

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION  
OF THE  
NEGROES.

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RICHMOND:  
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The meeting of the Assembly this evening on Domestic Missions, beloved brethren, is but a continuation of the meeting of last evening on Foreign Missions. The work of Domestic and Foreign Missions is one work, namely: the evangelization of the world by the Church, under the commission of her Divine Head, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature." For the sake of distinction, and a wholesome distribution of labor, all the world lying within the boundaries of our Confederacy, except the Indian Territory—which we have given to the foreign field, and of which we shall make no mention at all in our remarks—we denominate and cultivate as the domestic field; and all the world lying without, we denominate and cultivate as the foreign field.

The domestic field is very extensive. The area of our

newly born and noble Confederacy, embracing thirteen sovereign and independent States, covers 842,108 square miles, and if we add the Indian Territory, 1,029,108 square miles, (assuming our published tables to be correct,) and to which we shall add, in the course of time, and that time not far distant, we trust, the gallant, but now betrayed and fettered State of Maryland. And our area will without doubt be hereafter further enlarged by the coming in of some of the Territories now upon our borders.

The Confederacy lies happily between the extreme cold of the North, and the extreme heat of the South, and enjoys generally as salubrious a climate as any breadth of land of like size on the earth. It is rich in mineral resources, embraces every variety of soil, and produces the substantial grains of wheat, rice, and Indian corn, in sufficient quantity not only for home consumption, but also for export, together with the great staples of cotton, hemp, tobacco, and sugar, which have become essential to the exchanges of traffic, and the commerce and comfort of the world. From the fruitful and generous bosom of these Confederate States the multitudes of the North and West of the old United States have annually gathered, not their gleanings, but their harvests of wealth.

We can only estimate the present population of the thirteen Confederate States, for the census of 1860 is sealed from us, being locked up in Washington, and which we may not learn, until the present unjust war waged against us by the Federal States is at an end. But knowing that the past ten years have been years of general health and prosperity to our country, we may safely estimate, upon the rates of increase of past decades, our present population at 8,000,000 whites, and 4,000,000 blacks, in round numbers, and a total

population of 12,000,000. And yet such is the extent of our country that we do not average more than from fourteen to fifteen inhabitants to the square mile, and can, consequently, without the slightest inconvenience, accommodate a population of treble our present number: These present and coming millions of our people form our domestic missionary field; and while the Gospel is preached from one end of the land to the other, there are in various parts, and upon our frontiers especially, great spiritual destitutions, that require the united and vigorous efforts of all denominations together to reach and to supply them.

One feature in the domestic field demands special consideration, and prompt, and unremitting, and universal attention. Our social constitution as a nation is uncommon. Over all our land, from the Chesapeake on the North to the Rio Grande on the South, and from the Atlantic ocean to the Ohio and Missouri rivers, there is dispersed and settled in intimate connection with the whites, the *negroes of Africa*; the two varieties forming our population, in the proportion of one negro to every three or four whites; and the relation between the two is that of master and slave. I omit any separate consideration of the free negro population, which ranges at the present time between 160,000 and 170,000, for, from their position in society and association, they necessarily fall in with bond-servants in their religious instruction.

Now that we are happily separated from the free States, our great and increasing population of negroes, for special reasons I shall not stay to mention, falls exclusively under the care of the Churches of Christ in the Confederacy, and under ours among the rest. Over two hundred years ago, **Africans were first landed on our shores; for you remember**

that as far back as 1501, Isabella of Spain, by grant, permitted the introduction of negro slaves into Hispaniola; and from that time the traffic in them went increasingly on in Europe till 1562-'3, when England, our mother country, entered into it, just forty five years before the first permanent settlement was made in her American colonies, which was at Jamestown, Va., in 1607; and thirteen years after, in 1620, a Dutch man-of-war landed twenty negroes for sale in the colony of Virginia, on James river, which determines the epoch of their introduction into the colonies; after which they were gradually introduced without exception into all the thirteen colonies; but, for the most part, contrary to the wishes of the colonists. The traffic in slaves being established, many colonists themselves engaged in it, and none with more avidity, pertinacity, and profit than the people in the Northern colonies.

