

general welfare and prosperity of the nation. In Maryland, where emancipation was effected by statute law some time before the President's Proclamation, about forty schools were established by the "Maryland Association for the Moral and Intellectual Improvement of the Colored People" of that State. Of these about one-fourth have been, within a few months, broken up; meeting and school houses have been burned; and teachers assaulted and driven away. In the States recently in rebellion, they are subject to wrongs and outrages, from which they have no redress under existing laws, which were made to subserve the system of slavery. Your memorialists therefore submit, that, as the Government, "for its own purposes," changed their condition, and deprived them of the care incident to it, and upon which they depended, it has become bound, by every consideration of justice and honor, to assume their guardianship, and to prevent them from suffering by the change. We are glad to see the subject so forcibly urged upon Congress by both the President and Secretary of War. In the opinion of your memorialists this solemn duty will not be accomplished by the mere adoption of the late amendment to the Constitution, which provides for the legal abolition of slavery. Much of the real and personal property in the parts of the country in which these "wards" of the Government live, is, by reason of the rebellion, subject to forfeiture; and the lives of many persons to the penalties of treason. And if it be desirable to restore this property to those who have incurred its forfeiture, and to proclaim a general amnesty on their behalf, it is not less desirable to fulfil the obligations of the Government towards the people who were their slaves, and whose unrequited toil accumulated much of that property.

If it be a self-evident truth—of which we have no doubt—that the just powers of the Government are derived from the consent of the governed, in order to secure them the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, it must be equally evident that any system of laws under which the rights of a large portion of the people are disregarded, is inconsistent with that republican form of government which Congress is bound to guarantee to every State. Under the rule of Christian action above referred to, all these rights would be cheerfully accorded, so far as we should desire them for ourselves; and whilst the elective franchise should be regulated by the sound discretion of a majority of the people concerned, we believe that all political distinctions on account of color are not only contrary to this rule, but subversive of the great principles which lie at the foundation of our government. Under the same rule, a course of justice and kindness will be pursued towards them, and full opportunity will be given, and every assistance afforded, by the dissemination of education and intelligence, to enable them to rise from the state of ignorance and degradation in which slavery has left them.

In the past this nation has enjoyed the bounties and mercies of the Almighty. These have often been publicly acknowledged by the highest officers of the Government. We are still the recipients of His favors, and the expectants of His mercy, both now and in the great hereafter. We are assured, in solemn language, that what measure we meet, will be measured to us.—(Mark iv, 24.) How then can we ask or expect His mercy if we refuse to accord justice to our fellow-men, who are children of the same Almighty parent, and alike the objects of His love and mercy!

It is with diffidence that we venture to urge this subject before Congress; yet we cannot disregard our own duty in this respect. We doubt not that it is the desire of Congress to do its whole duty on behalf our country, in order to merit the approbation of our common Father, who holds the universe as in the hollow of His hand, and who can bless or blight our endeavors, and there is none to call in question or arrest His judgments!

It is our prayer in behalf of all the members of Government, that they may be endued, by our Heavenly Father, with wisdom and strength to perform, with fearless reliance upon conscious rectitude, the great duties which devolve upon them.

BENJAMIN TATHAM,
ROBERT LINDLEY MURRAY,
WILLIAM B. COLLINS,
RICHARD M. JANNEY,
FRANCIS T. KING,
JAMES CAREY,
JAMES C. THOMAS,
JOHN BUTLER,
WILLIAM CATTELL,
JOSEPH HILL,
CHARLES F. COFFIN,
MICAHAH C. BINFORD,
ROBERT W. HODSON,
ELEAZAR BALES,
ENOCH HOAG.

BALTIMORE, 12th Month, 14, 1865.

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