

# Presbyterians in the South and the Slave: A Study in Benevolence

By C. N. Willborn, Ph.D.

## INTRODUCTION

Patriarchalism in the old South has received much attention in scholarship on the antebellum period in U.S. history. There is good reason for this, for “Patriarchal prerogatives were deeply embedded in the domestic law of every state in antebellum America,” writes S. McCurry, “but perhaps nowhere were they so vigorously observed as in South Carolina.” John Boles, a leading historian of Southern culture, insists that slave owners wanted “to be seen as paternalistic. . . . Thus the owner felt righteous, the slaves projected their anger onto the overseer, and the overseer felt himself to be in an untenable position.”<sup>1</sup> Both McCurry and Boles are representative of historians who paint the paternalism of white slave owners as evidence of their hypocrisy and a matter of pragmatism rather than moral conviction.

There can be little doubt that there were masters who adopted a philosophical paternalism in dealing with those they owned. This is reflected in various

beneficial laws that governed dietary matters amongst slaves. Likewise, there is reason to believe that some, if not many masters, adopted such a philosophy for pragmatic reasons, knowing, for example, that the better a slave is fed, the healthier the slave, the more productive the slave. However, there is an aspect of southern paternalism that ought not to be dismissed summarily. There were masters who had a paternalistic relationship toward and with their slaves, not to ward off state officials, not simply for greater productivity, but out of genuine desire for the improvement of the lives of the slaves. The exercise of a biblical paternalistic care would benefit the slave in both this life and the life to come. A number of Southern Presbyterian ministers preached and practiced the biblical obligations of paternalism and exhorted their hearers to act fatherly and as a good neighbor toward the poor and needy.<sup>2</sup>

While there can be little doubt that both economics and fear shaped the way Southerners viewed slaves and slavery, there is another aspect of the relationship to be considered: the “peculiar institution” engendered many affectionate relationships between whites and blacks in the antebellum South. Charles Colcock Jones, “Apostle to the Negro Slaves,” provides an example of close relations between master and slave. “The Jones’ relationship with these domestic servants,” writes Erskine Clarke, “was kind and paternal: they were regarded as part of the household and were looked upon with genuine affection.”<sup>3</sup> These warm relations induced men such as Methodist Bishop William Capers, Lutheran John Bachman, Episcopal Bishops Gadsden and Elliott, and Presbyterians Thomas Smyth, John B. Adger, and John L. Girardeau, to work arduously for the welfare of the slaves.

The aim of this brief paper is to illustrate the genuine concern a number of our Presbyterian forefathers had for the slaves and freedmen of the nineteenth century

---

THE AUTHOR: Dr. C. N. Willborn is Associate Professor of Church History at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. He is a contributing editor to *The Confessional Presbyterian*.

1. Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 85; John B. Boles, *The South Through Time*, 2 vols. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1995) 1:207. Paternalism is “the system, principle, or practice of managing or governing individuals, businesses, nations, etc., in the manner of a father dealing benevolently and often intrusively with his children” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary).

2. Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) 133. In this volume Wade makes the common assumption that churches for the slaves were concerned with instructing them in obedience toward masters in particular, and whites in general (82). However, there were masters and ministers who practiced and preached paternalism based upon the Scriptures that benefited the slaves temporarily and eternally. More will be said on this in a later section.

3. Erskine Clarke, *Wrestling Jacob: A Portrait of Religion in Antebellum*

Southern United States. It is my hope that prejudices against a certain class of men—in this case, white Presbyterian ministers—can be allayed so that valuable ministry lessons can be learned from our past and applied to our present social and cultural situations. At the heart of this demonstration is an overview of the exemplary ministry of John L. Girardeau of Charleston.

#### PRELIMINARY EXAMPLES

Students of American Presbyterian history remember the labors of Samuel Davies (1723–1761) and his promotion of religious freedom and toleration within the British colonial context of Virginia. The same students may also recollect Davies' role in founding historic Hanover Presbytery and his fame as a gospel preacher. Of equal interest should also be his efforts among and for the blacks of rural central Virginia. He had a sizeable number of blacks under his charge and spent much time educating and evangelizing them.<sup>4</sup> His labor of love had lasting effect as testified by one who wrote as late as 1843 that he had “seen persons born in Africa who were baptized by Mr Davies, and by his care had been taught to read; and have seen in their hands, the books given to them by this eminent preacher.”<sup>5</sup> The slaves were the chief objects of Davies' compassion and this compassion was expressed largely by teaching them to read and providing them good reading materials.

