging from the returns, follows most frequently that of their *owners* or *drivers*, and *their convenience*, whether near or distant from the churches of the different denominations. The denomination that takes *the lead* on a plantation, generally keeps it.

On a majority of the plantations where there are any church members at all, *prayers are held among themselves*, either every evening or two or three evenings in the week.

The entire negro population of our District, by the tax returns of 1844, was four thousand two hundred and twelve. The number of Church-members is one thousand one hundred and thirty-nine, which embraces about *one-fourth* of the whole number. A very large proportion indeed, and a majority of the adult population.

The churches should exercise over their members a constant, strict and kind supervision. Their peculiar state of ignorance, and dependence upon us for the word of life, demands it. And we should remember that so great is this dependence, that if they are not constantly watched over, and as it were *held up*, they will decline and go back to deeper ignorance and depravity. Experience and observation have taught me, that in proportion to our fidelity in the use of means for the moral improvement of this people, in that proportion the Lord has added his blessing, and the people have made advances. This is the great principle in the government of God which we see developed in every department of human action. We should never lose sight of it.

Too many grow weary in a good work, because they see no fruit; or because the work has its ebbs and flows. This is wrong.

If we decide that it is our duty from the word and Providence of God, that such a work should be done, and done by us, we have nothing further left us than the attempt to do it: relying upon the precious and upholding promise of God: *in due time we shall reap, if we faint not.* The promise is to them that faint not. There will be causes enough in every good work to make men faint, but the promise is to them that *persevere.* Perseverance is the true test of sincerity of principle and confidence in God. He who faints, loses the reward of both. Nor must we be weary when the work seems to decline or come to a stand; or even when it wears the appearance of hopelessness. At such seasons we must gird up our loins and quit ourselves like men: the Lord may be putting our faith and love and zeal to the proof. He may be visiting us for our shortearnings and sins: the fault may be all our own. If the winds and waves impede our way, we must toil the harder in rowing. The Master is looking upon us and will presently appear for our comfort and relief. What a glorious commendation is that bestowed upon the church of Ephesus by the Lord Jesus! "And hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted?"

IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE NEGROES.

I think it my duty in this report to bring before you, the *physical condition* of the negroes in our county, and the necessity of its further improvement, in order to insure greater success in our attempts towards their moral and religious improvement.

This subject has been touched upon in previous reports, but it has not been presented with that prominence which its importance demands.

No one conversant with the state of this particular district of our county for ten or twelve years past, can fail to perceive, and candidly acknowledge, the very great advance which our planters have made in the improvement of the physical condition of their people. Greater attention is paid to their clothing, their food, their houses, their comforts, their family relations, and morality at home; and *the appearance* of the people themselves, both at

home and abroad, indicates this increased care and attention on the part of their owners.

There are several causes which have contributed largely to this happy result, and which we trust will continue to operate favourably in time to come.

The first is, *the permanency of the majority of our plantation settlements.*

The disposition to change and removal, while it has had its votaries, has never been very prevalent with our citizens. They have, therefore, considered the county *their home*; and their desire has been to educate their children to the extent of their means, give them settlements in life as near themselves as possible, and to sustain all the means of grace, without which no society of men can hope for permanent prosperity.

Considering themselves permanently settled, they have been induced to pay greater attention to the improvement of their plantations and to the comfort of their people. Few men will do more than put up the cheapest and frailest houses, and make the easiest provision for themselves and their people, who are contemplating a removal to some other more favoured region as soon as Providence shall put it in their power. This spirit of removal is the bane of all improvement, and it has been, and continues to be, one grand cause of the desolate and dilapidated appearance of large districts and hundreds of plantations in the Southern country. Hurried away by a desire for accumulation, great numbers of planters have commenced a system of removals that has resulted in the loss of their comfort, and the ruin of their fortunes: not considering that the same energy perseverance and industry essential to success wherever they go, would make them prosperous at home. Hence, have we seen whole families broken up and removed far away to better their fortunes, and others have come in and bought up their plantations upon which they grew poor, and have gone to work amassing wealth as fast as the seasons make their round. There is more in the man himself than in the place at which he lives. Another idea which has contributed largely to the increase of this spirit of removal, is, that our system of domestic slavery can maintain itself only by feeding upon immense bodies of new land. Confine it to old lands and it will die. This is somewhat a mistake. Every permanent community must in time require an enlargement of territory for the support of its increased

