

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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## I.

### SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE FEDERAL THEORY OF IMMEDIATE IMPUTATION.

WE will notice the most radical objection first. A distinguished theologian, who teaches immediate imputation, and who would be classed as a Calvinist, objects to the federal theory on the ground that "it is extra-scriptural, there being no mention of such a covenant with Adam in the account of man's trial." What he thinks of the covenant of grace may be gathered from the fact that he makes election logically subsequent, in God's decree, to the purpose to redeem. "The true order of the decrees," he holds, "is therefore as follows: 1, The decree to create; 2, the decree to permit the fall; 3, the decree to provide a salvation in Christ sufficient for the needs of all; 4, the decree to secure the actual acceptance of this salvation on the part of some—or, in other words, the decree of election." Such an order of the decrees is obviously inconsistent with a federal relation on the part of the Redeemer to any particular class of fallen men. It implies that his work had equal reference to all. Election is simply an expedient to save the scheme from ignominious failure. We understand this author to make a square issue. The natural relation is the only one we sustain to Adam: our union with Christ begins when we exercise saving faith. The theory of the covenant being extra-scriptural, he does not employ the terms which belong to it. To use Bishop Butler's distinction, he objects to the evidence rather than to the contents of revelation. We agree with him entirely that the question is one of fact. If the doctrine of the covenants is not a matter of divine revelation, then any

## VI.

### OUR DUTY TOWARDS THE NEGRO.

THE existence of nine millions of colored people in the Southern States imposes upon us, as individuals and as a church, a duty which we cannot evade, any more than we can escape our own consciousness or surrender our own being. Every now and then some one, who has surveyed more or less carefully something like a few square acres of ground, tells us that, like the Indians, this race is dying out, and is destined to extinction. If this were true, it would not alter our duty to the nine millions of living members of that race, and to their gradually decreasing descendants, who must last for many generations. But this view of the gradual decrease and final extinction of the negro race in America is not supported by the best authority we have on this subject, viz., the various censuses of the United States, in which various flaws may be picked here and there, but which give us the best approximation to the truth on this subject we can obtain. This authority promises us no relief in the way of gradual extinction from the pressure which these millions of colored people impose.

Some years ago an interesting writer published a book entitled *An Appeal to Pharaoh*, in which he advocated the forced colonization of this race in the original home from which they were brought: a view which has found advocates in the Senate of the United States, but whose impracticability, from every standpoint, is its condemnation. If one hundred ships carrying five hundred passengers were to make two trips a year in the work of the enforced governmental transportation of this race to the continent from which their fathers came, after all the expense and suffering which such a measure would entail, there would be just as many left in this country at the end of the year as when the work began, for they are increasing at the rate of more than

one hundred thousand per year. Our duty, therefore, toward this race is one which we can in no wise escape, and from which our children and children's children for untold generations will doubtless find no door of escape opening for them through either the gradual extinction or the enforced colonization of this people. What, therefore, is the duty which the white man owes to the negro? There is a wide field opened here, but we write now as a minister of the gospel, and answer, The white man owes the negro the gospel of Jesus Christ. We stand on a platform which must command universal assent when I say we owe the negro the gospel, and ought to pay the debt. We might go further and say that all our conduct toward the negro ought to be inspired by the principles of the gospel, but that opens too wide a field, and purposely narrow the scope of this note to the single point that we ought to give to them the pure gospel of the Son of God.

### I. OUR DUTY.

1. The negro is a part of that whole which Jesus Christ had in mind when he said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

(a) The negro was with the white and all other races, in the loins of Adam, when they were all created, and afterward all together sinned and fell. By creation, he shares the common human nature which all races alike derive from their common ancestors, the first parents of all the sons of men. There are not two or more distinct species of men, created at different times, endowed with different powers, made out of different substances, and descended from different stocks, but there is only one human species, created at one and the same time, with bodies and souls similarly endowed, and all the individuals alike descended from the one pair of universal parents—"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The Scripture is explicit as to the unity of the human species, and the offer of the gospel and the mission of the church are as wide as the species, "Jew and Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free."

(b) In his assumption of human nature, when he became the

"Son of man," Jesus Christ assumed a blood relationship which binds him as closely to all the parts of the human race as to any one of its parts. Our Lord, as to his human nature, was born of a Jewish mother, but, in strictness of speech, he was not a Jew any more than Roman, Teuton or Slav; in fact, he transcended, as no mere man could have done, all the limitations of time, race and circumstance, and as the "Son of man," sustains relations to all the "sons of men." He is the blood-brother of every human being, born out of the Adamic stock, whose common nature he assumed; and loyalty to Jesus Christ requires us to give his gospel, as far as in us lies, to every one of his brethren—that is, to every one of the members of our race.

