

# “Do We Not Owe This Debt to Africa?”

## The Anti-Jim Crow Theology of Atticus Greene Haygood

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*While Americans have accepted the popular narrative that white Southerners quickly mobilized during Reconstruction to exclude African Americans from political and social life, the truth is far worse. From the Compromise of 1877 until Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), prominent white Southerners like Bishop Atticus Greene Haygood tried to protect African American civil rights in the face of growing and violent white supremacy. Haygood’s theology was a public theology that tied issues of civil justice to the Christian faith. He envisioned a Christian republican order that unified both North and South and white and black citizens. The means to achieving this order was education and faith, including a recognition of the sin of slavery and redemption in rebuilding a racially reconciled world. A treatment of Haygood’s theology not only revives an important contribution in Southern political theory; it offers an alternative conception of integration, rooted in local communities and common faith that challenges contemporary accounts of reconciliation in democratic individualism.*

“In the North the whites are deterred from intermingling with the blacks by an imaginary danger; in the South, where the danger would be real, I cannot believe that the fear would be less.” – Alexis de Tocqueville

### INTRODUCTION: WHITE SOUTHERN DISSENT TO JIM CROW

The popular narrative of American race relations after Reconstruction depicts the South as a white population rapidly unifying across racial lines to exclude African Americans from political and social life.<sup>1</sup> This narrative is false. The truth, believe it or not, is actually worse. From the “Redemption” of the 1877 Compromise until *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), prominent white Southerners attempted to protect African American civil rights from what became the totalitarian and increasingly terrorist-enforced white supremacy.<sup>2</sup> One of these white Southerners was Bishop Atticus Greene Haygood.

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<sup>1</sup> Aziz Rana skips the “nadir” and presumes its role in his article “Race and the American Creed,” *N+1* (Winter 2016), found at <https://nplusonemag.com/issue-24/politics/race-and-the-american-creed/> (last accessed February 21, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* Revised Ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951/1981), 142-74; Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir 1877-1901* (New York: The Dial Press, 1954); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South* (New York: Oxford University

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Haygood's work was public theology, or an attempt to address issues of individual and civil justice with reference to principles of the Christian religion.<sup>3</sup> Haygood's public theology was republican in nature. He professed hope in a reunified Southern and Northern white people tasked with "elevating" freed slaves to join their white brethren in self-government. Central to racial elevation was education, and Haygood's work never strayed long from the subject. In addition, Haygood's public theology was assertively Protestant, reflecting the still-robust sense of American Protestant hegemony across denominations.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Haygood's public theology rested heavily on providentialism. The sins of enslaving Africans, importing them to the South, forcing them to work, using violence to suppress them—all of these God, over time, would not only forgive but transform into blessings for Americans of all races and, eventually, the whole world. This redemption did not excuse past sins but offered white Americans an opportunity to seek redemption by facilitating God's plan for the world rather than resisting it. To persuade his readers, Haygood appealed to the "nehemiad," or a narrative of the "great work" of rebuilding a racially reconciled and divinely redeemed South just as Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.

By revealing these elements of Haygood's public theology, this essay introduces the political theories of white Southern dissenters to the study of race in American political thought. First, this essay shows how Haygood spoke of racial reconciliation in terms of human relationships. In contemporary scholarly work, race is an impersonal force shaping identities and affecting relative privilege of isolated individuals. Haygood's work provides an alternative by speaking in fraternal language that reveals a social bond already in place. His way of thinking is more fertile ground for reconciliation.

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Press, 1992), 132-59; Jane Dailey, "The Limits of Liberalism in the New South: The Politics of Race, Sex, and Patronage in Virginia, 1879-1883," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, eds. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 88-114.

<sup>3</sup> E. Harold Breitenberg Jr., "What Is Public Theology?" *Public Theology for a Global Society: Essays in Honor of Max Stackhouse*, eds. Deidre King Hainsworth and Scott R. Paeth (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 3-17; Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Haygood was conservative in matters of the Methodist faith. He strongly supported prohibition, favored limits on Catholic and Jewish citizenship rights, and sometimes complained that clergy deserved more deference than his contemporary laity offered him. Even so, he was challenged from his "right" by Holiness preachers who condemned him for his smoking habit; Haygood saw these Holiness Methodists as semi-Pelagians in need of religious discipline. See Harold W. Mann, *Atticus Greene Haygood: Methodist Bishop, Editor, and Educator* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1965), 110-34, 160-68.