and increasing population. The increase of the coloured population of the Southern States is in equal ratio with the whites, and of course must require enlargement of territory for its support. This population, becoming redundant in the older slave States, must be removed to the newer ones. But while this is plain to every man, it does by no means follow that there may not remain on the old lands an amount of population sufficient for their cultivation, and a population which, under good and efficient and economical management, may not improve and prosper in a high degree. Our own county, one of the oldest in the State, dating its first settlements as far back as the days of Oglethorpe, is an evidence of the fact that old lands, under good management, may be cultivated with success without limit of time, by slave labour. The county never was in a more prosperous condition than it is at present, and the lands generally are becoming better under improved modes of manuring and cultivation; and if planters do not relax their energy and enterprise, will continue to improve in time to come. There is, and we are happy to observe it, an increasing desire to remain permanently on their estates, in the minds of planters in the Southern country, and to give themselves up more fully to the idea of *home*; and to make that home a home indeed, in respect to all its necessary and pleasant fixtures and comforts. The moral improvement of every people depends much upon their being in a good degree stationary.

Another cause is *the increased prosperity of our planters*. This cannot be doubted. They have generally become more industrious, more attentive to their business, more economical, more experienced in the cultivation of provisions and market crops: their incomes are more regular. They are consequently *able* to do more for their people, both within themselves and by employment of extra labour: and all they do for their people is so much clear gain in preserving their capital and rendering it more efficient and productive.

It has been the policy of some to lay out as little capital and time in improving their places, and increasing the comforts of their people, as possible, supposing that it is but so much capital and time wasted. This is certainly a great mistake, for besides the real satisfaction which one feels in the prevalence of order and neatness and happiness about him, and in a consciousness of discharging just obligations to his people, there is an increased value

to his Estate itself, and an improvement in health, character and efficiency in his people, which more than balances his outlay on their behalf. And what satisfaction can a man of liberality of feeling and of some reasonable resources take, in an old, dingy, broken down and decaying plantation? How little does such an establishment comport with the possession of means, or at any rate with ability within ones-self, to make it different? Solomon says, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." *Prov. 11: 24.* The obvious meaning of the passage is, that a just and liberal return and appropriation of what we acquire, is the road to blessing and prosperity. And how frequently do we see Providence stepping in and taking away from men, the wealth which His mercy bestowed upon them, when they have failed to use it properly, especially in the way of making some suitable return to those through whose instrumentality it has been acquired? It is "mercy that rejoiceth against judgment."

A third cause, is a conviction that to attend to the physical condition and prosperity of the people is *really a matter of interest.*

Nothing can be more true. Health, cheerfulness of spirit, alacrity in labour, honesty of character, purity of morals and individual industry are promoted. The people have something to live for, something to hope for and something to enjoy. Their discipline and government is easier and more pleasant: their affection for their owner and their regard for one another and the general character and interest of the plantation, are increased. We behold a consequent improvement in their circumstances, and a greater elevation of character. All this advances the value of an estate. Candid men see it and acknowledge it.

The difference that we discover between estates where the physical improvement of the people is attended to, and others where it is not, is marked indeed. We discover a difference in the general health of the old and the young: in the natural increase of the people: in their dress, industry, condition of their houses and yards, attachment to their owners, fidelity in labour, honesty in conduct, interest in religion and many other particulars. — *The actual expense* of a plantation upon which the people are neglected, one year with another, is greater than that of a plantation upon which a different system of treatment is pursued; for the waste is greater in labour, health and life. Indifference, carelessness, exposure

and bad character, lead to many losses. It is a general fact, that if you do well by your people, they will do well by you. The strongest principle in the human breast is *Interest*, with the exception of *Grace*. The world is governed by interest. The negroes have their interests as well as other men, and the more their interests are respected and attended to and identified with the interests of their owners, the happier are they, and the more profitable to their owners.

