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SOUTHERN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF THE
YAZOO AND MISSISSIPPI VALLEYS.

Missionary Steamer "Morning Star," J. E. White, Master and Chaplain.

Incorporated 1848.

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Yazoo City, Mississippi, March 22, 1899.

Mrs. E. G. White,
Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Dear Mother:-

I see that the time has now come when I must write to you if I get a letter in the mail to you this month. Last month I failed to write to you because we were down the river where we did not have much postoffice facilities, and I was considerably broken up. We are getting along quite well on the boat. Emma is recovering slowly and gaining her strength. She walked up to town and back with me last night, which was the first time she had ever done so since she has been sick. My health is much better than it has been, and I am now able to attend to my usual duties.

But I wish to speak to you largely of the way which the work is going here. Of course, just as you have stated it so many times in the articles which you have written upon this subject, this work is a slow work. The people must receive a preliminary education before they are ready to receive the special truths of the third angel's message. This, we have found to be actually and absolutely the case; for, although the work has been going on for over two years here at Yazoo City, there has been so much to do in educating the people and getting hold of them, that the Sabbath question has not really been brought out at all. In a few instances it has been brought out, and some have accepted the truth in consequence; but for any general presentation of it, we have waited for the Lord to open the way and to indicate that the time had come; when the proper time arrives it will come naturally, and we hope to be ready for it. But our influence upon the people is wonderful. We have brought out many questions, such as the state of the dead, the punishment of the wicked, the immortality question, and the judgment; also, the second coming of Christ, and the signs of the times. These truths they seem to receive quite readily, and we feel that they are now ready to take the truth as fast as we can give it to them. We shall go forward in these lines as the way opens.

Now I will give you a little statement of the situation of the work. Here at Yazoo City there are three special points where we are at work; one is in the city itself; here we have no place of meeting whatever, but the work is done from house to house, and very, very many are deeply interested, are studying the Bible with the Bible workers, and also learning to read and improving their minds generally.

But in Lintonia, a suburb of the city, about a mile from the city itself, there is a large settlement of intelligent colored people. Here we bought a lot when we first came, and erected a movable chapel, 21x48 feet. It was a question in my mind at the time whether we would need so large a chapel, but the events prove that it is not large enough yet. In this we have an excellent ~~xx~~ day school, and a night school has also been started. Bro. Rogers and his wife are in charge of the day school and also of the night school. The day school opened last December with 15 scholars, and it has gradually increased until the present time, until now there are 145 on the roll. Of course, they do not all attend regularly, but the attendance this week is numbering over 100; Monday it

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numbered 107 and Tuesday 110. We expect that the membership will be over 150 by the end of this month. I think then we will have to stop any more coming, because we will not have room for them. Now, in regard to this school, I will give you some idea of how the scholars are coming in. There is a suburb of this city located 2 miles from Lintonia; from this place there are 12 or 14 scholars who walk back and forth each day, although they have a school in their own church, but they are not satisfied with it, and they prefer to walk clear to our school and pay the tuition. Again in Yazoo City itself there are public schools which are free; but from the city very many are sent over to our school at Lintonia, because, they say, their scholars learn more in one week with us than they do in a month at the public school. They also say that the discipline of our school is doing their children so much good that they would pay the tuition just for the sake of the discipline alone. Bro. Rogers and his wife came from Walla Walla, Washington. They are school teachers of experience and before they came to this place they were offered \$140.00 a month to take charge of a village school; this they refused for the purpose of coming down here and working for the colored people, where they did not expect to get anything more than a mere support. They have had a good many trials and difficulties since coming here, but the Lord is blessing them in their work wonderfully. I will say more, in regard to the attendance of the school; there are more than 20 scholars who live several miles in the country, some as far as 10 miles; but they are so anxious to attend the school that they find places in town where they can board with friends and attend the school. There are several young women who walk three and four miles to school and back again at night.

Now, mother, the influence of this is felt wonderfully in our work. It gives us a hold upon the people, and the people are gaining confidence by just such work as this, and they attend our meetings and Sunday school, and fill our chapel full. Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock there is a Sunday school held in the chapel; it is filled with both children and grown people. There is a kindergarten class there which numbers over 30, and it should be divided into four, but we have not the teachers. At the close of the Sunday school the children file out and then the grown people come in and fill up all the vacant seats, so that the house is filled in time for the preaching service. I have been giving a series of discourse on the second coming of Christ and the signs of the times. The house is packed continually, and I never saw such attention and appreciation as is given by this people. The Lord is blessing me in making the subjects plain and clear, so that everyone understands them, and I feel that the time has come now for the truth to go to them.

There is another suburb to Yazoo City called Wilsonia, about a mile in another direction from the city. Here we use the Baptist church, and I speak quite frequently there, and we have night schools at that place. There are some there who have followed the truth closely, and we expect ~~a~~ quite a number will accept it.