The negroes were introduced for service, and have been held to service ever since; and, although recognized and protected in law as persons, neither in the condition of slaves nor of free negroes have they ever been admitted to the rights and privileges of citizenship. In the course of one hundred and fifty-six years, from 1620 to 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, by importation and by natural increase, they had reached in numbers some five hundred thousand, or about one-sixth of the white population; and that proportion between the two continued, taking the whole country together, until the immense influx of foreigners of late years has thrown the proportion in favor of the whites several figures higher. You will remember also that the African slave trade was finally prohibited and brought to a close by the old United States Government in 1808, and, consequently, our present negro popula-

tion is country-born, with only here and there an aged one, in form and features, and in broken English, to testify the common origin of all. Our own Confederate Congress with wisdom and virtue passed an act prohibiting the slave trade, which act is now incorporated into our Constitution; and our negro population will to our great comfort, be country born in all time to come.

The natural increase of the negroes under a genial climate and mild treatment, has kept pace with that of the whites, but not exceeded it, and that increase will continue, although for good reasons the white population will make the disparity of numbers between the two classes greater and greater at every census.

With few and insignificant exceptions, (nearly all of which occurred in the early days of our colonies, and grew out of peculiar circumstances,) no laboring class in any country has remained throughout its existence more quiet, obedient, and peacefully associated with their superiors than our negro population, which is an interesting feature in their history worthy of remembrance.

*Whence* came this people? Originally from the kraals and jungles, the cities and villages of the torrid regions of Africa, wonderfully adapted by constitution and complexion to live and thrive in similar latitudes in all the world.

They are inhabitants of one common earth with us; they are one of the varieties of our race—a variety produced by the power and in the inscrutable wisdom of God: but when, and how, and where, lies back of all the traditions and records of men. These sons of Ham are black in the first hieroglyphics; they are black in the first pages of history, and continue to be black. They share our physical nature, and are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; they share

our intellectual and spiritual nature; each body of them covers an immortal soul, whom God our Father loves, for whom Christ our Saviour died, and unto whom everlasting happiness or misery shall be meted in the final day. They are not the cattle upon a thousand hills, nor the fowls upon the mountains, brute beasts, goods and chattles, to be taken and worn out and destroyed in our use; but they are men, created in the image of God, to be acknowledged and cared for spiritually by us, as we acknowledge and care for the other varieties of the race, our own Caucasian, or the Indian, or the Mongol. Shall we reach the Bread of Life over their heads to far distant nations, and leave them to die eternal deaths before our eyes?

*What is their social connection with us?* They are not enemies but friends; they are not foreigners, but our nearest neighbors; they are not hired servants, but servants belonging to us in law and gospel; born in our house, and bought with our money; not people whom we seldom see, and whom we seldom hear, but people who are never out of the light of our eyes nor the hearing of our ears. They are our constant and inseparable associates; whither we go, they go; where we dwell, they dwell; where we die and are buried, there they die and are buried; and more than all, our God is their God. What parts men most closely connected in this life from each other, that only can part us from them; namely: crime, or debt, or death. Indeed, they are with us from the cradle to the grave. Many of us are nursed at their generous breasts, and all carried in their arms. They help to make us walk, they help to make us talk, they help to teach us to distinguish the first things we see, and the first sounds we hear. They mingle in all our infantile and boyish sports, they are in our chambers,

and in our parlors, and serve us at every call. We say to this man go, and he goeth; and to another come, and he cometh; and to another do this, and he doeth it; they are with us in the house and in the field; they are with us when we travel on the land and on the sea; and when we are called to face dangers, or pestilence, or war, still are they with us; they patiently nurse us and ours in long nights and days of illness; our fortunes are their fortunes; and our joys are their joys; and our sorrows are their sorrows; and among the last forms that our falling eyes do see, and among the last sounds our ears do hear, are their forms and their weepings, mingled with those of our dearest ones, as they bend over us in our last struggles, dying, passing away into the valley of the shadow of death! My brethren, are these people nothing to us? Have we no gratitude, no friendship, no kind feelings for all they have done for us and for ours? Have we no heart to feel, no hand to help, no smiles to give, no tears to shed on their behalf, no wish in your inmost soul that they may know what you prize above all price, your precious Saviour, and go with you to glory, too?