Someone may ask, “Were not the masters opposed to such education?” The answer is a simple “no.” As Davies expressed it, even masters who had little or no religion or were bigots “freely allowed” their slaves to learn (Pilcher, 111). Almost without exception, masters believed religious education would make slaves good Christians, not dissenters. Davies believed the same and cast himself into this labor of love. Such was his affection and devotion to the sheep of his fold, both white and black.

Farther south and a couple of generations later, the name Charles Colcock Jones, Sr. (1804–1863) appeared in the annals of history. Jones was of a significant family in Liberty County Georgia. He was educated for the gospel ministry at Andover Theological Seminary (1827–1829) and Princeton Theological Seminary (1829–1830). The Georgian served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Savannah, Georgia (1831–1832), professor of church history and polity at the Presbyterian seminary in Columbia, South Carolina (1835–1838 and 1847–1850; now Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia). He also served his beloved Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Old

School) as general secretary of the Board of Domestic Mission (1850–1853). Jones, however, is most famous for his benevolent ministry to the slaves of lowcountry Georgia—a ministry that earned him the deserved title of “Apostle to the Negro Slaves.”<sup>6</sup>

While Presbyterians like Davies, Archibald Alexander, and John Holt Rice, had made gallant efforts to educate, evangelize, and improve the plight of slaves, general conditions had worsened by the time Jones was considering his ministerial calling. The number of slaves who could read was fractional in the United States. Some states, Jones lamented, “forbid all knowledge of letters to the Negroes.”<sup>7</sup> Ministers also had failed in their attention to slaves and religious education.

In response to the general malaise, Jones organized an Association for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes (1836), which was to aid the slaves of Liberty County and beyond. Jones formed chapels and Sabbath schools on plantations throughout the Georgia lowcountry to aid in the instruction of the black children. The reason for the Sabbath schools was three-fold: first, the parents of these children were largely ill-prepared to educate their own children; second, there were “but few of the masters who instruct them at home” (Thompson, 1:439); third, and supremely, the concern for the spiritual well-being of the many children born into slavery.

*Georgia and the Carolina Low Country* (reprint, Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 2000) 17, xxv. It should be noted that this paternalism or patriarchalism influenced men to provide gospel instruction for the uneducated and “poor Negroes.” This, of course, would be considered by many as the ultimate expression of kindness. Illustrations of this biblical paternalism in the Jones family may be seen in Robert Manson Myers, *The Children of Pride: A True Story of Georgia and the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); and Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). Examples may also be found in family accounts from Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *Broken Home: Lessons in Sorrow* (reprint, Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 1994).

4. For a helpful (albeit brief) discussion of Davies' ministry to the slaves see George William Pilcher, *Samuel Davies: Apostle of Dissent in Colonial Virginia* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1971) 107–115.

5. “Review of Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (n.p., 1842),” *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* XV (1843) 26–27. Since the reviewer claims first hand knowledge of the fruit of Davies' ministry, it is likely Archibald Alexander wrote the review.

6. For a useful overview of Jones' life see Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob: A Portrait of Religion in Antebellum Georgia and the Carolina Low Country*, 3–81. Also see Eduard N. Loring, “Charles C. Jones, Missionary to Plantation Slaves, 1831–1847” (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1976).

7. Quoted in E. T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 3 vols. (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963–1973) 1:435.

After several years of interacting with masters and slaves, Jones wrote that many in his region were convinced of the need to do more for the slaves than they had done but did not know how.<sup>8</sup> His goal was to do more for the slaves and to educate and excite the white citizenship to greater concern and care for them. He did this through his exemplary ministry, public meetings, and publications. His publications included a series of tracts on the subject, a two-hundred and seventy-seven page manual entitled *The Religious Instruction of Negroes In the United States* (1842), and *A Catechism of Scripture* (1845), to mention a few.<sup>9</sup>

“Dr. Jones,” wrote E. T. Thompson, “spoke plainly to the servants; he also spoke plainly to their masters.” Much of his plain talk was adopted and circulated by Southern churches. For example, a committee report solicited by the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia was received and adopted in 1833. In the report, written by Jones, the Church was exhorted to greater love and care for the slaves. “Religion will tell the master,” exclaimed Jones, “that his servants are his fellow-creatures and he has a Master in heaven to whom he shall account for his treatment of them. . . . The master will be led to inquiries of this sort: In what kind of houses do I permit them to live? What clothes do I give them to wear? What food to eat? What privileges to enjoy? In what temper and manner and proportion to their crimes are they punished?” (Thompson, 1.440).

