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ARTICLE I.

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE PATRIARCHS AND MOSES.

The Church considered in this sketch is the Church visible, that community which consists of all who "profess the true religion, together with their children."

No man, with a spark of liberal curiosity, can contemplate this community as it now exists amongst men, without desiring to know something of its history and its origin. The same motive, if no higher, which induced the first explorer to ascend from the delta of the Mississippi to the springs from which it flows, would induce the student of man to trace the course of that institution which has, in such a marked degree, moulded the character and fixed the destiny of so large a portion of our race. And if, like the adventurous travellers who for centuries sought for the sources of the Nile, the inquirer should be again and again baffled in his researches, the disappointment may serve as a wholesome discipline for his faith and patience, if he be a believer in God, and prepare him for the glorious discovery that the Church took its rise not in any feeble fountains of earth, but in the vast "nyanza," or ocean, rather, of the bosom of God; that it is the unfolding of "the economy of the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God," the demonstration "to princi-

ARTICLE V.

A STEP IN ADVANCE.

About twenty years ago, the writer of the following pages published, in this REVIEW, an article entitled, "Our Problem," which discussed the duties of the proprietary race to their slaves in respect to religion. Not that the white people were ignorant of, or inclined to deny, the general proposition that they should seek the salvation of the negroes; they were then diligently—but not diligently enough—engaged in that great enterprise. But there were differences of opinion among ourselves as to certain methods, certain involved questions, which seemed to call for study and comparison of views.

The article was published, as we said, and very kindly received at home, and measurably so abroad; as kindly as the much-misunderstood South could hope that any such deliverance would be. The writer trusted that his labor had not been in vain.

And now! The past is—not gone, but—*laid up*. The whole fabric of our life has been crushed in and shaken to pieces. The relations of labor to capital, the principal form of wealth, the structure of families, the traditions of social existence, the peculiar bonds of affection between the strong race and the weak—all, all, have either passed absolutely out of sight, or submitted to such a revolution as makes us a new people.

We are not chanting a dirge. And we are not afraid of God's providence. But we state again this well-worn fact, that it may be seen that we are looking open-eyed and without blenching upon the new world so stormily created about us, and inquiring with courage, because with reverence, what it means to us. Hopes are mortal; but duty is immortal.

As we look up from our study of these things, we see, between a tall mimosa and the eaves of our roof, a strip of deep blue sky. The generous flowerage of the tree has passed its prime and begun to fade; the roof is weather-worn and acknowledges its sure decay; but the sky is the sky of our youth, and of the youth of our forefathers, and of all the generations. It has shed the

same sheen into their eyes and the same sweetness into their hearts.

And even so in the revolution which has befallen us—*culbute generale*, as the old Count de Mirabeau phrased it—amid the many things, among the forms of duty even, which are utterly changed, there is one thing that endures—“the grace of God, which bringeth salvation.” The same Word sanctifies. The same hope is born of the same love. The same torch is in our hands wherewith to shine down the darkness of our generation. The same treasure is in the same earthen vessels, and for the same blessed purpose.

Another thing that has not changed is the relative position of the races. The effect of hereditary civilisation and culture has not disappeared. The larger brain, the richer life, the power of superior knowledge, are still with us. We have *the authority of the higher*; and we cannot, if we would, evade its enormous responsibility.

Let it be admitted that our difficulties are also enormous—poverty, prejudices on either hand, collisions that come by nature, and collisions that are works of art. If, of the many ties that once united us, but two remain, they are the fundamental and vital ties—a common humanity, and a common gospel.

We imagine that few of our people can read the second chapter of the book of Nehemiah without being reminded of the meeting of our first General Assembly after the war, December, 1865: “And I went out by night by the gate of the valley . . . and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. . . Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire; *come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.*” Glorious logic of believers! Mere *non-sequitur* for man!

Then, and since then, at every succeeding meeting of that high court, and almost incessantly in Presbyteries and Synods, in Church Sessions and around our evangelists, this problem has been emerging, and has been patiently and prayerfully con-

fronted. The labors, the experiments, the conferences, the gifts, persuasions, failures, of these twelve years would fill a volume—a volume that ought to be written for man. It is already written with God. Not that all has been failure—not by any means. But so far as the discovery of a system whereon to work is concerned, we had no real success until the adoption of the principle that churches distinctively of the colored people must be organized, and must be assisted to begin, and live on, their own separate life.