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Second, this essay challenges the interpretation of Haygood as weak on the subject of “racial instinct” or “social equality.” Haygood opposed segregation and hoped for the gradual integration of the races, and he understood that white Americans were the ones at fault. All the same, white Southerners were also the ones with political and economic power, so Haygood spoke from his stature as a religious leader to persuade white Southerners to embrace social equality.

Finally, this essay concludes by making this case by arguing against the democratic individualism in Jack “Skip” Turner’s *Awakening to Race*.<sup>5</sup> Turner’s treatment of race alienates citizens from one another by recreating the past with “useful” histories for settling the root causes of inequality and racism. Haygood, though by no means perfect, understood black and white Southerners as bound in a local community and in need of reconciliation not merely as race-bearing individuals but as brothers and sisters in Christ.

### SHORT BIOGRAPHY AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Born on November 19, 1839, in Watkinsville, Georgia, Atticus Greene Haygood was the oldest of four surviving children. His father, Greene Haygood, was a successful attorney, and his mother, Martha Ann Askew, was the daughter of a North Carolina Methodist preacher, who had retired nearby. Martha Ann, who had a lifelong interest in classics, likely named her son after Titus Pomponius Atticus to whom Cicero addressed his essays. Haygood suffered from seizures as a child but recovered his health by puberty, and he had also acquired a deep Christian piety. Greene Haygood was a Whig by politics but Democratic in style, which translated to some professional success after the family moved to Atlanta in 1852. Atticus enrolled at Emory College in 1855 and finished in 1859, at which point he became a Methodist preacher. He married Mary “Mollie” Yarbrough, who was the daughter from another family of Methodist preachers. As an adult, Haygood shared his father’s Whig politics but served during the Civil War as a Confederate chaplain, at one point in service to Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston during the Atlanta Campaign. After the war, he preached at Trinity Church in Atlanta from 1866-67 and then served as presiding elder over the now terribly poor North Georgia Conference of Methodist churches until 1871. After a

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<sup>5</sup> Jack Turner, *Awakening to Race: Individualism and Social Consciousness in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

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few years working on Sunday schools, Haygood took over as president at Emory College in 1874, when the college was in serious financial straits, and he managed to improve its situation by 1880.<sup>6</sup>

In an 1880 Thanksgiving sermon, he preached about the blessings of emancipation and its contribution to the rapid economic recovery of the South.<sup>7</sup> He expanded on this position in his 1881 *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and His Future*.<sup>8</sup> The book caught the notice of officials at the John F. Slater Fund, a northern philanthropic association funding educational endeavors for freed slaves. They invited him to serve as their agent in the South, and Haygood agreed. He held the position from 1883 until 1890, and during this period he wrote additional works defending racial equality, especially with respect to education.<sup>9</sup> These works include his 1885 *The Case of the Negro, as to Education in the Southern States*, and his 1889 works *Pleas for Progress, The Southern Church and the Negro*, and *A Reply to Senator Eustis's Late Paper on Race Antagonism*.<sup>10</sup>

After parting ways with the Slater Fund, Haygood accepted a position as bishop in California in 1891 only to return to Georgia in 1893 in failing health and finances. He died in 1896.

There is limited scholarly work on white Southern dissenters and even less on Haygood himself. He has benefited from two biographies, one by Elam Franklin Dempsey published

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<sup>6</sup> Some details were taken from Mann, *Atticus Greene Haygood*.

<sup>7</sup> Atticus Greene Haygood, *The New South: Gratitude, Amendment, Hope* (Oxford, GA: 1880).

<sup>8</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and His Future* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1881).

<sup>9</sup> In his role at the Slater Fund, Haygood took part in the ongoing debate over whether African Americans should pursue traditional higher education or industrial training. Haygood was, as Louis Rubin Jr. explains, convinced that industrial training was the better path. See *Teach the Freeman: The Correspondence of Rutherford B. Hayes and the Slater fund for Negro Education, 1881-1887*, ed. Louis Rubin Jr., (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), xxvi-xxviii.