In 1845, leading citizens<sup>10</sup> of Charleston, South Carolina invited Jones to “the Holy City” to headline a

series of meetings on the topic of benevolence toward the slaves of the Carolina lowcountry. The findings and results are discernible from the published report when the committee writes: “But this document [a record of the meetings] possesses an interest independent of its practical details. The concern which it shows to be deeply and extensively felt, for the religious and moral improvement of our colored population—a concern which can arise only from a religious sentiment—is itself a subject of congratulation.”<sup>11</sup> There was in the South, among civic, political, and ecclesiastical leaders, a “deeply and extensively felt” “religious sentiment” for the slaves and their plight. As they said, this religious sentiment existed “independent of its practical details.” In this case at least, their paternalism was religious or gospel motivated and centered.

The positive efforts of concerned Southerners toward slaves spanned denominational and political bounds. Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians labored on behalf of the slaves and involved their black brothers in the labors of the church. This was true in the rural South, with men like C. C. Jones in Georgia and James Smylie in Mississippi. Likewise, the urban centers of the South were blessed with men of the same conviction. Perhaps no single ministry exemplified that genuine concern for the slaves better than Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston.

In 1837, Thomas Smyth (1808–73)<sup>12</sup> wrote a letter to the congregation of Second Presbyterian Church as they prepared for their annual “corporation” meeting. In the letter the pastor pleaded with the congregation to follow the desires of their pastor and session in providing better conditions for the “coloured people” in public worship. Smyth reminded them that the gallery was oppressively hot in the summer months, and that needed to be remedied. If the gallery windows (which were for light not for ventilation) could not be made to open, then the black membership should be allowed to sit on the main floor!<sup>13</sup>

This exemplifies some of the concerns Smyth had for the blacks—free and slave—of Charleston. This concern and interest was multiplied when his brother-in-law John Bailey Adger returned home in 1846 from a twelve year missionary stint in Armenia. Adger’s concern for the slaves led him to remain in his beloved South Carolina where he cast his lot with Smyth to increase and improve the church’s attention to the moral and religious needs of the slave population.

Adger became a major voice in Southern Presbyterianism for religious instruction of the Africans and improved conditions for them. In 1847, with approval

8. *Charleston Observer*, April 30, 1842.

9. Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of Negroes. In the United States* (Savannah, GA: Thomas Purse and Co., 1842). This work is available online as *The Religious Instruction of Negroes. In the United States. Electronic Edition. The University of North Carolina, Documenting the American South; A Catechism of Scripture, Doctrine and Practice: For Families And Sabbath Schools, Designed also for the Oral Instruction of Colored Persons*, 3rd ed. (Savannah, GA: Thomas Purse and Co., 1845).

10. The leading citizens formed an impressive committee to execute the meetings. The committee included: Daniel Huger, R. Barnwell Rhett, Robert W. Barnwell, Henry Bailey, Daniel Ravenel, F.R. Shackelford, W. Curtis, Benjamin Gildersleeve, William Capers, and W.H. Barnwell. Other ecclesiastical and civic leaders involved were T. Drayton Grimke, C. G. Memminger, Richard Fuller, and Thomas Smyth.

11. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, SC May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston, SC: B. Jenkins, 1845) 6.

12. See Erskine Clarke, “Thomas Smyth: Moderate of the Old South” (Th.D. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1970).

13. Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters and Reflections*, ed. Louisa Cheves Stoney (Charleston: Walker, Evans, Cogswell Co., 1914) 159.