What is their *value as an integral part of our population, to ourselves, to our country, and to the world itself?* To ourselves they are the source in large measure of our living, and comprise our wealth, in Scripture our "money." Our boatmen are they on the waters; our mechanics and artizans to build our houses, to work in many trades; our agriculturalists to subdue our forests, to sow, and cultivate, and reap our lands; without whom no team is started, no plough is run, no spade, nor hoe, nor axe is driven; they prepare our food, and wait about our tables and our persons, and keep the house, and watch for their master's coming. They la-

bor for us in summer's suns and in winter's cold; to the fruit of their labor we owe our education, our food, and clothing, and our dwellings, and a thousand comforts of life that crowd our happy homes; and through the fruit of their labor we are enabled to support the Gospel, and enjoy all the priceless means of grace. Brethren, what could we do without this people? how live, how support our families? And have they no claims upon us? Are they nothing more than creatures of profit and of pleasure? Are the advantages and blessings of that close connection between us in the household to be all on one side? Has our Master in heaven so ordained it? I will reverse the question of the apostle to the Corinthians, and put it into the mouth of your servants, and make them ask it of you their masters. Hear them: "If we have sown unto you carnal things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your spiritual things?" And you can answer that question to God and to your own consciences. And what is *their value to our country, and to the world?* They constitute the great bulk of our agricultural population, and the immense returns of our soil come from their patient labors; labors which furnished three-fourths of the exports of the old United States, and brought three-fourths of the revenue into the national treasury. They were the mainspring, the mighty power that set and kept in motion, year after year, the unexampled and ever increasing wealth and prosperity of the whole country. The fruits of their labors sharpened the inventive faculties of men to devise machines and machinery to work them up, to build villages, towns, and even cities, to make room for their manufacture and sale, to project internal improvements, to facilitate transportation, and give circulation to the great traffic they called into being. Trades and manufactures of every



description swarmed in particular sections of the country, giving support to hundreds of thousands of our citizens, to supply the various wants of this people and their owners. By the product of their labors they have not only, to an immense extent, created the commerce of our own country, but largely increased that of the world. The ocean washing our shores is kept hoary with the ploughing of vessels, passing up and down; every sea is whitened with sails, and the heavens over them darkened with the smoke of the swift ships steering to the four corners of the earth. By their labors they furnish the most valuable and imperishable staple for mercantile exchanges ever known in the annals of commerce; and there are millions of the population of foreign nations, men, women, and children, dependent upon the supply of this staple for their daily bread. For every bale of cotton grown on our soil Great Britain can show one, and even more than one, of her population dependent upon that article for support. What a disaster in the world of trade would the sudden stoppage of the labors of this people produce? You cannot now subtract from the business of the civilized world 4,000,000 of laboring people from any part of its surface, whose loss would be so severely felt as the 4,000,000 of negroes in these Confederate States. No more useful class to the material interests of mankind now lives on the earth. What a wonderful fact in the providence of God.

Behold then the value of our laboring class. They form no mean portion of our body politic. They play no mean part in the affairs of our country and of the world. Is the moral and religious condition of so important a people of little consequence, when their value in all the relations and labors of life is enhanced in proportion to the purity of

their morals and the fervency of their piety? Shall we not justly and gratefully cause them to share in the blessings of that Gospel which we make known to all? Would it not be a national sin, crying to God for judgment, if our churches neglect them.