It is not pretended that even now, and on this plan, we have as yet attained any brilliant or large success; first, because there has not been time enough since we adopted the scheme; then, because we had a great deal of lost influence to recover; thirdly, because we had not devised means to meet one obvious necessity of the scheme, (to which the rest of this article will be largely devoted;) and lastly, because few of our own people seem to have discerned how great a step we were taking—even removing the work bodily from the category of Domestic, to the category of Foreign Missions.

What, precisely, is the radical difference between these two grand departments of Christian work? At the time and in the way in which modern Foreign Missions came into being, the distinction seemed clear enough. Foreign Missionaries went abroad, and Domestic Missionaries stayed at home; they were distinguished accurately enough by their place. And this grew, without discussion, to be the accepted discrimination between them; so much so, that when, in the providence of God, the Indians came to be surrounded by white settlements, and the Chinese began to immigrate among us, it was commonly said that Foreign and Domestic Missions had *merged*, and the work had become one in two (merely formal) divisions. We think it can be shown that this is a mistake, and that the true distinction is the distinction of race.

Confining our attention for a moment to the general question, it is obvious to remark that Foreign Missions find the ground preoccupied by a *false religion*, while the prepossessions of our own race are once and always for Christianity. To whatever

continent our heralds go; with whatever non-Caucasian race they labor—Mongol, Malay, or Ethiopic—there is a mythology to be assailed, a solid body of superstitions to be sapped and riven asunder, venerable traditions, customs, and even laws, to be overturned.

And then the law of heredity comes in. The people make their gods, but then the gods re-make the people. Climate, food, and religion, are factors of the highest order. They combine, just so far as they are different from our own, to build up any given people on its own separate base. And these influences permeate the race more and more deeply, till even blood and bone tell the story.

Consequent upon these facts is this: that the methods and appliances of gospel labor will vary directly as the variations of the races themselves.*

Some races are casuistical and argumentative; some are emotional and impulsive; some are moved to investigate by the display of a superior civilisation; some cannot be moved to investigate at all, and must be assailed and won by sheer importunity. Some races eagerly crave education; some scorn it. Some are charmed by music; some are deaf to it. Some, like the Chinese, look down with contempt upon the foreign devils; some, like the South African, are ready to worship us as gods. And to all these, and a hundred other types of the one disease—sin, must we bring appropriate styles of the one remedy—Christ.

It is, therefore, a received truth that a wise missionary will apply himself diligently to the study of race peculiarities and the best methods of dealing with them, just as a good general studies a fortification and seeks its vulnerable point. And it is interesting to reflect, and to see that the reaction of these peculiarities on religion will make a visible difference, an individuality, in the product, *i. e.*, the churches.

We are now brought to a last remark on this point, viz: that

* It surely cannot be necessary here to make formal concession of the unity of mankind, its common ruin in the fall, or the identity, under all genuine forms, of the gospel and the way of life. All that is assumed in what we are saying, and is indispensable to our argument.

there are limits to the association even of Christians across the lines of race. No missionary loses himself or his nationality among Hindoos, or Indians, or Polynesians. The instances of honorable immergence in an alien race are so few as merely to punctuate the law of separation. It is a law, a law which enforces its own observance. But it is a law out of which has grown, and must more and more completely grow, separateness of church organisation. If one, sufficiently polyglot, could pass from prayer-meeting to prayer-meeting; from Shanghai or Soochow to Oroomiah and Constantinople, and thence to Corisco, to Zulu-land, the Fiji, the Tahitian, the Choctaw; how intensely would he feel the oneness of the gospel and the vigor of that life which could put on so various forms and utter itself by such different but harmonious voices!

And is there not a hint of the perpetuity of these differences in the vision of John: "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of *all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*, stood before the throne and before the Lamb?" The Evangelist seems to have seen, and gloried in, their combination out of all varieties of man in one blest throng. It is to the splendor of that day, that ovation of Christ, that our missionaries are bringing their contributions of redeemed souls.

It cannot be necessary to go in detail over all these points and run the parallel between the African race, as domiciled in America, and the other non-Caucasian races. They brought from the beautiful and terrible land of their ancestors all they had by way of religion—a coil of cruel and debasing superstitions. And now that a century has elapsed, and although our divine gospel has been so largely made known to them, and though it has been perhaps universally (more or less intelligently) accepted by them, those superstitions are a power among them still. Voodoo and Obeah have still their thousands of votaries; the dread of witchcraft makes many slaves whom the law calls free; charms and counter-charms, silly and stupid beyond belief, are practised to this day, and by nominal Christians. Within the past year, if we are not misinformed, murders have been traced directly to

this source—the belief that witchcraft, or conjury of some sort, had been employed to work a man's death.