In 1847 J. B. Adger began holding meetings for slaves in the Lecture Hall on Society Street in Charleston (above). A church building for blacks was erected in 1850 on Anson Street (left). Both buildings still stand today.

of the Presbytery of Charleston and under the authority of the Second Presbyterian session, he began holding meetings for the slaves in the Lecture Hall on Society Street, which was owned by the church. Adger labored with a singular affection for the black brothers of Charleston. He taught them the Scriptures, catechism, psalms and hymns. The intention of Adger was to provide instruction and worship for the slaves that would raise them out of their ignorance and superstition. Thus, Adger provided an avenue for many to become Christians and many more to become better Christians.

It soon became evident that the Society Street location was insufficient for the work. Adger and Smyth recognized that the work needed a more suitable facility and one that was more obviously that of the blacks. In 1850, after no little opposition from sectors of the community, a handsome church edifice was erected at 91 Anson Street by the membership of Second Presbyterian Church.<sup>14</sup> The building seated several hundred worshippers, with the black members taking the main floor seats.<sup>15</sup> The seating priority was a visible reminder to whites and blacks alike that the Anson Street building was built for and existed for the blacks.

As one might imagine, the endeavor was of some concern to white citizens. “The idea of building a church,” Adger wrote, “where negroes were to assemble

for worship separate from the whites, even though the minister was to be a white man, and the Sunday-school teachers all white gentlemen and ladies, was not only novel, but, to many persons, alarming.”<sup>16</sup> There were those who worried that church buildings of this sort would foster dissent and lead to uprisings against the status quo. Adger would bend to none of this alarmist rhetoric. “They belong to us,” argued Adger. “We also belong to them.... They live with us, eating from the same store-houses, drinking from the same fountains, dwelling in the same enclosures, forming parts of the same families.... See them all around you. In these streets, in all these dwellings; a race distinct from us, yet closely united to us; brought in God’s mysterious providence from a foreign land, and placed under our care, and made members of our households. They fill the humblest places of our state of society; they serve us; they give us their strength, yet they are not more truly ours than we are theirs.”<sup>17</sup> For Adger, his ministry was

14. The Anson Street Chapel is now home to St. John’s Reformed Episcopal Church, the grounds of which are adorned with the wrought-iron handy work of Charleston’s famous artisan Phillip Simmons. James Henley Thornwell preached the dedication sermon in 1850 on *The Rights and Duties of Masters*.

15. The wings of the building accommodated whites in attendance from Second Church and elsewhere, but it is most significant that the blacks were given priority in seating.

16. John B. Adger, *My Life and Times* (Richmond: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899) 164.

17. *Ibid.*, 167. Sadly it is necessary to note that when Adger referred to the blacks as “a race distinct from us,” he is not espousing a polygenesis viewpoint. He with most Southerners held to one race created by God. Adger is simply referring to color and culture as the distinction.

not a social ploy to control the Africans; his labors were motivated by genuine Christian love for the poor and needy in his milieu and there were none more poor and needy than the slaves.

After five years, Adger's arduous labors for the slaves took its toll on his health. He was once again physically spent and began considering an able successor for the work on Anson Street. He found a kindred spirit in his fellow lowcountry friend, John L. Girardeau.<sup>18</sup> Girardeau was of Huguenot descent, a son of a planter, and the product of a small Scottish-styled Presbyterian Church on James Island.<sup>19</sup> Girardeau's love for the slaves had been nurtured on the plantation by his kind mother and he had grown up to possess an exceptional zeal for the spiritual education of and care for the black population of his beloved lowcountry and South.

#### AN EXPERIMENT IN ZION

In Charleston, Girardeau inherited Adger's Gothic style building on Anson Street. In 1855, under Girardeau's leadership, the mission work was formally organized as a Presbyterian Church with forty-eight black members and a number of white members, including three white elders (the influential Robert Adger being one) to provide spiritual oversight of the church membership.<sup>20</sup> By 1858, the numbers were too large for the Anson Street building and the citizens of Charleston raised \$25,000 to build a new building at the corner of Meeting Street and Calhoun Street.<sup>21</sup> After a few setbacks, the construction was completed and 500 black members and a hundred more white members held the inaugural service in the largest church building in South Carolina—seating approximately 1,500. The black membership chose the name for their new home—Zion Presbyterian Church. By the time of the War Between the States the black membership, mostly slaves, was 600. Girardeau was preaching

to 2500 slaves, free blacks, and whites twice each Sunday. With such large numbers under their charge, Girardeau and the white elders chose spiritually qualified men from among the black numbers to serve as "watchmen" over "classes" of fifty. The "classes" were grouped according to residence in the city, much like the parish system of Scotland. The watchmen met monthly with the elders for reports on the welfare of their little flocks. The watchmen were responsible for instructing their classes and providing financial stipends from the church treasury to those slaves in need. They also provided basic marital advice, as well as, premarital counseling.