<sup>10</sup> Atticus Greene Haygood, *Pleas for Progress* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1889); *The Case of the Negro, as to Education in the Southern States; A Report to the Board of Trustees* (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1885); *The Southern Church and the Negro* (Location and Publisher Unknown, 1889[?]); *A Reply to Senator Eustis's Late Paper on Race Antagonism* (Nashville: Open Letter Club, 1889). The last publication was part of an effort of white Southerners to oppose racial discrimination through a short-lived organization of public figures called the Open Letter Club, and Haygood's essay was a response to a 1888 Scribner's magazine article titled "Race Antagonism" by Louisiana Senator James Biddle Eustis. Eustis argued that races contained a biological instinct both for each other and for superior and inferior races. Race instinct explained the happier conditions for African Americans in the South, since they lived separately from and as inferiors to whites. Northern efforts to impose equality were, for Eustis, miserably fruitless, and he pointed to the unhappy living conditions of northern African Americans as evidence. Haygood's reply summarizes findings from his longer works and indicates how these findings prove African American equality in learning and citizenship, although he dodges the difficult question of social equality.

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in 1940 and the other Harold W. Mann published in 1965.<sup>11</sup> Susan Kwilecki published an essay on Haygood’s life and general theological beliefs in 2012.<sup>12</sup> He received due attention in Ralph E. Luker’s *The Social Gospel in Black & White* and in David Chappell’s *Inside Agitators*.<sup>13</sup> A significant factor in Haygood’s obscurity is access to his work. Until the advent of digitizing research library holdings, finding primary sources by Haygood and other white Southern dissenters has been quite difficult. During the 1960s, historians C. Vann Woodward and Charles E. Wynes attempted to recirculate work by white Southern dissenters during the Civil Rights Movement in part to illustrate to contemporary Southerners that the fight for racial equality was their fight as well.<sup>14</sup> Even so, it is easy to understand the reluctance of contemporary scholars to engage these figures. First, historical narratives centered on Northern contributions were already in place. White Southern dissenters appeared, then, as echoes of Northern leadership and, when the dissenters failed, yet another illustration of the morally decrepit South. Second, white supremacists in the South actively repressed figures like Haygood during their lives, making their work in the South both harder to find and riskier to research. In the several decades of segregation and Dunning School revisionism, scholars could simply write white Southern dissent out of history, leaving later generations ignorant of Haygood’s “betrayal.”<sup>15</sup> Third, these two problems then compounded each other. Scholars look to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Ralph Ellison, and other celebrated authors as moral beacons. At the same time, contemporary Southerners have inherited ignorance of their own tradition of resistance to white supremacy precisely in the way that white supremacists had

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<sup>11</sup> Elam Franklin Dempsey, *Atticus Green Haygood* [sic] (Parthenon Press, 1940); Mann, *Atticus Greene Haygood*, 1965.

<sup>12</sup> Susan Kwilecki, “New Light on a Lost Cause: Atticus G. Haygood’s Universalizing Spirituality,” *Religions* 3, no. 2 (2012): 357–68.

<sup>13</sup> Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black & White: American Racial Reform, 1885–1912* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1991); David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). Luker depicts Haygood as a conservative religious figure who was, nonetheless, quite liberal on racial questions. Chappell frames Haygood as one among the few post-Reconstruction white Southerners who resisted Jim Crow and set a pattern for future, more successful white Southern activists.

<sup>14</sup> Examples include C. Vann Woodward, *A Southern Prophecy: The Prosperity of the South Dependent upon the Elevation of the Negro* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1964); Charles E. Wynes, *Forgotten Voices: Dissenting Southerners in an Age of Conformity* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2002), xvii–xix.

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hoped. The impression left on both is that white Southerners happily glided unopposed into a disgraceful period lasting nearly a century.

The task of retrieving these figures and restoring them to the same honor belonging to Emerson and Douglass is no easy task. White Southern dissenters, being Southern, have a presumption of guilt. As shown below, Haygood embraced some ideas out of step with our present politics. However, whereas scholars today forgive the idiosyncrasies of Emerson, one wonders if Haygood could receive the same generosity. Emerson, being Northern, must necessarily be on the right side of History. Haygood's idiosyncrasies and paternalistic language, however, might seem to reveal the true nature of a Southern racist, whose efforts at redemption fell short and earned him, like the rest of his section, a deserving obscurity. In truth, the reverse should be true. Haygood put much more at risk in during his career as a preacher and racial advocate. He was the one who dealt with the threats and endured setbacks in his career that he could have avoided had he only silenced his conscience. Finally, white Southern dissenters failed, and the natural conclusion would be that they failed because they were either half-hearted or the South too far gone. In fact, they failed because, in the years after Reconstruction, the North steadily withdrew interest in assisting African Americans in favor of investing in "New South" industries. Emboldened white supremacists could use the Northern weakness for industry against their flagging zeal for the principles of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>16</sup>

### REPUBLICAN EDUCATION INTO CITIZENSHIP

Haygood treated education as the origin of free government, and free government could only ever be republican. "Republican" refers to a belief in popular sovereignty and self-rule as understood by the Founders.<sup>17</sup> Haygood himself, however, presumed republican government

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<sup>16</sup> Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 291-320, 321-49; Ayers, *The Promise of a New South*, 310-38.