But, brethren, to bring our subject to a point. *Why have the negroes been sent into our country at all?* For what purpose? To be our servants, our support and source of wealth and comfort? to develop the vast agricultural resources of our land? to stimulate the industry and enterprise, and add to the support, and comfort, and prosperity of the nation and of the world? No doubt He who sees the end from the beginning included all these benevolent results in assigning them their settlement here. But is this all. Who, my brethren, can assert, who can believe, that nothing more is to be seen in the Divine purposes? Does our Heavenly Father ever forget the spiritual interests of men? Beyond these worldly purposes, there was the purpose (and we say there was the purpose, for we see it fulfilled and fulfilling,) of advancing the civilization and salvation of the negroes, through the Gospel of His Son. He permitted, in His inscrutable providence, men, in their insatiable avarice, at immense sacrifices and sufferings, to collect and bring the negroes from their native continent to ours, and overruled it with all its evils for good, by precipitating a nation of imbruted, enslaved, and wretched heathen into the very lap of Christianity. In this strange work, the command to the Church, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," is stayed; nay, turned backward, and the Lord has caused the heathen to come to us, and learn our language, and manners and customs, and live with us, that they might more easily, and speedily, and constantly

hear of the Saviour's love, and believe and live; and it has been overruled to this blessed end. Since their coming, Ethiopia has stretched out her hands to God, yea, to the Saviour on the cross, and thousands and tens of thousands have been going lo! for these two hundred years, in company with their teachers and owners to people the celestial city, the land of rest, which Jesus has purchased and prepared for His people. Praise God in the earth, and praise Him in the heavens, for His wonderful works of mercy to the children of men.

Has the Church from the beginning *recognized this good purpose of God, and fulfilled her duty to the negroes?* Partially only. And this is evident from their moral and religious condition, and from the little, comparatively speaking, that we are doing for them. And what is their moral and religious condition? The negroes have been termed the heathen of our land, but the universal absence among them of all forms of idolatry, and the adoption of the Christian religion as their religion, prove that they are not a Heathen people. We should avoid extreme statements on this subject. While not heathen, they are in the mass a degraded people in their morality; and this you know from your own long and close observation of them in all the relations which they bear to their owners, and to each other, and to the Church of God, as well as I do; and they are also in the mass an ignorant and weak people in their religion, and with this fact also you are as well acquainted as I am. They are almost totally an unlettered people, and without access to the written Word of God, being dependent for whatever knowledge they obtain, above the traditionary knowledge of life, upon intercourse with their superiors; and for religious knowledge, upon the oral instructions of some of the

more favored of their own color, and upon the oral instructions of their owners and white pastors and missionaries, which instruction falls far short of their necessities. And yet it amazes one after all to know the extent to which the knowledge of the way of salvation is diffused among them. Multitudes are members of our different evangelical denominations. All estimates of the actual number can be but approximation; one estimate is from 250,000 to 300,000, and allowing for spurious conversions, there will be a large remainder of hopefully converted men. And one reason why the knowledge of religion is so diffused among them, and professors are found almost everywhere is, that they preach the Gospel to each other—*the poor preach the Gospel to the poor*; so that to your surprise, in visiting districts supplied only at long intervals with preaching, you discover here and there people who profess to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose conversation is Christian, and whose lives, according to the testimony of their neighbors, are Christian, and some of them remarkably so. Why is this? No man need wonder that knows the power of the love of Christ in the heart of man: When you felt the power of that love in your soul, and embraced Christ as the One altogether lovely, did not your soul go out in longings that your dear family, and friends, and neighbors, and in short the whole world, might know the precious Saviour too?—And did you not in your humble zeal try to recommend Him to them? and did you not feel the love of souls in your inmost heart? You have that law abiding in your heart still. Religion is the same in the black man that it is in you. He has felt his sins as you have, he has seen the Lord by faith as you have, he has rejoiced in hope of escape from the wrath to come through Him as you have; and,

fired with love as you have been, he has gone forth into the prayer-meeting, and into the family, and into the highways and hedges, and tried to call sinners to repentance, and to compel them to come into the Gospel-feast, and this has been the work of godly women as well as of godly men.— Nor have they neglected to instruct their own children by times, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and make their families Christian families. Fervent, active piety is confined to no nation nor condition of men, and it is by Christians diffusing religion around them in their several spheres of life, that the heaven leavens the whole lump.