Girardeau, his elders, and the watchmen held many classes for the instruction of the slaves in the catechism of the church, the Bible, and Psalms and hymns for singing. They were so successful that some of their opponents were convinced they were violating the state's law (1834) that forbade the teaching of slaves to read. The public wedding services for slaves held at Zion also raised the ire of a few of Charleston's choicest bigots. That the slaves could and would celebrate marriages by strolling down the city's fashion center "in silks, satins and feathers," raised a number of objections through the local newspapers.<sup>22</sup> In the face of numerous and varied distractions, the work grew steadily until that fateful day when the sky over Charleston Harbor and Fort Sumter was filled with the fire and smoke of the War.

Girardeau continued his labors unabated until 1862 when he joined the ranks of many ministers as a chaplain in a South Carolina Regiment. Throughout the war, however, he returned to Charleston where he and his fellow elders continued to exercise as much care for their black flock as possible, even receiving new members into the Zion family. The final months of the war found Girardeau imprisoned in the Northern prison of Johnson's Island on Lake Erie.

Though many black Charlestonians were scattered across the Southern landscape at the close of the war, there were some remnants from the old Zion Church remaining in Charleston. Additionally, in September 1865, significant numbers of white Charlestonians began to return to the city. They had left the city to escape the ravages of war and found refuge in rural locations throughout the coastal plains, midlands, and hill country of the Palmetto State. Girardeau's family, for example, had fled their Bull Street home late in the military campaign and found safety in rural Darlington County, near Timmonsville. Late in the summer of 1865, however, the downtrodden and displaced white Carolinians were returning to their homes, and they found their churches closed.

18. See C. N. Willborn, "John L. Girardeau (1825–1898): Preacher to Slaves and Theologian of Causes" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2003) and Douglas Kelly, *Preachers with Power: Four Stalwarts of the South* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992).

19. James Island Presbyterian Church was founded in 1706 by the Church of Scotland minister Archibald Stobo. One of several churches started by Stobo, it maintained ties with the Scottish Church rather than the nascent American Presbyterian Church for some time.

20. There was a considerable disparity between membership and attendance numbers in Adger's formational years of slave ministry.

21. The property is presently home to a Holiday Inn. Visitors to the Holiday Inn will find a city map from 1871 which identifies Zion Presbyterian Church on its prominent location. Zion was razed in 1968 to make way for "urban progress."

22. *Charleston Mercury*, October 25, 1859.

According to a longtime friend of Girardeau, it was about this time that “[Girardeau] began to receive overtures from the Presbyterian young [black] men in Charleston” to return to his pulpit. His sense of duty and love for “the holy city” hastened his return. As Girardeau disembarked the train in the Charleston depot the “colored members of the church” greeted their pastor with “superabounding enthusiasm.”<sup>23</sup> While this does not agree with the banal image often portrayed of the Africans’ lackluster enthusiasm for white Southerners, it is no doubt true. Girardeau found a considerable number of black Carolinians anxiously awaiting his return to the pulpit.

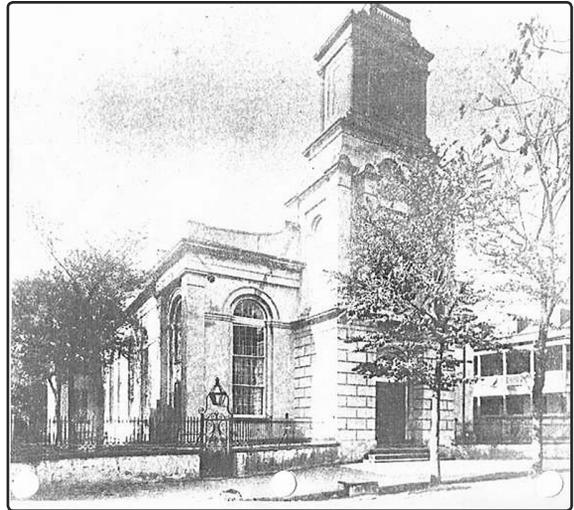
They were awaiting his return for indeed they had summoned him in a letter dated July 27, 1865. This was shortly after his grueling return from war and imprisonment. The letter speaks of their concern for Girardeau’s well-being and their desire for his return to them. It reveals a love for the man and his family that few textbooks recognize as having existed between whites and blacks, masters and slaves.