<sup>17</sup> Federalist 39; See also Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, May 28, 1816, which describes a republic as "...a government by its citizens in mass, acting directly and personally, according to rules established by the majority; and that every other government is more or less republican, in proportion as it has in its composition more or less of this ingredient of the direct action of the citizens. Such a government is evidently restrained to very narrow limits of space and population. I doubt if it would be practicable beyond the extent of a New England township. The first shade from this pure element, which, like that of pure vital air, cannot sustain life of itself, would be where the powers of the government, being divided, should be exercised each by representatives chosen ... for such short terms as should render secure the duty of expressing the will of their constituents. This I should consider as the nearest approach to a pure republic, which is practicable on a large scale of country or population ... we may say with truth and meaning, that

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more than he articulated or defended it. He assumed his audience was committed to the same political principles of the Founding, especially since they had recently recommitted themselves to them at the conclusion of the Civil War. With this assumption as his starting point, Haygood insisted that freed African American citizens needed immediate access to educational resources that would instill these very same principles that white masters had spent years, blood, and treasure to keep from them.

Haygood laid this charge at the feet of the church and the state but reserved special obligations to the churches in the North. After all, Southern states had begun educating African Americans but had so little revenue that it could barely afford schools at all. Haygood in *Our Brother in Black* conceded to his audience that schools in the South should be segregated, not out of principle but out of necessity to gain white support in the first place. He regarded segregation as a “fact” he could not dispense with, but he hoped to “consider even the weaknesses of the people they would lift up, just as wise doctors consider the peculiarities of their patients.”<sup>18</sup> In this passage, Haygood implied that the desire for segregation was a “weakness.” To alleviate a wounded white Southern reader, Haygood recounted the admission of a Northern philanthropist on his preference for rooming in an inn with a white man over an African American.<sup>19</sup> The intention of this passage is to leave aside the issue of segregation in favor of providing education at all. He demanded that the Southern people must educate African Americans and noted, with force, “If the best man or woman in the South, if the most nobly-connected member of the ‘oldest and best family,’ should go into the wilds of Africa, as a missionary, to teach Mteza’s people, there is not a human creature, with a sense or soul, who would not honor the mission.”<sup>20</sup> How, then, could one “taboo this man or woman for teaching the negro children a Georgia village, and give a rational reason for the difference?”<sup>21</sup> By 1889, Haygood happily pronounced, “To accomplish their end wisely, justly, efficiently, there must be a fair and equitable distribution

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governments are more or less republican as they have more or less of the element of popular election and control in their composition; and believing, as I do, that the mass of the citizens is the safest depository of their own rights, and especially, that the evils flowing from the duperies of the people, are less injurious than those from the egoism of their agents, I am a friend to that composition of government which has in it the most of this ingredient,” *Memoirs, Correspondence, and Miscellanies: From the Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 4 vols., edited by Thomas Jefferson Randolph (Charlottesville: F. Carr and Co., 1829), 4:275.

<sup>18</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 144.

<sup>19</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 142.

<sup>20</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 152.

<sup>21</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 152.

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of race. I rejoice that every State in this Union ... does now ... in principle at least, use its school fund without distinction of race.”<sup>22</sup> Haygood’s caveats were part of his hope that the South would make progress from first tolerating segregation to slowly integrating over time.<sup>23</sup>

The Southern churches were already engaged in education. Indeed, he argued that even during slavery Southerners had educated African slaves better than they themselves would admit. This position may cause a contemporary reader to raise an eyebrow or two, but Haygood insisted on the recognition of efforts of church missionaries in the South, especially women, to teach slaves everything from learning how to read to modeling the political virtue necessary for free government.<sup>24</sup> By no means did Haygood use these examples to exonerate the South; he said rather plainly, “We of the South have not been without folly and unbelief and sin in our attitude toward this fact of emancipation. We have been slow to accept its full significance, even when we fully and finally accepted the fact.”<sup>25</sup> Rather, his point was to illustrate that the work of educating the millions of newly freed slaves was considerably less than many in the North—with “their long-indulged habit of looking up on the South as a sort of national Nazareth”—would think.<sup>26</sup>