Further : these uncured superstitions and the mental and moral diseases connected with them, corrupt the gospel itself, where they are left to themselves. No other such scenes are to be found in our land, as scenes of so-called worship among the negroes. Only they worship God by dancing—they only, besides the Shakers, a “sport” of Northern civilisation, and an illustration how extremes meet. But dances are often the more seemly and decent form of their worship.

We hasten to say, however, and will maintain it with whatever emphasis may be necessary, that there is much genuine religion among them ; but it bears the race mark. It is often a singularly touching and beautiful piety ; it humbles many a beholder whose culture has done much for him, but left him to admire an unlettered negro's grace, as far above his own attainments. But their celestial dialect is *theirs*, and not ours. We enjoy their prayers, but we could not have offered them.

When to these unquestionable truths is added the fact—at which theorists may carp, but which common sense and statesmanship have found it necessary to accept, viz.—that the race lines are permanent, and limit the possibilities of fellowship, and that there will not and cannot be any honorable and reputable reduction of the two to one mass, we seem to have proved the point that labors among the colored people belong properly to the department of Foreign Missions.

But it may be said, “The two races formed churches together of old ; why not now ?” That is a fair question, but easily answered.

A large part of the slave population formed churches of their own, served by a white evangelist, who was, oftener than not, called a *missionary*. We need spend no time upon their case.

A great many churches contained a few colored members each. They were not eligible to any office ; their votes were not taken upon the election of pastor or other ruler. They were cared for, and taught, and remained always in the same condition of tutelage as did the juvenile white members during their childhood.

Such Presbyterian churches, at least, were evidently in an abnormal condition.*

The remaining portion is the most interesting and decisive of all. In the region of large plantations, where the colored population largely outnumbered the whites, but were members of the same communion, often in the proportion of ten to one, what was the actual constitution of the churches? Nominally, there was but one session, as there was but one pastor. But in fact the pastor governed the colored membership, aided by a body of colored "leaders," or "watchmen," or "superintendents," as the Assembly at Memphis called them. In fact, the session was guided almost entirely in the admission of members and the administration of discipline, by the reports and suggestions of these men. It was they, to a very large extent, who discharged pastoral duty, beyond that very limited portion of it which the pastor himself could undertake. It was they who had charge of the plantation prayer-meetings—who visited the sick, and in many instances even buried the dead.

Every faithful pastor, of course, did his best to know his leaders well, to hold them well in hand, to supervise their judgments, correct their mistakes, and perform as much of his own normal work as he could for so large a population, scattered over so great a surface. But when he had done his best, and his elders had done as much as they could or would, it remained true that the real session of the colored members was the bench of leaders: and thus that the pastor was virtually *pastor of two churches*, white and black. And no amount of theoretical tight-lacing ever prevented it, except by sacrificing the work.†

Taking it for settled, now, that this work is to be prosecuted on the basis of Foreign Missions, with such modifications of any

* The question is here suggested, whether those who were so embarrassed in the attempt to accommodate the Church to its new duties after the war, by the fear of committing some anomaly, had not overlooked these obvious facts?

† Zion church, Charleston, Glebe St. and Calhoun St., became the typical instance of success. The white church worshipped in one building, and the colored in another; one session governed both, but were aided by leaders, Dr. Girardeau being the pastor.

particular method as may prove to be necessary, we are brought to the point which the great Missionary Societies had reached many years since, and to the problem which then confronted them: How are these native churches to be supplied with pastors? It is our impression that the American Board strove long and hard to furnish the Sandwich Islands with a ministry from this country; and that only a cluster of insurmountable difficulties—of which the ruinous expense was but one, and not the greatest—drove them at last to consider whether it was not the divine plan that every nation should raise its own spiritual guides and shepherds. And yet the Word is very clear about ordaining elders *in* (not *for*) every city. And now that the thing is done, and the principle adopted, it is so evidently right and wholesome, that we wonder why there was ever any hesitation about it.

It might be pretty safely said, that wherever missions have had the most rapid, permanent, *revolutionising* successes, there this principle has been most cordially adopted and thoroughly wrought out. The Baptist Mission to the Karens, the Methodist Mission in the Fiji Islands, the American Board among the Armenians, and the English labors in the Coral Isles of Polynesia, will occur at once as cases in point to every student of Foreign Missions.