Revd Sir & pastor

We the undersign members of Zion Presbyterian Church embrace this opportunity, as one among the many good ones we have engaged in the past and in doing so you have our best wishes for you health & that of you loveing family hoping all are engaging that blessing of good health and realizing that fulfillment of god words those that put their trust in him shall never want.

This love for Girardeau is further expressed in their longing for him to return to them and resume his pastoral labors in their midst. “The past relations,” wrote the Zion members, “we have engaged together for many years as pastor and people are still in its bud in our every heart therefore we would well come you still as our pastor.”<sup>24</sup>

From the time Girardeau returned to Charleston until he was able to reoccupy the Zion pulpit, fifteen months had elapsed.<sup>25</sup> Finally, “on Sabbath, December 23rd, 1866, the Rev. John L. Girardeau re-commenced services in the building.” Girardeau’s text for the occasion was “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servant for Jesus’ sake,” (2 Corinthians 4:5). While no manuscript exists of this sermon there are a few points that appear obvious. First, he preached Christ. There can be little doubt that Girardeau reminded his listeners that he had always been faithful in preaching Jesus to them. He was



Zion Presbyterian Church (White), Glebe Street (top) and Zion Presbyterian Church (Colored), Calhoun Street (bottom).

no moralizer or politician in the pulpit. Indeed, he may have reminded his black brothers that his catechism<sup>26</sup> was replete with the gospel, without mention of master-

23. D. W. McLaurin, “The Confederate Chaplain,” in *The Life Work of John L. Girardeau, D.D., LL.D.*, ed. George A. Blackburn (Columbia, S.C.: State Co., 1916) 123; Thomas H. Law, D.D., “Pastorate After the War,” 135.

24. Paul Trescoat, et al to The Reverend J. L. Girardeau, July 27, 1865, Microfilm #160, SCL. The letter from the Zion leaders has been quoted verbatim without alteration in order to preserve the authenticity and sense of its historical context.

25. When Girardeau returned to Charleston he found his home on Bull Street and Zion Church occupied by Federal troops. It took over 12 months for Girardeau, Adger and others to convince the Federal Government that the claims of the Presbyterian Church USA (Northern Church) was in error when it claimed ownership of the Zion property.

26. John L. Girardeau, *A Catechism For The Oral Instruction of Coloured Persons* (Charleston: Evans and Cogswell, 1860). Girardeau’s catechism was one of several prepared and published by Southern ministers for their black and white parishioners.

slave relations. Second, in preaching Christ, Girardeau was also sending a message to the Northern detractors that their harassment over the past fifteen months or so was unjust. That Jonathan Gibbs<sup>27</sup> (the Northern missionary) would choose the property of Zion Presbyterian Church to occupy was a clear indication that he, and by association, the Committee that sent him, did not believe the South had been adequately preaching the gospel to the African-Americans. Girardeau's first sermon in the Zion pulpit issued a resounding "Not true!" to such an implication. Third, it would not be far-fetched to assume that Girardeau reminded his hearers that, while they were no longer slaves, he would continue to be their slave for Christ's sake. He was not free to do otherwise.

Girardeau wasted no time rebuilding the walls of Zion. First, a meeting was held to determine the total black membership that wished to continue as Freedmen in the Zion Presbyterian Church. Much to Girardeau's disappointment, only one hundred sixteen indicated their desire to remain in Zion. This reflected

27. Gibbs briefly attended Princeton Seminary before being ordained by the Presbytery of New York. After a short ministry in New York he served as pastor of First African Presbyterian Church in his native Philadelphia before traveling to the South to labor amongst the freedmen. He later entered politics in Florida.