The negroes now need as a class faithful, and continued and universal religious instruction, and the grand practical question is, *how shall we as a Church communicate it to them?*

That instruction casts itself into two departments: first, *private* and then *public*. *Private instruction* is that which is communicated by *owners*. If you plead the patriarchal relation, then should you discharge your duty as a patriarch, not only “commanding your children,” but your “household also after you,” and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon you that which He has promised to His faithful people. You are responsible for both children and servants.— Gather, therefore, your servants about your house to family worship, night and morning; read the Scriptures; explain them if you will; sing praises to God, and pour out your prayers before Him. Your servants will receive instruction and blessing. “But I cannot get them to attend; at least they attend very irregularly.” And pray whose fault is it? If you are not able to govern your servants, you

ought not to own them. Why do you not *make* them attend, as you do your children? Lay it down as a rule, permanent and not to be violated, that when, as the head of your family, you ring your bell for family worship, immediately after supper or tea, (the best time, for the children and servants are all awake and at hand,) all work of every kind throughout the house stops, and every one comes into prayers. And let the same rule obtain for morning worship, immediately before your breakfast is brought in. You will enforce this just rule but a short time before no one in your family will be conscious of its existence, and your servants, with the rest, will be ready, and take their places, morning and evening, with quietness and regularity. What a loose jointed and unchristian association is a family, whose servants, at the hour of worship, are scattered in and about the house, attending to various duties, in a noisy manner posting from room to room, slamming doors, or rattling crockery, or bringing in meals! The regular attendance of your servants at family worship is of more importance than many imagine; it establishes the worship of God in the family, and gives it precedence before all things else; impresses the servants with reverence for God and for their master; and a happy moral and religious influence flows down through the entire household.

Next must follow plantation prayers and instruction. A comfortable room or chapel should be provided and consecrated for the purpose, where your people may assemble for worship two or three or more evenings in the week, as they may arrange among themselves; and where you, as head of your household, may meet them one or more evenings in the week for religious instruction, even if you do not carry that instruction beyond reading the Scriptures,

and singing and praying with them; only be you regular and fervent in so doing. In this room or chapel marriages may be solemnized, and funeral services performed. And here you may meet the church members from time to time for special instruction, or prayer for a revival, and such persons as are under serious impressions and need your careful instruction. And here also you may invite any kind, way-faring minister to preach a sermon to your family and people, when he tarries a night with you, and so enable him to fulfill the command, "As ye go, preach," and to feel happy that he has not been burdensome to you, "for the workman is worthy of his meat." This is the true way to show hospitality to ministers.

Establish, in addition, that indispensable aid to plantation instruction, the plantation Sunday-school for the children and youth, and for all adults who choose to connect themselves with it. Assemble the school every Sabbath afternoon or evening, and as frequently in the week as you please to do so; conduct it on the infant school plan, questioning and instructing all together from the Scriptures and catechisms; or avail yourself of the help of your good wife, who will always second your efforts; perhaps she will prefer to take the charge of the school, and relieve you altogether; or you may put it under the care of your pious daughter or son. Experience proves plantation Sabbath-schools to be of great and lasting value, for they exert a happy influence upon the active piety of the owner and of his family; they civilize the children and youth, and they christianize them, and save their souls. They have made rough plantations to bud and blossom with the fruits of righteousness.

**To crown all your private instruction, exhibit a consistent**

Christian example before your people, and govern and conduct all the operations and affairs of your plantation on Christian principles; converse with them as occasion offers on the momentous interests of their souls; secure the Sabbath to them as the day of sacred rest, given to them by the Lord; protect them in person, in family, and in their interests, from the wicked and profligate; be righteous and just in rewards and punishments; correct them for sins against God as well as against yourself, as you do your children, and save their souls from destruction. Look well to their food and raiment, and lodging, and to all their wants in sickness and in health, from their youth even unto their old age; sympathize in their joys and in their sorrows; "live and let live" in the exaction of your labors and duties; for if you neglect, pinch, and grind, and drive, and be an extortioner over them, until their very countenances, and dress, and spirit show how badly you treat them, your prayers and instructions will do them no good, but rather prove you to be much of a hypocrite, and add to your greater condemnation. On the contrary, demonstrate by good works your faith and charity, commending all to God's grace and mercy, and you will, though often discouraged, reap the good fruits of your efforts.