I make no question that there are planters who hear me now, if called upon, would testify that all they have done for their people has added to their own peace and prosperity as owners; nor have they found it true in their experience, that the more they have done for their people, the less have they done for themselves. We certainly ought to do much for them; and when we do for them they must be excited and encouraged to do for themselves also.

A fourth cause, is a *conviction of duty* — a conviction of duty drawn from the *word of God*.

This is the powerful and permanent cause. Said a gentleman pointing to his improvements on his place, “these are the fruits of the Religious Instruction of the *Negroes*.” And another, “formerly I gave myself no concern whatever about the marriages, or morality of my people, but since my attention has been turned to my duty towards them, I now take the liveliest concern in them and desire most earnestly to promote the improvement of all entrusted to my care.”

He who feels that his servants are immortal beings, and conscientiously desires and seeks their salvation as he hopes to meet them in peace before the judgment seat of Christ, will not be long in learning that his duty obliges him to render to them that which is just and equal in respect to things temporal, as well as things spiritual. And it is by attention to their temporal welfare in a spirit of kindness, that he demonstrates to them the sincerity of his interest in their eternal welfare, and commends to them that religion which is illustrated and confirmed by his own consistent example and life

There are those who express towards their people much love for their souls, and who commend to them religion as the one thing needful, and inculcate upon them contentment in their lot and indifference to the world, but whose entire conduct is the reverse of what they inculcate. They themselves are indeed pro-

fessors of religion, but their people behold them as covetous and grasping and driving, and as anxious after earthly goods and enjoyments as are most men of the world. Their people perceive that they are neglected in their houses, clothing, food, land to plant, opportunities of making something for themselves; that their prosperity and conveniences and comforts are passed over. Can any man, treating his servants in this manner, suppose that he will be credited in his professions, or that they will follow his advice, or delight to wait upon his instructions? I trow not. The true character of masters is seldom misunderstood by servants. It is better known to them than to their most intimate friends. Sanctimonious carriage and pharisaical cant, avail little with them. They not only wish their owners to say "be ye warmed and filled," but they wish the clothing, the houses, the meat and drink to follow from their hands.

There should be a feeling of good-will going out from Masters to servants, as from the head of the household to the different members of it. *Religion* demands this of us. And of course where this feeling truly exists it will be followed by corresponding acts of kindness and generosity. We need to feel a greater *oneness* with our servants, if I may be allowed the expression. We have it with our children; we delight to do them good, we delight in their improvement, their good appearance, their prosperity, their respectability in society: we live in them: what they are and what they possess, reflects back upon us. They are our children, we envy them not, we grudge them not. This same feeling should exist in its just measure, between masters and servants. We call them *ours*. In common language we say they *belong* to us. Hence we should feel our honour, our character and standing, as very nearly associated with their improvement, their happiness, their appearance, and their prosperity. Nor should we grudge reasonable outlays to promote these ends. They dwell in good houses, they are well clothed and fed; they have neat gardens and are well to live by their industry. Well, let them be so. They are welcome to it all. Are they not my servants? Do they not call me master? Is it not my peace and my pleasure to see them prosperous and happy. Are my comforts and interests abridged by what they enjoy? By no means. They compose my household. I have no feeling of envy or opposition to them. I desire to be carried away by no iron-banded avarice, that gathers from them all

it can, and restores nothing but what it sees to be absolutely necessary for gratifying its own insatiable desires. So feels and so reasons the master who heartily acknowledges his obligations and sincerely seeks to fulfil them.

To these several causes now mentioned, we attribute much of the improvement in the physical condition of the Negroes in our district, which has been in progress for years past. These causes I trust, will continue to operate efficiently and the results will continue to be more cheering. Yet I deem it a question of serious concern, which we should individually address to ourselves, whether we do sincerely feel the duty of improving the physical condition of our people, and whether we keep such improvement in view and make it one prominent object of pursuit?