And now, at last, we, in our own difficult and honorable enterprise, are led to the same point. The Assembly of 1877, by a unanimous vote, has recognised the truth that if we found African Presbyterian churches, we must raise up for them African Presbyterian ministers. It has established an Executive Committee to take this work in hand; has formally adopted the Theological Institute at Tuskalooza, Ala., opened with its encouragement a few months since; and ordered the committee to digest and report to the next Assembly a complete scheme for the conduct of the Institute. The brief remainder of this article will be devoted to the submission of certain views on the subject to the consideration of the Church.

Two or three features of the mind of the race may here be mentioned, as bearing upon their prospects in this regard. The first is, the almost entire absence of the logical faculty. *Exceptis*

excipiendis, of course, ratiocination, in any higher form than the adducing of direct testimony, and the quotation of apt texts, need not be looked for, at present, at any rate. When you have built up your little argument, in terms as simple and cogent as you can command, and proved your point, you find not merely that they reject the conclusion now who refused it before, but that those who receive it, receive it without the slightest reference to the argument. Examine the construction of their sermons, and you will be struck with the absence of reasoning and of proof. The discursive faculty often shows well; pathos is not wanting; exhortation is their strong point.

Another point of importance is the great relative strength of the verbal memory. Words are easily and willingly committed, especially such as have the swing of rhythm or the clue of rhyme. This is a great advantage in lodging the "form of sound words" firmly in their minds, and thus providing a safeguard against doctrinal error; a partial safeguard only, however, limited by that ratiocinative weakness already spoken of, but real and important. On the other hand, this very gift of verbal memory makes special vigilance necessary to ensure their learning more than mere words.

There can be no doubt, now, that the law of heredity, operating upon a race whose ancestors have been ignorant and debased for many generations, and indeed had not begun to be civilised until they were brought to this country, will make their culture, their education to anything like thoroughness, a very slow and difficult work. Indeed, it is a long battle to give them the idea of thoroughness and accuracy at all. We may as well make up our minds that only substantial and necessary attainments must be sought in the training of preachers, except in exceptional cases. Of *them* we would make energetic use, and give them as much education as they can hold, and prepare them with the utmost care to be "leaders of the people." For the rest, we must be content with (1) a close acquaintance with the Scriptures; (2) an intelligent soundness in our standards; and (3) aptness to teach by speaking.

We should do our own views, and the people whose interests

we are anxiously considering, great injustice, however, if we left the impression that they are a dull and unimprovable race. At different times, and in many instances, they have developed remarkable power for the acquisition of languages. They have a singular gift of pathos; and their eloquence is genuine, effective, and original. Many of us have listened and worshipped while they prayed in strains that made us glow with feelings far above mere admiration. And we feel that all this is merely a glimpse of capabilities yet to be developed: and this is one of the things that spur us up to labor for them.

It need hardly be added, that in the process of making these acquisitions, a great many things will be picked up incidentally, or that they will benefit greatly (by absorption, one may say,) from daily intercourse with cultivated and active minds.

It thus appears that no rigorous schedule-laying is possible at present. With the three conditions stated above as a *minimum*, each student must be carried as far as his powers and opportunities admit. But of merely literary culture there must be but little, in ordinary cases, because time and strength will hardly avail for the most necessary studies. This is already the conclusion of some of their best teachers from abroad. The fact is not without interest, that these students have so strong a desire to master the Greek Testament and to read the Lord's words in their original record. And difficult as is the task of teaching them another tongue, who have so superficial and defective acquaintance with their own, who can say that it is not a sound Christian instinct which impels them in this direction, and makes them persevere, despite their early discouraging experience of it? What labor should be more cheerfully bestowed than that which gratifies this desire?

One of the pressing problems of the enterprise is, How most rapidly and effectively to broaden and develop their general intelligence? Probably no better general rule can be laid down than to encourage conversation on almost every topic that comes up, and hold "question-meetings" with them, where they may suggest any topics that interest, and any questions which perplex them, and follow the discussion along, wherever it may spontaneously flow.