(c) The colored man is capable of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the renewal and sanctification of the Holy Ghost. We have seen their lives transformed by the gospel of God's grace, and every Southern man and woman carries precious memories of the faithfulness and godliness of men and women of the colored race, in the genuineness of whose religious life they must continue to believe as long as they continue to believe in religion at all. Many of us have seen the fruits of the indwelling of God's Spirit in pious servants as manifestly as we ever saw in the lives of our own pious fathers and mothers. There is no skepticism on this point that the gospel of God's grace can do its work for them, just as truly as its saving work may be done for us.

(d) The colored race needs the pure gospel of God's truth and grace. In some places they have competent and faithful ministers of their own color, who lead them in the path of righteousness, but in multitudes of instances, all over our Southland, "blind leaders of the blind" emphasize the spiritual destitution of this people, capable of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and sustaining the same relations to the Son of man as do the other peoples of the earth. Their destitution is not an argument to let them alone, but it is an argument taken out of the very heart of Christ to do the utmost we can for them.

2. The providential position of the negro is another argument for giving him the gospel.

The race has been thrust by God's providence upon us in such a way that we must take account of their presence. It is not a theory, but a condition which confronts us: a condition for which neither we nor our ancestors were responsible, but no speculation as to origins alters the stubborn facts which stare us in the face. Nine millions of colored people in our homes as servants, upon our streets, and in our fields and stores, cannot be ignored by the thoughtful citizen, or by the earnest Christian. The naval officer may ignore the ice-berg which stands in the path of his gallant vessel of iron and steel, but the mad crash and the sudden descent in the whelming waters must be the sequel. We cannot ignore these people, for they are here in our land, in our homes and places of business. The problem of dealing with them has been committed to us. It is our problem, which God has thrust upon us; and with all proper humility, we would like to say that the white people of the South are as well qualified to deal with this problem as any others to whom it might have been committed. A strong and homogeneous people, of the purest Anglo-Saxon stock to be found in our country, conservative and orthodox, with only a few of the debilitating and fever-breeding "isms" which harass and debauch some less favored regions, and with an understanding of and an affection for the colored race acquired by more than a century of intercourse, our people are as well qualified as any that may be found to serve as the kindly teachers and wise leaders of these dusky millions. Contrast the condition of their savage ancestors of two centuries ago with their descendants to-day. Their ancestors spoke a barbarous dialect, which perhaps had in it no word for God, or spirit, or the primary religious duties or graces; their descendants know something of the English language, and can understand the religion of Jesus Christ as preached in this noble tongue. Of course, they are not masters of English. Who is? But the gospel through this medium can effectively reach them. Their ancestors knew nothing of the making of crops, of obedience to law, of the religion of Christ; their descendants know something on all these subjects, and who can doubt that as our loving Lord looks down on them, he counts multitudes of them as his disciples? But you say they are not

accessible to us. We reply, they are more accessible to us than the savages of the New Hebrides, who drove the famous missionary, John G. Paton, to the hiding of the trees to escape their wrath, than the wild men who slew Bishop Hannington, or the cruel Indians who lashed missionaries to the trees, that they might slowly hack them to death, and yet Christ-charged hearts, under the impulse of love, carried the gospel to all of these. That they are growing more accessible is the testimony of those who are working in this field. Many of them, including their best leaders, have recovered from the mad craze after political domination, and the whole race is in a fair way of seeing that there is nothing in politics for them as a people, that the whole power of the Federal Government could not permanently make thriftlessness and ignorance the masters of intelligence and morality, and that their best friends are the best white people of the South. As they are learning these lessons, there increases also their accessibleness to influence, from those who know them best, care most for them, and can do most for them, viz., the most intelligent, moral and God-fearing of the Southern men and women.

3. The third argument for giving the gospel to these nine millions of negroes is that thereby we may preserve the safety and the purity of our own institutions and life.