The duty we acknowledge. But we require such a conviction of it as will prompt to its discharge. And let it be understood that while we are called to a discharge of the duty, we must remember that God will judge us according to the ability which we possess. The talent of earthly substance is meted out in different proportions. It cannot be expected of a master who possesses but few servants and whose means are limited, that he will make as large provision for his servants, as the master who possesses many, and whose means are ample. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."—Every owner must of necessity be his own judge in this matter. But let no man forget that God is judge, and that he must strive to keep a conscience void of offence before Him.

We need industry, energy, and perseverance. Where these are possessed, they will manifest themselves as truly and as pleasantly on the plantations of the poor as on those of the rich.

What a pleasing prospect would this county present to the eyes of our citizens and to the eyes of strangers and visitors, if all our plantations were improved up to our ability? for that is the measure of our duty. Who fails to be delighted with durability, neatness and order? Who fails to rejoice in the peace, contentment, cheerfulness, and purity of the community in which Providence has cast his lot? What a happy influence should we exert upon each other? What a favourable impression would be made upon all who come to a knowledge of us, of the benefits of a faithful discharge of our duties to our servants, for the life that now is, and for that

which is to come, as they are enjoined upon us in God's holy word? Shall we not awaken a just emulation in this department of duty? I have confidence in the good character, generally, of the citizens of this county and in the Christian profession which so many of them have assumed and which some of them so highly adorn: and in the interest which they almost universally express in the religious instruction and improvement of our coloured population. Whatever may be the differences in their religious creeds or political principles; whatever local divisions or collisions exist among them, yet these things do not affect the essential unity and general harmony of the whole. They dwell together as one people and all the great ends for which communities exist, are in the main, steadily pursued and successfully secured. May such be the fact in all time to come.

Entertaining these views, I feel assured that the subject now presented will meet with candid consideration: and no one will suppose that I have gone beyond my sphere, since the physical improvement of the Negroes is not only our duty, but it stands in immediate connection with their moral and religious improvement, which is the great object aimed at by our Association: — and moreover, the physical condition of the negroes is an outward evidence of our interest in their spiritual state which others will immediately inquire into and judge us by.

CONCLUSION

In my last report I gave a view of the religious instruction of the negroes in the United States, and adduced much evidence to show the steady and great progress of that work. I shall now, from the observation of the past year and from my own correspondence, content myself with the assertion, that the work *still continues to advance*; and one pleasant feature in the movement in the minds of its friends is the conviction that the people need larger accommodations for the public worship of God: a greater amount of catechetical instruction: the employment of missionaries expressly for their service, and above all that they are entitled to, and should claim, *more* of the attention and labours of the settled Ministry than they have heretofore enjoyed. I give you an extract from the minutes of the Presbytery of Harmony, S. C. which may be

considered as indicating the feeling in many of our ecclesiastical bodies of different denominations, and the great ends at which they are aiming. The Presbytery state — “ that it is their deliberate opinion, that the religious wants of our coloured population *are not met, by the mode of instruction at present pursued by our Ministers.* They stand in need of something more than the occasional instruction afforded them from the pulpit, by the Pastors: they need *catechetical instruction* in the elementary truths of our holy religion. They are generally unable to read, and therefore this instruction must be oral. They think that the Church has not done her duty to them in the matter of affording *comfortable houses in which to worship*: and therefore in order to a fuller discharge of duty in these particulars the Presbytery adopt the following resolutions. 1. That this Presbytery sincerely and heartily deplore before our long-suffering and merciful God, our past unfaithfulness to this solemn trust, and humbly ask forgiveness, in the name of our blessed Redeemer Jesus Christ. 2. That by the grace of God helping us, we will endeavour from this time to cultivate more faithfully this long neglected, but most interesting field. 3. That in order to prepare the way for more efficient labour than can be performed under our present mode of operation, we adopt the following plan: viz: that the *whole Presbytery be divided into seven districts*, as follows,” &c.