28. John L. Girardeau, "Prefatory Notes," Thomas Smyth Papers, SCHS, 2.

29. With Zion confiscated by the Federals in 1865, Girardeau was invited to the Glebe Street Presbyterian Church to hold services for all Charleston Presbyterians. In 1866 the memberships of Zion and Glebe Street merged. Upon recovery of the Calhoun Street property late in 1866, Girardeau began holding services at Zion Glebe Street and Zion Calhoun Street. After 1875 and organic separation of the white and black churches, the churches lost their formal relationship—Zion Presbyterian Church (White), Glebe Street and Zion Presbyterian Church (Colored), Calhoun Street. Black citizens of Charleston today refer to the two churches as Big Zion (Calhoun Street) and Little Zion (Glebe Street).

30. *Minutes of Session of Zion Presbyterian Church, Glebe Street, October 3, 1867; April 1868; April 1869*, The Presbyterian Historical Society Philadelphia (PHS); From the *Minutes of Session of Zion Presbyterian Church, Glebe Street, March 6, 1870*, PHS, we learn that the infrastructure included a Committee on Sick, Gentlemen's Missionary Committee, Ladies' Missionary Committee, Visiting Committee, and a Ladies' Sewing Club.

31. *Minutes of Session of Zion Presbyterian Church, July 27, 1869*, PHS. The three hundred forty-five members dismissed to form the separate church, are listed by name in the said minutes. A good one third of the total were male with another large portion of the membership being youth and children.

32. The organization of Zion Presbyterian Church (Colored) reveals that Girardeau was forced to work in a socially and politically forged "make-shift" manner. Even though the two bodies were "separated" they were still governed as one church and considered by members as parts of a single whole.

the influence of Reconstruction and the less than enthusiastic attitudes of many Southerners toward their black brothers.

Nevertheless, Girardeau proceeded with the one hundred sixteen faithful, and on March 25, 1867, the session nominated seven men to serve as "Superintendents" over the new congregation. The election of Superintendents, rather than elders as Girardeau desired, was in accordance with the resolution of the 1866 General Assembly. The men were all members of Zion before the war and some had served as Watchmen or Leaders of the Classes. "In 1867," wrote Girardeau, "a fresh start in the teeth of many difficulties was made with 116 members of the 500."<sup>28</sup>

Later in the year, with Joseph B. Mack at his side, Girardeau began rebuilding the infrastructure of old Zion. The 1867 records indicate a total membership—Zion Church, Calhoun Street and Glebe Street—of four hundred forty.<sup>29</sup> This included the one hundred sixteen freedmen. By March of 1868, the church had added sixty members. Fifty-one of the new additions came through profession of faith in Christ. There were nineteen infants baptized and seventeen adults. By March 1869 total communicants numbered five hundred sixty-one in Zion. Sabbath schools were once again instituted with two hundred enrolled. This number swelled to 750 scholars by 1875. While other conditions were still chaotic throughout the city, the South, and the Southern Presbyterian Church, there were some hopeful signs as evidenced by Zion.<sup>30</sup>

In 1869, the General Assembly, following Girardeau's lead, made it possible for freedmen to be ordained as elders. Just as Girardeau had quickly moved to install superintendents in the newly restored work in 1867, he wasted little time in organizing the black membership into a "branch congregation" of Zion, complete with ordained elders. On Tuesday, July 27, 1869, the Session of Zion Presbyterian Church dismissed three hundred forty-five members to form the Zion Presbyterian Church (Colored), Calhoun Street. From this we learn that in two years the black membership of Zion under the beloved white pastor had grown from one hundred sixteen to three hundred forty-five.<sup>31</sup> Thus, in 1869 the black membership constituted more than one-half the total membership of Girardeau's flock. This example offers some evidence that the integration of whites and the newly freed blacks into one church could have worked if it had been zealously pursued along the lines Girardeau recommended.<sup>32</sup>

Upon the recommendation of Girardeau and the

*Continued on Page 302.*

**John Calvin, the Nascent Sabbatarian, Continued from Page 14.**

Sabbath almost disappears from recorded Christian practice after Christ's resurrection," and that furthermore, "the indirect evidence is very strong, and shows not merely that the Lord's Day was kept by Jewish Christians, but that it originated with them," for it is likely "that the church in Palestine *originally* observed both the Sabbath and the Lord's Day."<sup>45</sup>

