



"MORNING STAR"

SOUTHERN MISSIONARY STEAMER.

Vicksburg, Mississippi,  
Jan. 31, 1896.

Dear Mother:--

We are having stirring times here in the work. When we went North for our summer vacation we did not expect to be absent more than about six weeks, but the work I had undertaken to do proved much more than I anticipated, so that we were gone about four months. Many have said, and are now saying, that after we have brought the truth to the colored people, that although they will accept it readily, they will not stick. Many expected that on our return we would find that the work would all be lost, and that the people would have gone back. But there was a good worker stayed, and did faithful work, and when we returned we found that instead of going back the people had been growing all the time and that the work was in better shape for us to go on than when we went away. But the devil had been busy, and had circulated reports that we had gone off leaving the church in debt, and that we would not come back, and then what would the people do who had left their churches and joined us. This had been used as capital. Then when the Gen. Conf. took Bro. Palmer away from the work here, he came down before we did to pack up, and this was seen. Then it was SURE that what they had said was true, and that we were going to leave the work. These reports had kept quite a number from having anything to do with us, for they think a great deal of their church privileges. Take it all around I think it was a good thing that we spent the time in the North that we did, for when we came back finally, and opened the work again, these people did not have anything to say. Then in a little time Bro. Dr. Kynett came down of his own accord, and at his own expense, and began working among them, and to-day his daughter Lydia will be here, and they both are excellent workers. His work among the sick is having an excellent effect. His daughter is a good Bible worker, and a trained nurse, and both are good teachers for our night schools. Well, the work has gone on with such an increased impetus that it is carrying away prejudice wonderfully.

As an example, day before yesterday Dr. Kynett called on a sick colored woman. The people are intelligent, and have been in much better circumstances. But the hard times have cut them down and they are having a very hard time. He is a tailor. He is attending all the sermons, and the Bible class in the night school, and is very desirous to learn all he can. When Dr. Kynett called on her he found that they did not have a fire in the house, and nothing to make it with. Their house is very neat, and is arranged in a tasty manner, showing that there is refinement there. Dr. Kynett seemed to know just what to do. First he sent to his coal pile and got some coal and made a fire, and then he doctored the sick woman. Ida Weckell generally goes with him to assist in giving any treatment that is needed. She was there that time. The woman is getting better. But the point is this,--inside of half an hour it was known all over most of the town, or a part of it at least, what the doctor had done for the woman. He had my buggy and the horse that I hire and went to his rooms himself and brought the coal.

I am using the \$100.00 you placed in my hands to the best advantage I know how. I lend a little now and then where they are in a close place, and then I sometimes buy things and take to them where they need it, and in this way making it go as far as I can.

Taking all these things together the people are seeing that we have not come here to get their money or to beat them. It is breaking down the barriers that the ministers built up around us so as to prevent the people from coming to us.

At first after we returned it seemed that we could get no hold on the people, and that it was at a dead stand-still. There were no opportunities for Bible readings, for the ministers had informed their members that they would turn them out of the church if they attended them or allowed them in their homes. It was the same about coming to our meetings at the church, and we found that it was going to be the same when we should open our night school. We talked the matter over, and studied it over, and finally we decided that we would meet every day at my house and each day devote an hour to considering the situation and to earnest prayer that God would open the way and give us the opportunity to work for the people. As we undertook to carry out this plan we felt the blessing of the Lord coming in, and felt assured that he would open the way. We had already begun a series of Sunday afternoon lectures at our church, and opened each one with a service of song for half an hour. A man whose wife has accepted the truth is a good player on the cornet, and he volunteered his services free to play for us. We have a very fine organ, and with these to lead we have really good singing, and it is proving a regular attraction. At first our Sunday meetings were not very well attended, but I have a printing outfit large enough to print little hand-bills, and so I got up first the one printed in black ink as inclosed in this letter. We sent out about 500 of these. When it came to Sunday the house was filled, and with as quiet and attentive an audience as I ever spoke before. It is remarked that there is not another such a quiet colored audience in Vicksburg as we have. Well, the Lord blessed me as I spoke to the people, and there was the deepest interest and the closest attention. It was stated that we had the best colored people in Vicksburg present. The next week I printed the hand-bill in two colors so that they would not get them mixed up and think they were the same ones. Well, the house was filled again. All are much interested in the meetings.

Our Sabbath meetings are also well attended, and we have a nice audience there. We first hold Sabbath-school for an hour, then I speak for about an hour, and then we have a social meeting. The Lord is meeting with us in these meetings. Quite a number of outsiders attend now, and seem much pleased with the meetings. Bro. Olsen was here two weeks ago, and was much interested in the company. He was here over the Sabbath, and spoke to the people. Then we had a praise meeting, and Bro. Olsen enjoyed it so much we were pleased to see him. He said he wished Battle Creek could be where it could attend that meeting. He has got an idea of the people that he never had before. He sees that they have got an intelligent idea of the truth and what it means to accept it.

Three weeks ago we started the school in our own church. We did not know how the work would take, fearing that the influence of the fear of the ministers would keep the people away. The first school we had an attendance of 35. The second school we had 37. The third we had 57, the fourth we had 82, and last night we had 93. This is twice as many as we ought to try to get into the church for a school. We are only seated for 100 people. To get along I had to put one class in the pulpit, and one on the platform for the organ. The rest were so crowded that it makes the work difficult. I am satisfied that very soon we shall have to do something to increase the capacity of our room. In the school we teach Reading, Penmanship, Spelling, Grammar, Arithmetic, and Bible. We had not started Bible study up to the second school, for we

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had all we could attend to in organizing the school. But at the close of the school four young men came and asked of us if we could not start a Bible class as part of the school. They were intelligent young fellows, studying for the ministry as I understand. Of course we arranged it, and I have taught them ever since. They seem eager to learn, and are finding that the Bible is a different book from anything they had ever seen of it before.

It has been a question to know what to do for teachers for our school in the common branches, but we have made arrangements for four of the teachers of the public schools to assist us in our night school work, and with our forces we shall be able to have about thirteen teachers, and will be able to carry the work forward in an orderly and successful manner. The school is exciting much comment, and is doing more than anything else to break down prejudice.

Well, there are other lines of work that are in preparation. We realize that in line with the articles you have been sending on with reference to the colored work that something must be done to assist them to employment so that they can earn a steady living. Dr. Kynett has come in just the right time for this, and he is a good business man, and just the kind of a man for such business arrangements as will be necessary. He has hired a large house for \$15.00 a month, and will establish several lines by which many can earn a good living. He manufactures the best loom in the U.S. He will start a rag carpet and rug business that will employ many. There is great sale for such things here. Then he will start a domestic bakery on a small scale. Then he proposes to start a laundry that will employ several. I feel sure he can set the most of our people at work so that they can earn a living.

I inclose copy of a circular letter that we are sending to the North, that will give some idea of what plans we are laying. A little effort on the part of the northern people in the lines mentioned in the letter will bring relief here, and that very soon.

Well, we shall press on with the work, and expect that the Lord will bring success to it.

I will add that we have started a school in another part of the city. As yet the attendance is small, but as soon as it is under way there will undoubtedly be a good attendance.

Pray for us and the work.

Your son,

*J. E. White*