If a large proportion of these people are to remain ignorant, superstitious, immoral and irreligious, it must react injuriously upon the interests of our entire section of country. For our sakes as well as theirs we must give them the gospel. Education as given in the public free schools, or in the institutions established by philanthropists, does not meet the needs of the case, and even the practical industrial training, which thoughtful men of both races, and of all churches, from Cardinal Gibbons through the long list of patriotic, public-spirited men everywhere, are beginning to see is so much needed, is not a sufficient solvent for the hazardous issues which perplex the subject. Nor can political measures go deep enough to furnish a remedy, though it is worth while to ask if it were not immoral to thrust the royal function of the franchise into the hands of ignorant, vicious white men, or of ignorant, vicious black men, who are no more competent to

exercise this grave responsibility than to shape the movements of a planet; certainly such a measure cannot end all the difficulties which attend upon the relation of the two races. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope; and if this does not succeed, then the sun and the moon and the stars shall fall, and the "reign of terror and of blood" shall come. But who can doubt that as the gospel regenerates the hearts of the men and women of both races, there will be no dark problem vexing our Southern sky with its prophetic threats? We must give the pure gospel to the ignorant, vicious, superstitious everywhere as the guarantee of our own best life.

The Presbyterian Church is peculiarly adapted to discharge this mission to the colored race. It stands for an educated ministry, furnishing instruction rather than bald and vehement exhortation. It stands for a quiet, spiritual worship as opposed to all modes of formalism or of wild emotionalism. It stands for a home in which the children shall be carefully trained and instructed in the Word of God, and in the faith of the church. It stands for care in the admission of persons to church membership, and careful discipline of communicants. These are just the points where this race most needs buttressing and reënforcing, and while it would perhaps be rather sanguine to expect that multitudes of them would hasten to flock, "like doves to their windows," to the Presbyterian Church, yet the influence of our church amongst them may be out of all proportion to the numbers of this people enrolled in its membership, setting a standard, as it certainly may, for other churches, and, "like a little leaven, leavening the whole lump." The primacy of Presbyterianism is not due to its numbers, although, taking the world over, it is the largest of Protestant churches, but it is due to its orthodoxy, elevated spirituality, stalwart morality; and these rare gifts it ought to give with a lavish hand for the healing of the nations and the races. If Presbyterianism has these good things, it has no right to refuse them to any and all.

It needs no further proof to show that it is both our duty and our interest to give the gospel to the colored man.

## II. OUR PLAN.

The mature and settled policy of our church is to organize into a separate and independent African Presbyterian Church, and to train for the service of this church and for the reaching of the unevangelized negroes a native colored ministry—an educated ministry, passing through the curriculum of studies which would give the necessary training and knowledge for this work.

Against this policy not a word can be said; it does not raise the spectre of either social or ecclesiastical equality, since the African Presbyterian Church is as separate from us as any other communion in Christendom. Meantime, the preparation by us, in our own Colored Theological Seminary, of a competent and trained colored ministry, provides this African Church with ministers who have no racial prejudice to overcome, who understand the life of the people to whom they are sent, and who can be supported at a comparatively small cost. And this work of training has been so carefully and successfully done that this colored seminary, now called the Stillman Institute, has never turned out a graduate who, if living, is not now doing a good work, either at home or in the Dark Continent, among his own people. If we willingly give to support Sheppard and his wife in Africa, why not give also with equal readiness to maintain the more than threescore equally deserving colored ministers, whom we have raised up and trained, and sent out to preach to the negroes of the South, and who are doing a work which it is far more necessary for our welfare should be done here in our own land? "It is wonderful how cheaply these ministers can live. Some years the appropriations have not averaged over forty dollars per year. They could be well sustained by appropriations averaging one hundred dollars each. Many of these men, like Paul, work with their own hands, that they may preach the gospel to their own people. I do not believe that anywhere in connection with our church, either at home or in the foreign field, a greater spirit of sacrifice and self-denial is manifested than by the workers in this field, and yet our church as a whole contributes but a small proportion of what it ought to give to this great cause. The fault lies at the door of the pastors of the



church, for if they would inform themselves of this work, tell God's people, whom they serve, plainly and forcibly about it, and urge upon them, in the spirit of Christ, its needs and its claims, the people of God would pour out the means necessary for its extension and support."

These words are written under the influence of the traditions and history of the church of which the writer is the pastor. Perhaps the first colored Presbyterian minister in the United States was a member of Lexington Presbyterian Church, as he was certainly taken under the care of the Presbytery of Lexington when meeting in this church, in October, 1799, and licensed one year later by the same Presbytery, when meeting in Lewisburg, W. Va., the Rev. John Chavis by name, for nearly forty years a preacher in the Presbyterian Church. And our lecture-room, with its historic colored Sabbath-school, officered and taught by "Stonewall" Jackson and others, whose names are honored far and wide, makes an appeal which must be heard. And all over our Southland are scattered churches which, if true to their traditions, to their present duty, and to their Lord, must so give that as he "sits over against the treasury watching their gifts," he will say, "They have given much." Amen!

THORNTON WHALING.

*Lexington, Va.*