(Each district embraced from two to five contiguous churches.)
 “ And further that these districts *be visited by the following committees*” &c. (These committees embraced from two to three ministers each.) “ The several committees are directed to visit as soon as possible their respective districts, and *from the pulpit, and from house to house*, bring this important matter before the minds of the members of the churches and others interested, and endeavour to persuade them *to erect suitable houses*, in which the coloured people may assemble for catechetical instruction and the preaching of the gospel. The committees are also directed to ascertain whether the churches or individual members may be induced *to contribute* of their substance for the support of *the missionaries* who may devote their entire labours to this class of our population (it being understood that such missionaries may confine their labours to the instruction of the servants of those supporting them, if desired.) And if these desirable objects cannot be attained, the committees are directed to urge upon all the churches the duty of *allowing*

their pastors, to devote at least *half their time* to the coloured people." These are just views. The churches in the slave-holding States are entering upon *their* great work, the religious instruction of the Negroes. Nor have they perhaps, ever been in a more favourable position for doing so than at the present time. The discussions of the last ten years have led our whole country to a better understanding of the system of slavery, in respect to its origin, its nature, and circumstances, its future continuance, and the duty of those who are immediately connected with and interested in it. While the discussion has done evil to some communities and individuals and churches, hapily, as a subject calculated to produce excitement, through special management for that purpose, it has very much passed into the hands of factious and aspiring politicians on both sides of *the line*. The mass of the Southern people are quiet, and united, and will remain so. They are not ignorant of the nature of slavery, nor of their rights and duties, nor of their ability under God to take care of their own interests. The Negroes, in the Providence of God, are with us, and we with them, and from present appearances, the connection, promises to be of some continuance. Their moral and religious, more than their civil and political condition, lies the nearer to us and is the more manageable and the more important of the two, and consequently claims the chief attention of Christians and of men of enlightened benevolence and patriotism. Such is the favourable state in which we find the views and feelings of our citizens at large. It is the time for the people of God to follow the leadings of His providence, the teachings of His word and the promptings of His spirit. Let us pray that He would send forth labourers; let us, trusting in His power and support, sow the seed plentifully: let us enter the fields white for the harvest, and thrust in the sickle and reap. This is our duty: this is our work. The Lord will cause light to arise in darkness and guide our footsteps in the way of peace.

Three members of the Association have departed this life during the past year.

The first was *Captain Joseph Jones*, suddenly removed from his family and friends and from the active employments, and respon-

sibilities of life, in consequence of a fall from his buggy, his horse having ran away with him

In the commencement of the religious instruction of the negroes by this Association, he was not favourably impressed towards the work, in consequence of irregularities which he had years before known to occur in connection with some evening meetings, held by a minister of the Gospel for their benefit. But after a careful consideration of the plan pursued by the Association, and an observation of the effects of judicious religious instruction, he changed his mind and for a number of years was a true friend to the work in nearly all its details, and since his profession of religion in 1842, a prompt and efficient member of the Association. In his death this Association has not only lost a valuable member, but the county a valuable and influential citizen, who through a long life has been prominent in its history. A man of liberal and enlightened views, of public spirit, of many private and social virtues, and whose character commanded the confidence and respect of a large circle of friends and acquaintances.

The second was *Joseph Cumming, Esq.* of Savannah. He was ever an advocate of the religious instruction of the negroes, and years ago engaged in the work and exerted himself with his natural energy and zeal in their behalf. Although he was not a resident of the county, yet having interests in it, his name was subscribed to the constitution of the Association and he was one of the most liberal contributors to its funds and no one took a greater interest in its doings and its success. After a life of over thirty years in the profession of the Gospel, marked by zeal, perseverance, integrity and consistency of principle and practice, he met death with a firm reliance upon the righteousness of Christ, which freed him in a wonderful manner from every fear, enabled him to set his house in order and calmly wait the moment of dissolution as the moment of his ascent to the presence and enjoyment of God in Heaven.

The third was the *Rev. Peter Winn*, a native of this county, a member of Midway church, and a graduate of Athens college. He spent two years in the Theological Seminary in Columbia, S. C. and was compelled to relinquish his studies on account of ill-health. He then undertook an agency for the American Tract Society in 1841, and continued in connection with that Society until 1845.

