

COMBINED SERIES,

- VOL. XXIV, No. 3.

THE

Reformed Presbyterian

AND

Covenanter,

MARCH,

- - - 1886.

J. W. SPROULL,

D. B. WILLSON,

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

EDITORS' ADDRESS,

ALLEGHENY, PA.

"Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
Phil. 3:16.

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
Jude 3.

TERMS: { \$1.00 per annum in the U. S. and Canada.
 { \$1.24 per annum in Great Britain.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY MYERS, SHINKLE & Co., 523 WOOD STREET.

THE

Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanters.

VOL. XXIV.

MARCH, 1886.

No. 3.

ORIGINAL.

THE WORLD'S DEBT TO AFRICA.

BY REV. G. M. ELLIOTT, SELMA, ALA.

The first of January, 1886, placed the colored people of America in possession of twenty-three years of freedom. Their faces are now toward a new era of things. With more than twenty years of experience, they proceed upon other years to turn the lessons of the past to the best account. These years have been attended with many trials, difficulties and hindrances. They have been years of feeling around, and casting about. They have been years of much groping. And yet they have not groped and wandered about as long as the children of Israel, thirty-three centuries ago. If they are kept in the wilderness no longer than they, they have yet seventeen years before reaching the "promised land" of the children of Ham. Doubtless there is a *promised land* somewhere for this people. Concerning where it is, and how it is to be possessed, there may be a diversity of opinion. As history repeats itself, as God is unchangeable, as he is just in all his ways, we believe there is somewhere in the dim, unveiled future a Canaan for the people that have been so long oppressed in this land—a resting place—a possessing place, a domain where they will not be elbowed round, and pushed into a corner, and be the objects of constant criticism, and every paper, magazine and platform, be discussing, what shall we do with the negro? Every one may have his own idea as to where the modern Canaan may be. Some may locate it beyond the great Atlantic, by the banks of the Congo, the Niger and the Nile, among the beautiful and fertile plains of interior Africa, whose wealthy resources have been hidden from the generations of the past, that the sons of Ham, in the latter days of the world's history, might go in and possess a land to which they are mentally and physically adapted, and there, under the blessings of the glorious gospel of Christ, develop into a mighty people. Some may fix this Canaan in the far-off west, where they may dwell

unmolested under the shadow of the great Rocky mountains. Others may confine its limits to the southern side of "Mason and Dixon's line," in the land of their bondage, and cause that, the place of their oppression, to become the sphere of their triumphs and success. They would allot to them the beautiful and "sunny south," with its genial climate, its varied soil, its rich products and boundless resources; the land with which the negro, as civilized, is better acquainted than with any other; a land that he has worked from his forefathers, and whose soil he has thrice paid for.

It is not our purpose to fix the place, or locate the bounds, of this hoped-for-land; the matter must be settled by him who "hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Suffice it to say, we believe there is a "promised land" somewhere, whether it be in Africa, in the west, or in the south. It is not in harmony with the manner of divine government that a people should serve another race two hundred and forty-three years (or taking the entire time, four hundred and thirty years) and receive no remuneration. It was in the year 1620, that a Dutch vessel landed the first cargo of slaves on the banks of the James river. From that time till 1863, slavery was sanctioned by law in the United States. This is the actual time during which that system of oppression, oppressed the colored people in this country. But the slavery of the race extends much further back in history than this. As it began to effect the race we may date its beginning in the early part of the fifteenth century. The Portuguese were the first to cruise along the coast of the "dark continent" and carry off the natives into slavery. In 1484 Antonio Gonzales, a Portuguese captain, landed on the coast of Guinea, and carried off some boys, whom he sold to some families in the south of Spain. In 1510 the king of Spain ordered fifty slaves to be sent to the West Indies to work in the gold mines. This was about the beginning of slavery in those islands, and the beginning of the general enslaving of the race. In 1562, during the reign of Elizabeth, England first polluted her hands with the infamous slave traffic. Parliament legalized the purchase of negroes. The English, French, Dutch and Portuguese, all had their trading ports on the coast of Africa. Thus she has contributed to enrich all these nations. Truly, Ham has been a "servant of servants." He has served the world well. We think the time now draws nigh when the vast debt for service must be paid. It is true much has been done toward the education and elevation of the freedmen. The liberality of Christendom has been called into exercise to improve their condition; but we ask was it not due? They had been robbed of the reward of labor; they were helpless. Justice demanded it; charity demanded it; Christianity demanded it. The contributions in this direction would not pay the interest on the debt due. Does anyone think I

am wrong? Bear with me while I make a calculation as to that which is due. It has been estimated that up to the close of last century, the slave traffic had robbed Africa of 30,000,000 inhabitants. Now, let us suppose that the number taken during the present century will amount to at least 10,000,000, which added to the above will make 40,000,000. (I believe some have placed the entire number as high as 50,000,000; but we reduce the number to place ourselves on the safe side.) Not to charge even for the full 40,000,000 that have been the subjects of bondage, we will take only 25,000,000. Let us estimate the wages due 25,000,000 persons for two hundred years, allowing three hundred working days to the year, thus leaving thirteen holidays, besides allowing them to rest on the Sabbath, which many of their masters did not grant. Let us pay them only fifty cents a day. In footing up the bill we find it amounts to \$750,000,000,000. This is the bare account without any interest. Now we have calculated for only about half the time in which the race was in bondage, and that for about half wages, with much spare time, so that the slave might be able to make some spare change for himself and have an extra suit of clothes, a little better than that provided by his master.