Another very necessary exercise is the search for proof-texts by the help of a concordance. Here, there will be abundant opportunity to drill their powers of selection and discrimination. They must grow skilful in distinguishing between verbal and real correspondence of texts, seeming and real appropriateness and cogency of quotation. This will be an admirable tonic for their weak logical faculty, which must not be abandoned because it is feeble. Great pains must be taken, also, with their *reading*. The fact that they are to serve an illiterate people, greatly enhances the value of such an accomplishment, which we may be permitted to say is hardly ever enough regarded by our educated men. Indeed, are there not some, even in the highest walks, who look on careful and expressive reading (of hymns and Scripture) as too closely allied to sensational preaching? Yet it is hard to overrate the power of a Psalm of David, or a hymn, impressively read. Certainly, for that great mass who cannot read well enough ever to be thrilled by what they find in books, it is of inestimable importance that their preachers should be able to express and convey to other hearts the sacred emotions germane to the Word.

Without endeavoring to exhaust this portion of the subject, we proceed remark upon some of the dangers that beset the work. Singularly enough, most of them originate in one tendency, the tendency to give up manual labor on undertaking professional study.

If this be allowed to assert and develop itself, the many who are still prejudiced against such enterprises, (and no new good thing makes friends of all men at once,) will be clamorous in denouncing (what they will call) the encouraging of indolence under the pretence of study. That is the first danger.

And it points to another, more serious still, that there will be such pretenders, eager to live idly at the expense of the Church, and keeping an appearance of piety and industry for the sake of the loaves, saying, with some of old, "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

There is a third danger involved, one yet more profound. It is that a class, growing up without habitual experience of physical

toil, will both forfeit the sympathy of the great working mass and lose their own sympathy with that mass. And if once the tree be thus divided in its very roots, the best hope of our enterprise is gone.

And aside from this particular line of perils, there is this, that a body of men, lifted by careful cultivation so far above the bulk of their people, will encounter swarms of temptation—inwardly, to vanity and self-conceit; officially, to lording it over the churches; outwardly, to political and other worldly aspirations, which will destroy their spiritual aptitudes and lower their spiritual life. It cannot be too distinctly understood that a sense of irresponsibility brings a thousand evil passions into play, beyond what their subject, even, ever suspected of himself. And we must not be surprised, or too greatly disheartened, if instances of this sort arise, in the course of time.

Where are our safeguards against these dangers?

So far as they are to be sought in methods of instruction, they may be said to lie, first, in scrupulously avoiding a showy course of study and practice, and particularly a *superficial* showy course. The more solidity and thoroughness, the more humble, persevering application, the less sensation and clap-trap, the more safety.

Secondly, in the diligent cultivation of conscience, not only in its stricter meaning, the sense of obligation, but also in a taste for what is clean and honorable in things small as well as great.

Thirdly, (we are still speaking of methods of instruction,) in the constant inculcation, by precept and example, of the wholesomeness and honor of hard work, bodily as well as mental work. No place must be given, even for a moment, to the notion that it is a good thing to have gotten through a day without having touched the axe or the hoe.*

But there is a better way of dealing with the "lions in the way" than pausing longer upon them than will suffice for their recognition. It is to go forward and meet them as they come.

* We remit to a foot note the suggestion, whether such a seminary ought not ultimately to become a farm school. We are probably not ripe for a formal discussion of that question now.

If we know anything of this matter, it is that we have been led "by a way we knew not." WHO led us? It is He who will yet move us on, point by point, until his work is done, for us, by us, in us.

Love for this race is the Southern Christian's inheritance. There is hardly a pious lady of middle age who has not toiled hard for their good. There are many ministers, who for years did, of their own free will, harder work outside than inside of the stipulations of their call. Few more precious memories are in our hearts than those of the happy seasons when we welcomed our dusky brethren and sisters into the church and sealed them with baptismal water. We have wrestled for them in prayer; we have knelt beside their sick beds; we have closed their dying eyes. And now this faithful God, whom it is our glory to have served, and our grief to have served so poorly, comes to change the *method of the service*—only that—and bids us be more loyal to the new commission than we ever were to the old.

It is into this new form of the old service that we are slowly finding our way. He who knows its difficulties, its dangers, and its rewards—He will never leave us, unless we leave Him. To be His, is everything.

ARTICLE VI.

THE NEGATIVE TENDENCIES OF THE AGE.

Were any one, amid the ceaseless activity of the age in which we live, to put forward the inquiry of inspired wisdom, "Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new?" and to answer that inquiry in the words of inspiration, "There is no new thing under the sun," the scoffer would curl his lip in derision, and the sceptic be ready with the muttered sneer, "dreaming idealist," "pietistic enthusiast," while even the thoughtful would consider such a statement as farfetched and extravagant. And yet, as the stream of time rolls on, the words of