The Northern churches had a special obligation because they were rich. Southern schools were doing all anyone could reasonably hope in a war-torn countryside and among a white population that had, for centuries, sunk tremendous equity into human bondage instead of schools; however, the amount of education they provided was simply insufficient. When accounting for the failure of the South to educate African Americans, he lamented, “The plain truth is, [after the Civil War] we were struggling for existence” and even at the time of the book’s writing, “the struggle is still at its intensest [*sic*] point.”<sup>27</sup> However, if the North provided the funds, the South had to work with the North to ensure the work continues. Haygood stated, “If all the Northern people were doing their best, the Southern people standing aloof in sullen silence, much might be done, but the work would be marred and hindered in all directions.”<sup>28</sup> If the North was overbearing and the South less than cooperative, the one fact that Haygood stressed most was this: African Americans proved to

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<sup>22</sup> Haygood, *Pleas for Progress*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 84–104.

<sup>24</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 34–35.

<sup>25</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 52.

<sup>26</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 55.

<sup>27</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 116.

<sup>28</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 118.

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be excellent students. In *The Case of the Negro*, Haygood pored over census statistics illustrating the high rate of illiteracy among African Americans, arguing that such illiteracy was the result of white supremacy and demanded education if there was any hope of preserving republican government in the South. At the end of the report, Haygood concluded, “It has been a success if we consider how many of them have learned to read and to write; if we consider how much better they behave as free people than was expected in 1865” and, among other reasons, “if we consider that they are beginning to appear on the tax books as owners of houses and little farms.”<sup>29</sup> Most of all, Haygood stressed the success of how educating African Americans produced teachers among their number in the years immediately after Emancipation, “This is most important; for if it were proved that the race could not furnish its own educators it would be proved that the race never could be educated. But it has been proved that the negro race in the Southern states is capable of furnishing its own teachers.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Haygood concluded, “The success of these colored principals and professors demonstrates the capacity of colored students to become the efficient leaders of education among their people when the time and opportunity have enabled them to show what they can do.”<sup>31</sup>

Education also extended to the habits of economic independence. On this issue, Haygood demonstrated some of his best grasp on the effects of slavery and the changes the South needed to mitigate them. For Haygood, private property gave African Americans incentives for embracing republican government. The most insidious aspect of slavery among the better treated slaves, he argued, had been the degradation of work and sense of dependence on the masters for their needs.<sup>32</sup> For this reason Haygood believed that newly freed slaves, rendered utterly unprepared for citizenship by their masters, embraced divisive Northern interlopers fomenting racial antagonism and promoting demands for reparations. Haygood rejected reparations, but not because there was no rightful claim to them. Rather, he regarded them as reinforcing the old master’s education of depending on white clemency and generosity.<sup>33</sup> Ever the Whig, Haygood believed the best way for the new citizens to

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<sup>29</sup> Haygood, *The Case of the Negro*, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Haygood, *The Case of the Negro*, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Haygood, *The Case of the Negro*, 16. Haygood made a similar argument in *Reply to Senator Eustis*, 6–9, and the entirety of *The Southern Church and the Negro*.

<sup>32</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 140.

<sup>33</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 115.

preserve their independence was to secure their own private property, improve it, save profits, and put them toward social institutions that would continue to uplift their progeny.

Haygood regarded private property as an education in political economy. In *Our Brother in Black*, he explained the harm annual sharecropping leases do to all parties. The most obvious disadvantage was not to the sharecropper but to the landowner, since the landowner could earn considerably more on the land if he had longer leases. How so? Haygood explained, “This one-year system puts both parties in a position that landlord and tenant ought never to occupy; namely, to give as little and get as much as possible, but without reference to that which is vital to the money interests of both—the improvement of the farm.”<sup>34</sup> If the sharecropper were only concerned about a year’s income at a time, then he would have no interest in long-term investments in the land, its improvement, or even the broader community in which he was a part. The economic arrangements imposed on landless freed slaves served more as a way of engaging in social control on which the landowners placed more value than ensuring economic stability and growth into the future. He said, “In the ‘state of mind,’ restless, uncertain, and more or less suspicious, that has prevailed with our people, both whites and negroes, for a number of years, it may well be admitted that these year-by-year arrangements were all that were practicable. Very well; but what about the next decade, the next generation, and the next hundred years?”<sup>35</sup> Even as white landowners perceived gains by suppressing African American economic and political independence, they seemed to ignore the tremendous costs they themselves incurred with suppressed income on their own properties and, by extension, by the suppressed revenue across Southern plantations.<sup>36</sup>