Now, what about this debt? I submit it to any honest jury in Christendom, and ask, is it just? If it is just, then should it be paid? I ask has it been paid? I trow not. Then, if it is just, if it has not been paid, will it not be paid? When I turn the pages of my Bible, and read "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" then I say this debt must be paid. Here is a note payable at the bank of Heaven, drawn upon the nations of the earth, that have been engaged in the traffic of human flesh. This note of \$750,000,000,000 must be paid. The laws of this bank compel its payment, under penalty most severe. There is no repudiating this debt. The note is held by a firm that can compel its payment. Now, when we look at this debt and remember who holds the note, and when we look at the condition of the ex-slaves, and have reasons to believe that it has not been cancelled, we ask, is it a delusion to ask for a remuneration for the unrequited labor of the sons of Africa? The above sum would purchase this Canaan. There are in the following eleven southern and former slave States, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia, an aggregate of 460,438,400 acres of land. The money mentioned would purchase all the land in these States, at a cost of \$20 an acre and leave a balance of \$740,791,232,000; or allowing that there are 8,000,000 colored people in the United States, it would enable them to purchase all the land in these eleven States, pay cash for it, and leave in cash to divide to each person, ninety-two thousand, six hundred and eleven dollars and forty cents and four mills (\$92,611.40 4). Now, in the face of all these facts, and all these figures, what shall we conclude? By the time England has paid

her share; by the time Spain and Portugal have paid their shares; by the time Holland has paid the amount due; by the time France has paid her share; by the time America has paid her share; will there not be funds enough to procure a land, or a country, somewhere, wherever the Lord may indicate?

Now, we do not mean that this debt will be paid in so many cents and dollars, but we do assert, and claim, that somehow in consistency with the laws of divine government, it will be paid. In looking at matters of this kind, we must remember that they are in the hands of God, and with him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. He sometimes seems to us to work slowly, but he is always sure.

It is estimated that the good people have spent \$20,000,000 toward the education and Christianization of the colored people their since emancipation. It will at once be seen that this is scarcely a fraction of the interest on the enormous sum that is due the emancipated race. And yet they are still in almost a helpless condition. Only a few are able to do much toward helping themselves. The most of them are still serving somebody else for a mere pittance. They work hard and get little. Their condition is most deplorable. Of the more than 7,000,000 in this country, 6,000,000 are reported as being unable to read and write. Their moral and spiritual darkness is no less appalling than their intellectual. When we look at this state of things in our own country, we cannot but sigh deeply and say, how long!

But, notwithstanding these facts, let us not suppose these people are not coming on. The progress seems slow because the multitude moving is so vast. When we go among them and move with them, we see what they are doing. Looking at them from afar they seem not to be moving at all. Let us come closer and see this host marching up from Egypt. They have been for twenty years moving with a steady tread. Though the steps have been short, and sometimes almost in the same place, there is progress. There are in the south 15,932 colored public schools, 56 normal schools, 18 universities (so termed), 24 theological schools, 13 law and medicine, and deaf and dumb institutions. They pay tax on more than \$91,000,000 of property. They are editing, printing and publishing over 106 newspapers. In South Carolina they have bought and paid for over 270,000 acres of land, in Georgia they own about the same amount.

From these facts it is plain that the efforts put forth to give the negro a start, have not been in vain. Their progress in the next twenty years will be much more rapid every way, than it has been in the last twenty years; for, as we have before said, these have, to a large extent, been experimental years. They are now prepared to profit by their mistakes and disappointments. They are better prepared to meet and resist opposition.

In this article we have only mentioned the financial debt that is

due this people. Time would fail us to speak of the great moral debt that rests upon both church and State respecting this race. While thousands have been robbed of wages, countless thousands have been robbed of that which neither gold nor silver can buy, the awful consequences of which are everywhere to be seen in the south and throughout the race. Nothing but the pure gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can pay this debt. It is then the duty of both church and State—yea, it is the duty of Christendom, to unite in sending a pure gospel to this unfortunate people whose imploring hands are stretched out for help.

THE NATURE AND GROUND OF OUR POLITICAL DISSENT.

* BY REV. J. M. FOSTER.

It is generally known that one of the terms of communion in the Reformed Presbyterian Church is, that her members deny themselves the political privilege of voting and holding office under the Constitution as it now stands. This we call our *political dissent*. To understand its nature we must attend to definitions.

1. *Dissent*. This means public objection to the action of an organic body. Only the members of a body can dissent from its action. None but the members of Synod can dissent from Synod's action. So of Congress, and every other body of men. This is a fundamental principle. Dissent is of two kinds, ordinary and fundamental. An ordinary dissent is a member of a body objecting to an immoral act of that body and publicly disowning all responsibility for it. A fundamental dissent is a member of a body objecting to its accepting and adopting an immoral constitution. In the first case the dissenting member may continue acting with the body from whose action he dissents without prejudicing his dissent. But the second involves separation from the body until the cause is removed. We have an illustration of the first in a member of Synod dissenting and recording his dissent while still continuing to act with the body. We have an instance of the second in the Dissenters separating from the Church of England, because they objected to her constitution.

2. *Political dissent*. In this discussion we must discriminate between the nation and its government, the convention and the congress, constitutional and statutory law. The nation is the principal, the government is its agent. The convention makes the constitution, the congress the statute. But still we raise the questions:—What is a nation? What is the political body? What is the government? What is the constitution? A *nation* is the creature of God. It is not a human device. It is not of man, neither

*Paper read before the Presbyterian Ministers' Association, Cincinnati, Ohio, February 1, 1886.