*For the public religious instruction of the negroes, we rely in the first place mainly, if not almost entirely, upon our settled pastors and stated supplies. Upon them the great burden of the work now falls, and will ever fall; by them the work must be done, or the spiritual wants of the negroes remain unsupplied. It is impossible to perform the work by missionaries, for missionaries cannot be supplied in sufficient numbers, and were it possible to do so, where are the funds to be obtained for their support?*



Let it be repeated again and again: The pastors, the pastors are the laborers in this field. It cannot, it ought not to be otherwise, from the very composition of our churches and congregations. They are identical in composition with those of the Old and New Testaments, embracing husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and he who accepts a pastoral charge, accepts whites and blacks together. Husbands and masters call him, but call him for their wives, their children and servants, as well as for themselves; and the pastor who expends his labors among the whites, to the entire or almost total neglect of the blacks, is but *half* a pastor, and is laying up trouble and remorse for the day when he gives account of the souls committed to his care. Who would credit it without seeing it? A minister of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose characteristic was that he "preached the Gospel to the poor," settles over a congregation in town or country, having an equal, if not in some instances an overwhelming majority of negroes belonging to it, and preaches from year to year to the whites, and takes no more notice of the negroes (who from habit or duty come to hear him) in his sermons, and adapts them no more to their circumstances and capacity than if no such beings were ever seen in the Lord's house—who never troubles his head or heart about the poor, ignorant creatures, who appoints no inquiry meeting for them, even when the Spirit of God has visited them, and they are inquiring the way of salvation, who knows not one colored member of his church by name and person in ten; who never has any service whatever expressly for their benefit; who never baptizes a colored child; who never exerts himself to interest his officers and members in the instruction of the negroes at home on the plantations, nor in establish-

ing and continuing Sunday-schools for them at the church on the Sabbath day; in short, who has nothing more to do with them than absolute necessity requires, namely, to attend to their examinations for admission, to admit them and attend to their discipline, and reprimand or cast out the poor offenders, and care for them no more! What is the matter with such a minister? Has he no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no mind to comprehend, no heart to feel?—Awful will be his meeting in the judgment day with this portion of his charge. “Here are we, sir, look on us. We know, if you do not know us poor servants, once and for years under your pastoral charge. But you never noticed us, you never cared for our souls, you never made any efforts to lead us to the Saviour, and here are we undone through your unfaithfulness for all eternity.” And, alas! the matter stops not here: what are we to think of the white part of that minister’s charge, who permitted, and it may be required him to act so? who, in their selfishness and deadness to duty, devoured the Bread of Life from their servants all their days, and cast to them only now and then the crumbs that fell from their tables! My brethren, we ought never to take charge of any congregation in which we would not have liberty of free and unlimited access to the colored part of it, and of preaching and laboring for its salvation to the full proportion of time and effort justly due them. No affluence of salary, no comfort of parsonage, no lofty towers nor buttressed walls, no “long-drawn aisles,” nor “fretted roofs,” no “impressive grandeur,” nor elegance of architecture in the sanctuary, no extent of intelligence, nor elegance of refinement, nor abounding wealth among the people, nor their friendship, nor their admiration, nor high standing and position in the Church, should tempt us

to neglect them. No, never! What is the chaff to the wheat? O, think of the coming of the Son of Man, before whose face the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and no place be found for them! O think, ministers of God, we watch for souls as they that must give account, imperishable souls, for whom the Lord of Glory died!

Our pastors should use their best judgment, and distribute their labors between the whites and blacks in just proportion, preaching one part of the Sabbath to the whites and the other part to the blacks, should they require so much of separate effort for their instruction; and preach on the plantations, in paying pastoral visits in country charges. Give notice to the master on what evening you will be with him, and that you will preach or lecture for his family and household. Right gladly will he welcome you: the family and plantation will be all astir, "our minister is coming to preach for us this evening!" Tea is over, the time of meeting is at hand. The little children beg to sit up to meeting, one servant takes the books and lights, another the chairs, and another the stand—every thing is nicely arranged, and you are directly in presence of bright faces, and your psalm is sung with spirit and power, your prayer and your sermon fall on many attentive ears, and the hearty thanks of your humble parishioners fill you with gladness. At the close you will speak a few encouraging words to the members of the church, and shake hands with the aged, and perhaps step in to see some sick and afflicted one. You will also inquire how well the children and youth attend the plantation Sunday-school, and if you do not impart joy to that household, and go away a happier Christian and a more blest minister, we shall bid farewell to years of experience and observation in this field of labor. Of great