In short, Calvin's understanding of the biblical doctrine of the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath, while off slightly due largely to an exegetical error, and (understandably) not so well developed as that of his Puritan successors, is in sufficient agreement with them on the central issues that he is certainly not 'non-sabbatarian' as some have suggested. In fact, one may justly categorize Calvin together with later sabbatarians; the term 'nascent sabbatarian' would seem most appropriate. ■

**Edwards' Freedom of the Will, Continued from Page 103.**

The present author concludes this review and analysis of *Freedom of the Will* by turning to the advice that Martyn Lloyd-Jones once gave to a man seeking to learn more about the doctrines of the Christian faith. Said Lloyd-Jones: "My advice to you is: Read Jonathan Edwards.... Read this man. Decide to do so. Read his sermons; read his practical treatises, and then go on to the great discourses on theological subjects."<sup>49</sup> Better advice could hardly be given. If one wants to know about the Christian faith in its richest Calvinistic form, he could do no better than beginning by reading Jonathan Edwards.

Soli Deo Gloria. ■

45. Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, *This is the Day: The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in its Jewish and Early Church Setting* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott: 1978) 30–32.

49. From D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival," as cited in Justin Taylor, "Reading Jonathan Edwards: Objections and Recommendations," *A God Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, edited by John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2004) 269.

33. *Minutes of Session of the Zion Presbyterian Church, Glebe Street, August 15, 1869*, PHS. An announcement of the events of Sunday evening August 15, 1869 was published in the *Southern Presbyterian and Index*, nd., available on Microfilm #160, SCL.

34. Girardeau was elected Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Columbia Theological Seminary in 1875 and remained in that chair until 1893 when his failing health forced his retirement. He died a peaceful death in Columbia on June 23, 1898 and lies awaiting the resurrection of the body in Columbia's Elmwood Cemetery.

**Presbyterians in the South and the Slave, Continued from Page 222.**

Zion Session, the following Freedmen were nominated to serve in the office of Ruling Elder—Paul Trescot, William Price, Jacky Morrison, Samuel Robinson, William Spencer, and John Warren. On "Sabbath August 15, 1869, 8 ½ P.M." the congregation of Zion Presbyterian Church (Colored) met for worship and the ordination and installation of their Ruling Elders. Girardeau chose for his text on this occasion Acts 14:23—"And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting ... they commended them to the Lord." The records tell us, "Session did then with prayer and the imposition of their hands ordain the persons ... and install them in the same." Thus, Zion became the first Southern church governed by black elders.<sup>33</sup> Girardeau had done what Dabney and a host of other Southern churchmen would not consider doing. He had admitted that black men could be qualified to rule in the church. He had exhibited his approbation by participating in the holy service, even the laying on of hands. What Dabney and others doubted possible, Girardeau confirmed as real.

Sadly, Girardeau's experiment did not gain prominence in the Southern Church. In 1874, the Presbyterian Church US, under political and social pressures from within and without, voted to segregate their communion into black and white churches. Girardeau opposed the move, lost the vote, and lost his beloved Zion.<sup>34</sup> Within a few short years many black Presbyterians across the South affiliated with the Presbyterian Church USA, leaving the Presbyterian Church US.

## CONCLUSION

All human weaknesses aside, the heritage of Davies, Jones, Adger, Smyth, and Girardeau is a good one. Their sacrificial labors could and should serve as a model for many today. Our elders and deacons should adopt a paternalistic model toward the precious sheep entrusted to them by our heavenly Father. A great sensitivity and shepherd like service would follow. The men we have considered loved their black brothers and gave themselves to the good work even in the face of social, political, and ecclesiastical difficulties. No doubt there are many rejoicing in the presence of our LORD today because of the loving ministries of these men and countless others like them. ■

**Seminary Education, Continued from Page 230.**

Catechisms as the guide to the survey. Readings are required in Calvin's Institutes as well as catechism memorization" (Greenville Catalogue).

Third, we seek to teach all doctrine courses exegetically. But when the truth has been established from Scripture, we use the summary found in the Standards.