In July, 1842, he wrote me from Charlotte, N. Carolina.—“I have even felt that it was *right* in the Providence of God that I

should lose my health and be debarred from the Gospel ministry, and thankful that another door of usefulness was opened to me." "The Lord is prospering His work and giving His unworthy servant increasing strength to do it. Give the praise unto Him to whom it is due." His *motive* for seeking the Gospel ministry, he stated, in a letter making application to be received under the care of the Presbytery of Georgia, September, 1843, to be this,— "That I could honour my master more in this, than any other work. While I shrink from the responsible duties of the ministry, I have yet an ardent desire to labour in it, trusting in the strength and wisdom of God. My health has greatly improved, so that I am constrained to believe that my master has much work for me to do yet. And when I have given up my present work with the Tract Society and return home, I have a great desire to spend my remaining days among the blacks." Mr. Winn was licensed by the Presbytery of Georgia, in Midway Church, November 25, 1843. He then visited the West Indies for his health, and his Agency was directed to Louisiana and Texas for 1844; he did not visit Texas. In the autumn of 1844, he received a call from several planters in Claiborne county, Mississippi, near Oakland College, to settle with them as a missionary to the negroes. From convictions of duty and long cherished desires to enter upon this work, he accepted this invitation, giving up the prospect of returning to friends and home, for Christ's sake. In a letter to his *mother*, advising her of his intention to settle in Mississippi, believing such to be the will of God, after telling her that his health, though improving, was not established, said—"I desire to lie passive and submissive in the hands of my Heavenly Father. Oh! that I may be prepared to cultivate this field, and that I may be enabled to lie very humbly at the foot of the cross! The responsibility will be very great.— There will be no less than one thousand souls committed to my charge! I feel that I, in myself, am not sufficient for these things." His preaching, during this year, while pursuing his agency, he wrote his mother, had been attended, as he humbly believed, by the Spirit, "as often as he had spoken;" and having been permitted to preach the Gospel, it was the most useful and pleasant year of his life.

He commenced his labours among the Negroes in Claiborne County, in January, 1845. In July he wrote to the Presbytery, saying, "I have found it a most delightful work." He laboured above his

strength: having a preaching and catechetical exercise every Sabbath, and preaching on plantations every other night in the week. Toward the close of the year, he candidly acknowledged "his feelings had gone beyond his judgment." Consumption had fastened upon him, and his days of usefulness in the ministry were numbered. The Lord blessed him with the confidence and affection of the planters and of their people, and he rejoiced in evidences of the presence of His spirit among them. "About twenty-five, in November 1845, had been received into the different churches, from under his ministry, and there was a general inquiry on the subject of religion among them." "For all this," said he, "I thank God and take courage." In a letter to me, he says, "my mind has of late dwelt more on *the Heavenly rest*, than ever before in my life. I will labour until the Father calls."

He relinquished his chosen field, and a people to whom he felt great attachment, and returned to his home in this County, in the spring of 1846. He gradually declined until the 18th of this month, when he fell asleep in Jesus, and passed into that heavenly rest, which he spoke of a few hours before his departure, as "exceedingly glorious," and going to it, was "like going home."

Well may we exclaim, in view of the death of this young servant and minister of God, so advanced in piety, so remarkable for quiet energy, perseverance and success in the Master's service, so humble in character, so patient in affliction, so cheerful in disposition, so faultless in his life, and so eminently fitted for usefulness, God's ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts. The coloured population have lost in him a sincere friend and able labourer. May God, in mercy to them and us, raise up many possessing his spirit, to enter this great and destitute field, not only among ourselves, but over our whole land.

Through the goodness of God, I was permitted to wait around the dying beds of each of these individuals. I saw them walking through the valley of the shadow of death. I saw two of them, to whom the Lord granted reason and strength and grace to the last, borne above all fear, and standing upon the threshold of the eternal world, in perfect peace; and heard them speak of their Father's house, of the preciousness and strength of their Redeemer Christ Jesus, and pray that He would come and release them from earth, that they might be forever at rest with God in Heaven. Their dying beds have revealed the emptiness of the world—the unspeak-

able value of religion—the nearness of eternity—the exceeding shortness of time, and the glorious privileges of the sons of God, to whom it is given through faith in the ever blessed Redeemer to triumph over sin, death and hell, and enter into everlasting glory. May these impressions abide with us all, that our “minds may dwell more upon the heavenly rest,” and that we may “labour until the Father calls.”