value are these plantation meetings; they carry religion home to the people, and demonstrate your interest in them. In their good effects they are like a personal appeal; you preach in public to your congregation; your hearers feel; you bear many on your heart as you pray and preach, and often from the pulpit direct a word to suit their case. The next day you visit one in the retirement of his home, you take your seat by him, and putting your hand gently on his knee, with tender interest you say to him, 'My dear friend, I feel much for your spiritual state, and I hope I have been praying much for you; tell me how is it with your soul? your precious soul, for which the Saviour died? Can I help you?' And so you continue to speak to him, and draw out in confidence his feelings; he cannot resist. You kneel down and pray with him, and when you retire he goes with you to the door, and grasps your hand and says, "My dear sir, this is very kind, do not forget me, come and see me again." So with the servants on the plantation; if you go home that night, many will thank you, and beg you to come again, and some will linger around your vehicle, or hold your stirrup and bless you as you move away, and the next time you meet the master and the mistress, they will say to you, "Do not let it be long before you come to see us again, you do not know how much good your meeting did to us and to our people, they have had a great deal to say about it ever since."

And, finally, the pastor should so preach the Word as not only to bring it within the comprehension of the negroes, but also to add to their knowledge and keep them improving therein. "But I cannot make them understand me. I have no talent for this sort of labor." If this sad confession be true, then you are deficient in one of the es-

sential qualifications of a Scriptural bishop, "aptness to teach." Did it never occur to you that the difficulty may lie nearer yourself than your weak-minded auditors? If a man wishes to know how well he understands a subject, let him attempt to make it plain and simple. You may lack a clear understanding of the history, the doctrine, or the duty of the Word which you preach, and consequently fail in enlightening the ignorant. How many sermons are laboriously prepared and written, and, after all, are listened to but by a handful of men, the preacher shooting clear over the heads of the bulk of the people. They come out of the church in admiration: "What a learned exposition! what an able discourse! what a great sermon!" And if this comes to the ear of the preacher, he perhaps concludes the judgment of the people to be correct, and that he is preaching wonderfully well! How are we instructed by the apostle: "Except ye utter by the tongue words to be easy understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air! In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, so that I may be understood, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," in a language the people do not comprehend. Much of our preaching does not reach our congregations. How can any people be sanctified by the Truth, unless you put them in possession of the Truth? Why bend the bow and put your arrow on the string if you shoot above and beyond the mark? Learn from the great Teacher who came from God, for He is our example. "The common people heard him gladly," "and the people were very attentive," they hung upon His lips "to hear Him." Look into His discourses, His parables, into His expositions. You see the truth He would convey to the

minds of His hearers, as clearly as you can see any object through a transparent atmosphere. The King's arrows are sharp in the hearts of His enemies, and what is the result? The people fall under Him. Be as learned and great and able as you may, yet speak to the apprehension of the people. Strike low upon the masses, and the arrows will tell, and the people will believe and live.

We depend, in the second place, for the public instruction of the negroes upon missionaries. Their fields will lie in districts populated thinly by whites, but thickly by negroes; or in the cities, for the purpose of gathering the negroes, bond and free, into congregations and churches; or they will labor as assistants to ministers having a charge of whites and blacks so large as to require the services of two ministers; and they will be employed by the Assembly's Committee of Domestic Missions, or by Presbyteries, or associations of planters, or by individual planters, or by particular churches, as the case may be; and their labors will be more in quantity; for they will have no other people to minister unto, and the missionary will require no less study, and variety, and pains-taking for the edification and improvement of the blacks than will that pastor who ministers to the whites. He may not use all his accomplishments in the same form and to the same extent, yet he will require them all. You need wise men, and men of knowledge, and men who continually grow in wisdom and knowledge, to teach, and guide, and govern masses of ignorant men and women and children, and for reasons so obvious that I must be excused for not mentioning them. Let the law of love reign in the heart of the missionary and gracious words proceed from his lips, and, as under shepherd, let him "go about doing good," in emulation of the great