Haygood gave an anecdotal example that served as a natural experiment. His African American neighbor owned some of his own land and rented on annual leases another plot from a white landowner. Haygood observed that the black sharecropper took much better care of his land because he knew he would see a long-term benefit and could pass on its value to his family. On his own farm, he “repaired his own fences” while “he did not touch the fences of the rented field, except to patch just enough to ‘turn stock.’”<sup>37</sup> With the leased

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<sup>34</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 204.

<sup>35</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 206.

<sup>36</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 216.

<sup>37</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 205.

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land, the tenant left fences un-mended because these smaller improvements did not increase his annual income, and he did not bear the costs for disrepair, since he could manage a profit without taking care of the property. If he were to repair the landowner’s land, however, he would bear the costs in labor. It would be better for the tenant to save that labor for ensuring a maximum profit on the leased land. With so many freed slaves earning income only from sharecropping, by this logic, Haygood concluded that the South should not be surprised at its considerable disrepair and poverty shared across both races. The only solution would be to offer sharecroppers long leases or sell underdeveloped land, especially since the latter often caused white landowners more problems than the land was worth. As Haygood remarked, “the longer the lease the less of a ‘tramp’ does the tenant become. It not only settles him down to systematic, intelligent work, but it tends to deliver him from the systemless and thriftless style of living that characterizes the man who only does ‘jobs’ as he can pick them up.”<sup>38</sup> The entire economic arrangement was a form of Southern self-sabotage, both in the terms of the white Southerners seeking to control the economic fate of their black brothers and in terms of the South as people composed of two races.

Indeed, this problem affected white and black Southerners alike, and, similarly, like many whites “many negroes are fitted to be landowners, as well as long tenants, and they will be if the chance be given them.”<sup>39</sup> The virtues of land ownership were many. Haygood explained that they would make these African Americans more “happy, strong, and prosperous” because land ownership encouraged “industry” and “economy.”<sup>40</sup> African American landowners would resist the “influences of communism” since owning a cabin “makes a man think twice before taking part in a riot” since the owner would see himself as a victim of a riot rather than a participant.<sup>41</sup> Owning land also would drive the newly freed slaves to regard taxation with suspicion. As they began to pay property taxes, they would be “concerned about the income as well as the outgo of public money”<sup>42</sup> rather than part of a broader mob interested in “virtual confiscation.”<sup>43</sup> Land ownership made African Americans independent: “A man who owns a farm, be it ever so small, is not so apt to sell his vote for a

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<sup>38</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 209.

<sup>39</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 210.

<sup>40</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 212.

<sup>41</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 212.

<sup>42</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 213.

<sup>43</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 214.

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dollar or a dram.”<sup>44</sup> In addition, ownership created stable families and established among them “a grand self-sustaining and efficient moral and social police” to protect against idleness among relatives.<sup>45</sup> In sum, Haygood professed that land ownership was the “way for their moral, social and race development. I cannot conceive of a good man who does not wish the best fortune to all men of every race. I cannot conceive of a good man who would not rejoice to see the negroes more comfortable, intelligent, moral, useful, than they are. I should despise myself to have any other feeling toward any human creature.”<sup>46</sup>

Finally, the African American churches provided moral and spiritual education to their congregations, much to Haygood’s obvious ambivalence. Haygood expressed ambivalence because he understood the church to concern all races and, hence, regarded the racial divisions between black and white Methodist denominations as unfortunate. In reluctant, almost anguished language, he considered theories of “racial instinct” as explanations for why African American Methodist clergy had sought to divide their churches into a separate denomination.<sup>47</sup> “Race instinct” at the time was a way white supremacists explained the “natural” division of public and private arrangements between white and black Southern populations. Because, so the theory went, members of different races preferred each other, legal divisions were merely following an observable fact of human life. This “fact” ran contrary to the universal church that Haygood embraced, and his concession came not from an interest in white churches driving out African Americans but as one who had attempted to persuade the black churches to stay within the racially integrated Methodist parachurch organization.<sup>48</sup> In other words, he only accepted the split because the African American clergy chose it and not because white clergy forced the issue.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, Haygood treated “instinct” as irrelevant to the core purpose of the church, “But, so far as the duty of the white race is concerned, what would it matter if all the colored Christians should segregate into Churches of their own color as well as their own faith? Nothing whatever.”<sup>50</sup>