Then down the river 7 miles there is a place called Palo Alto, which is settled up by colored people, most of whom own their own farms, and are very intelligent. One Mr. Kincade is the teacher of the district school there, and is a man of a good deal of intelligence. We run down to this place with our steamer Friday afternoons, and give discourses after the Sabbath to the people, who come to our chapel on board the "Morning Star" for the services. They fill this quite well at all times, and there is a great deal of interest there. We have presented at this place the subject of the state of the dead, etc., just as we have here at Yazoo City, and are now giving them a series of discourses on the second advent and signs of the times.

While down there last Friday and Sabbath, an invitation was brought from a church three miles further down the river, who are now entirely without a pastor, and they invite us to come in and occupy their

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church, and promise to fill it for us if we will come and preach the Bible to them. There are many other places like this and we hardly know what to do about it. This afternoon we shall run the steamer down to this last mentioned place and see what the situation is. We feel that at present we are hardly able to take on any more work than we already have; but it is terribly hard to refuse such openings and such opportunities as this, but we had better not undertake it than to begin and then find that we cannot keep it up. We shall see, however, how the matter looks when we go down there today. We shall have a baptism down there of a young man who has been on the boat with us for a number of months. He has accepted the truth and the Lord has done great work for him. He is fully imbued with a love of the truth, and he goes now within a few days to where his friends live, in the northern part of this State, to take the truth to them, and then he will go to Colorado on account of his health. He is a young colored man of good education, and has learned since coming here to use the typewriter and graphophone, so that he attends to my correspondence; I shall have to arrange otherwise after he leaves. But Emma is now getting able so that I think she can help me considerably in my correspondence. By the use of the graphophone, I am able to dictate my letters to the machine, and those who can simply write on the typewriter can simply take my dictation in this way.

About 55 miles down the river from this place is where we have built a chapel at Calmar. We have here a little chapel, it is not large, it is only 18x38 feet, but it is very neatly finished and in good shape. On one end of it we have built an addition of two rooms where the one in charge of the work can live while attending to his work. At this place I think there are now about 20 or 25 who have accepted the truth fully. Bro. Stephenson has been left in charge of the work and, and we can see from the reports that we receive that he is doing good work.

But now comes another phase in this work. The past season has been a terrible one upon the poor farmers, and the colored farmers are always poor. They rent their land, paying about one-half the worth of the land each year, and then they run store-bills through the season for the supplies they need for their families with the understanding that the bill is to be paid at the end of the year. Of course, their crops are taken first to pay the land rent and then they have to give a mortgage to their store keepers, and next the store-bills are paid, if there is enough. They are compelled to raise so much cotton so that they will be sure to have enough to pay all these bills, and at present prices cotton does not pay for the expense of raising, even although the man's time be not counted for anything. Then the last season was rainy all through the season, so that the people were not able to care for their crops; and when the crops of cotton did ripen, there was so much rain that much of it was destroyed, and, as a result, the people came out awfully poor. Most of them did not have more than enough to pay simply the land rent, to say nothing about store-bills; and, if they had any stock they have mortgaged them to the store-keepers, and the store-keepers are coming in and raking up everything they owned or possessed, leaving them absolutely bare and with nothing with which to begin another year. Then, they did not have the money to buy clothing, and many of them suffered terribly this winter for lack of clothing. Some time ago we made a call for second-hand clothing from the North, and we received at first 25 barrels, which we took down with us on our last trip. Also we received some donations of money, which enabled us to buy several barrels of meal, flour, molasses, and some such supplies as that, to be taken to those who were absolutely hungry. These were placed in the hands of a committee at Calmar. I was glad to have an opportunity to see how such work as that would affect the work in which we are engaged, and we are astonished at the result.

As a usual thing the people are very bitter against those who accept the truth; they are turned out from their churches, and all sorts of abuse heaped upon them. This had been the result to those who had ac-

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cepted the truth at Calmar. Bro. Olvin, especially, had been very much abused by his church people. When he was turned out of the church his minister said the time was coming when he would be hungry, when his family would be without clothing, when his cattle and everything would be taken from him, and then there would be no friends to help him; but, he said, those who had raised their voices to turn him out of the church, and thus done their duty, God would bless them, and would give them all the good things of this life and would show which were true to Him. Now, the result was as follows: Bro. Olvin did come to the place where he was hungry; his family lived for about a week on nothing whatever but hulled corn; they were practically without clothing; they were not comfortable, and they were not fit to come out to church services, and they were really in very a bad condition. But just at that time we came down the river with the "Morning Star" loaded with clothing and supplies, and were able to clothe him and his family comfortably, and to furnish them supplies so that they would have food to eat. Then I went with Bro. Olvin to his store-keeper and arranged with him, so that he would not take his cattle, but would give him opportunity to pay for it. So you see we were able to relieve Bro. Olvin entirely from his difficulty, and I understand that to be one of the duties that is given to us; for the Testimonies say that unless we relieve the necessities of those who accept the truth in such times as this, the work of the message as given to them will not accomplish much good.