and good Shepherd, and it will not be long ere the sheep will learn to know his voice, and they will follow him; they will follow him into the house of prayer upon the plantation, into the house of God upon the Sabbath day, into the Sunday school and prayer-meeting, and into the inquiry meetings; they will follow his good example, and receive the Word with all readiness of mind at his mouth; and many will believe upon the Lord through his instrumentality, and be his crown of rejoicing in that day. And as a good shepherd he will follow them into the highways and hedges, into their own plantations, and into their own sick chambers, and speak unto and pray with them. He will perform their marriage ceremonies, and attend their funerals, and follow them to their graves, and go in and out before them, with the Bible in his hand, in the fear of the Lord. He will become a star in the right hand of the Saviour before them, and they will rejoice in his light, and learn to sing his hymns and quote his precepts and authority, and argue by his knowledge, and take him to be their friend, and seek his instruction in their times of difficulty, and his comfort in their times of sorrow, and bring their families to him for instruction and for his blessing; and when they die, they will wish him to preach their funeral sermon. He will be happy with the people, and the people will be happy with him; as much so as weak, sinful, and partially sanctified ministers and people can be in this world. Whenever he meets them he speaks kind words, and receives kind words in return. He is not ashamed of them, and they are glad in him; and when he rides along the road, and they are at work in the field, he flings over the fence among them a cheerful "good morning; good morning to you all." In a moment every eye is up, and they

catch his voice and his person, and return his salutation with a hearty good will, with rapid inquiries after his welfare, and their loud and happy conversation dies on his ear as he leaves them behind.

Yes, my brethren, there is a blessing in the work. How often, returning home after preaching on the Sabbath-day, through crowds of worshippers—sometimes singing as they went down to their homes again; or returning from plantation meetings held in humble abodes, late in the starlight night, or in the soft moonlight, silvering over the forests on the roadside, wet with the heavy dews, with scarcely a sound to break the silence, alone but not lonely—how often has there flowed up in the soul a deep, peaceful joy, that God enabled me to preach the Gospel to the poor?—And now that this earthly tabernacle trembles to its fall, and these failing limbs can no more bear me about, nor this tongue, as it was wont, preach the glad tidings of salvation, I look back, and varied recollections crowd my mind and my eyes grow dim with tears; I pray for gratitude for innumerable mercies past, for forgiveness for the chief of sinners, and for the most unfaithful of ministries, for meek submission for the present, and for an assured hope in a precious Saviour for the future. Oh, my brethren, “work while the day lasts, for the night cometh in which no man can work,” for the shadows of that night, even while the day lasts, may fall upon you and stop you in your way, ere its deep darkness shut around you in the cold grave, no more to be removed, till the Son of Man shall come in His glory to the judgment of the great day.

The importance of the instruction of the negroes under our present circumstances cannot be too highly estimated. Is it too much to say that the stability and welfare of both



Church and State depend largely upon it? My brethren, the eyes of the civilized world are upon us. There are but two other nations beside our own that hold in their bosoms the institution of slavery. Ponder that fact and the responsibilities involved in it. None can come in from abroad to relieve us. The negroes of the Confederate States are thrown entirely upon the care of the churches of our Lord within those States. The Christian world outside look to us to do our duty, and, more than that, *God our Saviour looks to us to do our duty.* You feel the weighty responsibility; you say by the help of God we must meet it, and meet it in the very *birthday* of our existence as the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. Then let the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States awake and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and put on her strength; ministers, elders and members, awake, gird up your loins and quit yourselves like men. Our brethren of other denominations will awake and act also; so that we shall emulate each other's zeal, and there shall be action and re-action in all the Zion of God, and higher and higher shall rise our zeal in so good a cause, and greater and greater become our labors, until our whole population shall be evangelized, and our whole land be filled with the glory of the Lord.