To illustrate the possible relationships white Southerners might have with their newly freed and rapidly improving African American neighbors, Haygood discussed the example

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<sup>44</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 214.

<sup>45</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 219.

<sup>46</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 219.

<sup>47</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 234-35.

<sup>48</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 232-33.

<sup>49</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 235.

<sup>50</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 235.

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of his butler, Daniel Martin. A passage from the chapter “The Negro as a Member of the Community” in *Our Brother in Black* is worth citing at length to illustrate the fraternal, religious, and social language Haygood deployed:

I propose this question to myself: How must I, a white man, and my neighbor, Daniel Martin, a black man, treat each other? He is my neighbor living with his family near me; he is my friend also, in whom I can trust; more, he has been a servant in my household for six full years. Daniel is a citizen; more than that, he is a man; the law made him a citizen, God made him a man. I am as much bound by eternal righteousness to deal fairly with Daniel Martin in all things, as with the worthy man and cultured Christian minister whose garden joins mine. And, let it not be overlooked, Daniel Martin is as much bound as I am to deal righteously in all relations that bind us together. I may, because I have larger opportunity, owe more duty to him than he owes to me, but the nature of the obligation is the same.<sup>51</sup>

After this, Haygood spoke of the importance for decent laws, good conscience, and fair treatment between Martin and him. Haygood concluded:

[Daniel Martin and I] are each to do in all our dealings with each other the fair and honest thing. This is all there is in it. With this difference, if I wrong him, taking advantage of his ignorance, or weakness, or dependence, of anything peculiar to his condition that gives me the advantage of him, I am all the viler for using my advantage unrighteously.<sup>52</sup>

On the surface, this language strikes the reader as paternalistic. Haygood described himself as Martin’s boss with duties to take care of his servant, but the relationship Haygood described comes from Christian scripture.<sup>53</sup> In addition, Martin appeared in *Our Brother in Black* in a context that provided an explanation and a condemnation for the very cause of his state. Leaving aside the effects of slavery, white supremacists after emancipation had actively sought to deprive freed slaves of education, civic organization, and economic

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<sup>51</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 185.

<sup>52</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 187.

<sup>53</sup> Luke 12:42-48 (KJV): “And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” In this application, Haygood and Martin would both be servants with the lord being God.

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independence. Were those opportunities afforded to African Americans, the obligation Haygood presently bore to Martin would, over time, shift to an equal burden shared between the men. Haygood's notion of equality depended on a friendship between equals, shaped by a free community under fair laws and customs. In short, Haygood and Martin experienced equality in a personal, relational way rather than in a formal, coercive way. The result is an equality among independent citizens, one in which respect corresponds to Martin not merely as rights-bearing individual or personal identity but as freed black man serving his family, his community, and his God.

### **SOCIAL EQUALITY: THE WHITE SUPREMACIST TRUMP CARD**

One should note that Haygood carefully disputed a white Southern denial of “social equality.” “Social equality” referred to legally enforced racial integration of social life, ranging from (at minimum) public-facing businesses like hotels, transportation, and public services to (at maximum) clubs and churches. For Haygood and other white Southern civil rights activists, the issue of social equality was frustrating, as they personally had no issue enjoying mixed racial company but were aware that many Southern whites did. White supremacists, on the other hand, capitalized on this more casual racism of white Southerners to warn that even the minimum concessions would lead to forced integration of associations, churches, and even mixed marriages. As a result, Haygood is careful on the matter of social equality, and scholars have characterized this care as ambivalence rather than rhetorical necessity. For example, Chappell regards Haygood's position as part of the “second front of [white Southern dissenters'] defensiveness”: “So hard did they strive to avoid any hint of support for this dread (but ill-defined) shibboleth [of social equality] that they contradicted one another in their disavowals of it.”<sup>54</sup> In particular, Chappell draws attention to a passage in *Our Brother in Black*, in which Haygood describes a Northern judge insisting on social equality as “wild and rattle-brained,” as an example of Haygood's strategy of sidling “up to the prejudices of his society and enlist[ing] them in the cause of black voting rights.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, 14.