But now to come to the real comeout of the matter. Those who their ministers said would have plenty and all the good things of life were in worse circumstances than Bro. Olvin. They were without food, they were without clothing, and the merchants had been coming in and taking away their stock from them, and leaving them absolutely bare and desolate. Now, when we brought the food and clothing down, we appointed a committee, not understanding these circumstances, to look into the circumstances of the people, and that the goods were not to be given out except on orders written by this committee, and Bro. Olvin was one member of this committee. Now, the very members of his church who were loud in their voices of turning him out, and of whom their minister said they would have plenty while he would have nothing, were obliged to come to Bro. Olvin and get orders in order to get clothing and food for themselves and families. So you can see how the Lord has worked in this matter, and how He has discomfitted those proud, loud, boasters and blasphemers of His Word. We do not feel to rejoice over them and the circumstances, nor neither does Bro. Olvin, but we do feel that the Lord has demonstrated that He will care for His people, and that is one great lesson, which these people have to learn, and we are glad to say they are learning it.

There were those there who were terribly bitter against our work. One said that he wished someone would blow up the boat with dynamite; others went to the owners of the land and tried to get him to forbid us to come upon the landing where we pitched our tent to hold meetings last summer, but he refused to do this. Now, these very same people were obliged to come to Bro. Olvin and get orders for clothing and other things from us. Now what is the result? We find that our bitterest enemies have ceased all their opposition; they really could not carry it on under the circumstances. People are saying, "Surely God is with this people, or they would not be doing such a work as this." And those who said they would not come into our church as long as they lived are now coming every time there are preaching services, and are listening and are receiving the truth as it is given to them. Many also of those of the opposition are coming and asking for Bible readings, and some have actually come out and taken their stand for the truth. Now we feel that this ministering to the want at that time has appealed to this people in such a way that it has given us an influence with them which will accomplish more for the truth than a year of preaching could do without it. We are

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more thankful than we express day by day for the opportunity we had of catching this matter and of helping these people in this way. We find that the sentiment of the whole community round about is changed and that the opposition has practically ceased.

One other point came to my notice when we were down the last time. There is a little colored Baptist church 4 miles from us. They heard of the work we were doing, and their minister came and listened to the discourses two or three times, and finally he came to me when I was down and said that he had presented the matter to his people, and they wanted us to come up to his church and present the truth to them as it is from the Bible. They say they want to hear the Bible preached, and they want knowledge of it, such as they have never had, that they realize that they are in ignorance and have been deceived in regard to many things, and now they want the truth as it is.

Well, mother, I could go on at great length telling about these things, but I feel that my letter is getting long enough already. When I was down last we had an excellent meeting at Vicksburg. The Lord was with me as I presented the subject of God's care for his people. There were some who were faint-hearted in regard to stepping right out on God's Word and keeping the Sabbath, even although they lost their places; but the Lord blessed in this discourse, and the social meeting we had after it was a wonderful meeting. Our own people said that their faith was strengthened and that they received encouragement that day. There were also two who had backslidden and given up the truth, because they could not trust the Lord for their living. They took their stand firmly and squarely, and are now ready for baptism the next time we go down. I never heard any more humble and tearful confession than these two people made,-- it is a young man and his wife-- while I was there. There was also a Bro. Bishop and his wife. Bro. Bishop had heard one Bible reading on the Sabbath question up at Calmar, and then he was driven out of the swamp and everything was taken from him, and he went to Vicksburg to earn a living. We took hold and helped them while we were there. His wife was working at a hotel and breaking the Sabbath. They said they were trying to get into shape so that they could keep the Sabbath. I urged upon them the necessity of obedience to God's Word and standing the test right from the start, that if they stood the test right at the start it would make their work easier all the way long; but if they failed to stand the first test the Lord would allow others and others to come, sharper and sharper, until they either learned the lesson He would have them learn, or else gave up trying altogether. From this meeting they took their stand that they would serve God at all hazards and trust Him to do what He promised to do. These things took a deep hold upon the people, and much good was done at that time.

Ever since we have been here we have looked forward to the time when there would be two or three or four little companies along the river so that we could get them together at one place some time during the summer and have a good general meeting. We are nicely fitted for this, for when we select the proper locality we can run with our steamboat to Vicksburg and take the whole church on board and bring them up to the meeting. Then when we go down from Yazoo City we can take all there will be here. So you see the matter of expense for travelling will be easily provided for. There is now an earnest call that we have such a meeting in June, and I am inclined to think that we shall try to arrange it in this way. If we hold such a meeting, it will probably be held at Calmar, that place 55 miles down the river. We have a tent we can pitch, and with the use of the chapel and the tent and some rooming in the houses of the people I think we can take care of those who will come. We shall try to get some other preacher to come in to liven up the work some, so that it will not be all from two or three, and then try to have a meeting that will be of interest. We shall advertise it largely in the community, and feel sure that there will be a large attendance. But of course we must ~~xxxx~~ wait