

Africo-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii. 32.

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BLAZERS AND CHIPS

By Rev. Wm. L. Metz, D. D.
(By order of Atlantic Synod).

Article IV.

Missionary to Freedmen in Brunswick, Ga.

It does seem strange to the human mind that where Christ did some of His best work and most effective; and where His missionaries did their first work, Christianity is at low tide. We send missionaries to the people who first heard the Gospel of Christ.

It was set apart July 7, 1870; and among those of her early members were Revs. J. C. Gibbs, J. B. Bates, S. Campbell, W. T. Carr, M. R. Miller, Ishmael Moultrie, and Licentiate H. H. Hunter, who preached in Edisto and James Islands for quite a number of years. He was from some one of the Northern States.

Knox Presbytery

It seemed to have held an informal meeting at Brunswick, Ga., October 5, 1873; and among her first members were Revs. Joseph Williams, David Laney, J. T. H. Waite, G. S. Thompson, and possibly others. This Presbytery is third in order, but the time and place of its organization is uncertain.

Fairfield Presbytery was authorized July 7, 1870, and consisted of the churches in Lancaster, and the parts of South Carolina bounded east and south by the Wateree River and the southeastern boundaries of Richland, Lexington and Edgefield Counties, the said Presbytery to meet at the call of Rev. Samuel Loomis.

Yadkin Presbytery appears at the meeting of Atlantic Synod for the first time, October 11, 1871, at Chester, S. C. This Presbytery was set aside and her boundaries were set the year Fairfield Presbytery was set aside, 1870.

McClelland Presbytery was set aside by Atlantic Synod in Charlotte, N. C., November 14, 1881, to hold her first meeting in Mount Pisgah church at Laurens, S. C., March 11, 1885, with Rev. G. T. Dillard as Moderator. Among the members were: Revs. Wm. R. Coles, Wm. L. Bethel, Geo. T. Dillard, Albert G. Davis, Benjamin Garnett, Alexander C. Johnson, Lionell C. Joell, Emory W. Williams, Thomas L. Young and Benjamin F. McDowell. The writer was present, but was only a lad of 15 years.

Since this pioneer work as to the setting aside of Presbyteries, other Presbyteries have been set aside and are among our most active Presbyteries. For instance, Cape Fear, Hodge, and those in Tennessee, Alabama and Virginia.

The Mother Synod is the Synod of Atlantic, which held her first meeting at Charlotte, N. C., according to appointment, or order of the General Assembly, and was opened with a sermon by Rev. S. S. Murkland, from I Timothy 3: 15. At this meeting of Atlantic Synod three Presbyteries were represented: Atlantic, Catawba and Knox.

The Rev. S. S. Murkland was chosen Moderator; Rev. Luke Dorland was appointed Stated Clerk, and Revs. J. H. Bates and H. H. Hunter were appointed Temporary Clerks.

This Is Not All. The duty of gathering these facts was imposed by the Synod upon the Rev. B. F. McDowell, A. A. Jones and the writer; but while these brethren were true and faithful in their efforts to get data relative to this pioneer work and its workers, the writer has had to do the bulk of the work alone, getting information hither and thither from sources that were vague and limited. The writer has spent and burned the past midnight oil and spent some nights without very much sleep pondering over data and dates in order that he may not have to recant with humiliation something about which he seemed doubly sure.

The writer should say, furthermore, that if he has gone astray in any matter touching any part of this sketch, leaving

out that part under the caption "Laboring Without Presbyterial Boundaries," charge it to him alone and not to the other members of the Committee, for he alone is responsible for it. Meanwhile corrections are in order.

For the benefit of those interested and those who have written the writer about the book on "Afro-Americans in Presbyterian Background," he is glad to say that he has about finished and is reviewing it to see if it is worthwhile.

It deals with our people as Presbyterians before 1860 or 1865, when our friends came down from the North to help us. It touches on the Negro as a

Presbyterian in the gallery. Negro as a Presbyterian presence in the community. founding of Biddle University and a brief sketch of some of the first teachers with their cuts.

While this brief work is confined in a large measure to the work done in the South, brief reference is made to Lincoln University and some of her first graduates; and some of the efforts to give light to the Negro in the North.

In connection with this is a brief sketch under the caption "Looking Back At Old Biddle," with cuts.

THE END.

The first white man, according to the record, to labor in Georgia among the Freedmen after the Civil War was the Rev. James Thomas Hamilton Wait, who was commissioned to labor as a missionary among the Freedmen in Brunswick, Ga.; and there he labored from 1873 to 1874—just one year. It must be difficult to establish a Presbyterian church there, for the Minutes of the General Assembly of 1926 show that we have only a school there, Selden Institute, under Rev. S. Q. Mitchell.

Rev. James Thomas Hamilton Wait was born in New York City, February 17, 1825. He graduated in Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina, '52, and was ordained Deacon in 1846 by New York Methodist Conference. He was received into the Presbyterian Church in 1849. He served Methodist churches at Long Island, N. Y., 1844. The next year, 1845, he served the Methodist church in Charleston, S. C.; York, Pa., in 1846; Drummondtown, Va., in 1867-'68; the Presbyterian churches at Darlington and Waynesville, Ga., 1852-'55. After this Rev. Wait became pastor of Wicomico, Md., from 1856-'67. Leaving this charge he became pastor of the Presbyterian church at Toms River, N. J., from '67 to '72. He again returned South as a missionary to the Freedmen at Brunswick, Ga., from '73 to '74. Leaving this field where his services were in more demand to build up a strong spiritual force he went to Medway, Ga., where he labored from 1874 till the Master called him higher.

For many years this was the largest church in membership of all the other Negro churches in America. It was in a large section of Georgia that could be well called "Black Border," for like the coastal section of South Carolina, you can travel all day among colored people and seldom see a white man.

The Record, or the Minutes of the General Assembly of 1898 show that Medway had a membership of 537, which was 37 more than the membership of Good Will Presbyterian church, in Sumter County, South Carolina, at this time.

Laboring Without Presbyterial Boundaries.

From 1865 to 1869, the latter year when Atlantic Synod was set aside by our Assembly, these pioneers were laboring, it seems, here and there with no Presbyterian boundaries. However, Catawba Presbytery held its first meeting after setting itself aside in Zion Presbyterian church, on Calhoun Street in Charleston, S. C., with Rev. Sydney S. Murkland as Moderator. The other members were Revs. Willis L. Miller and S. C. Alexander and a colored minister whose name is not given, but is said to have been educated at Princeton. Dr. Alexander did not get to the meeting of this Presbytery and the other brother, the colored brother, was only able to be out the night of the meeting, being physically ill. So Rev. Miller and Rev. Murkland made the "Quorum" throughout the meeting, December 1866. "Point of law!"

Atlantic Presbytery has second place as to organiza-