<sup>55</sup> Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, 14.

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To explain Haygood’s view of social equality will require some direct textual analysis of his writing. Haygood leaves open the possibility of social equality when he writes. For example, the exact text to which Chappell refers does not warrant this interpretation:

Since January 1, 1881, I have been seriously asked by one of the most cultivated, liberal, and best known of Northern men “whether it is really true that Southern women, as a class, teach their children to hate Yankees.” He knew better, but he told me that thousands of people, all over the North, believe it. Why? Because some foolish man, as a sort of last shriek of baffled passion in some absurd speech has said as much! I told him, “No, sir; I have never seen nor heard of a Southern woman doing so wicked a thing.” It would be as wise in the South to believe that the wild and rattle-brained Federal judge who declared to me in the presence of a large company that “the south must accept amalgamation,” represented the constant thought, fixed purpose, and intense longing of every Northern man and woman.

Among sane people, capable of attending to the ordinary business affairs of every-day life, this sort of folly should have an end.<sup>56</sup>

Nowhere did Haygood reject social equality in this passage. Rather, he rejected that social equality was at the heart of Northern antipathy for the South. Later in the book, Haygood repeated Southern fears about Northern intentions to enforce social equality but, again, did not condemn social equality.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, in this later passage, Haygood complained that the fight over it missed the point, “Meanwhile the poor negro suffered from both sides, ground to powder by these two millstones, the upper and the nether, wearing each other out with useless friction and all-consuming heat.”<sup>58</sup> When Haygood took on the “social question” directly in *Our Brother in Black*, it was in relationship to his friend Daniel Martin:

Daniel Martin never asks any thing [*sic*] of me as to social life that I am not willing to give. I respect him in his place; he respects me in my place. He is master in his house, (except when his wife gets the upper hand,) I am master in mine (all exceptions understood.) No test that brought embarrassment to me or mortification to him ever occurred, or ever will. Wise people never make these issues; they do not come up spontaneously, not once in a thousand times. In his capacity as servant, Daniel Martin will make fires, clean shoes, and do other such things. Were I living in New York or London, and Daniel were what he is, or any other man in similar relations to me, I should expect him to do the same things, so long as they are included in our bargain, and he is paid for his work. But I do not ask him to sit at the table with my guests, or to entertain company in the parlor after tea. He does not wish such association. *Ask*

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<sup>56</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 95–96.

<sup>57</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 114.

<sup>58</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 114.

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*him*. He has just about the same social recognition in my house that a man of all work has in other decent and well-ordered households.<sup>59</sup>

Once again, Haygood did not reject social equality. In fact, in this passage, he implicitly endorsed it. First, Haygood stated that Martin did not ask for anything that Haygood did not want to provide, but we have no evidence that Haygood was unwilling to invite Martin. Rather, Haygood only testified to Martin's indifference on the matter. In their other arrangements, as already shown, Haygood offered Martin equal respect, all the more important because of the unequal opportunities afforded to Martin. In the social sphere, Haygood stated that he did not invite Martin to gatherings but only because Martin did not want to attend. Were this condition to change, it would seem, Haygood would offer, but Martin likely would never change his mind since, presumably, the white guests would probably make the experience unpleasant. Finally, Haygood's rationale for not inviting Martin is out of deference to Martin and not Haygood's white guests, once again demonstrating Haygood's commitment to fraternal respect. Haygood cannot directly endorse social equality because, in so doing, he might alienate the very moderate white Southern audience he wishes to persuade; however, he leaves open the possibility of social equality in his writing in the hope that his persuasive efforts succeed. Alas, they did not.

Eight years later, Haygood was bolder on the issue of social equality and twice tipped his hand to show his support for it. First, in *Pleas for Progress*, Haygood said of the issue:

There never was in this world, in any nation or community, such a thing as social equality, and there never will be. The social spheres arrange themselves to suit themselves, and no laws promulgated by State or Church will change the social affinities and natural selections of men. Men choose the circles for which they have affinity, seek the companionships they prefer, and find the places that are suited to them.<sup>60</sup>

Haygood could have stated what those affinities were, as he had hesitantly considered "racial instinct" as an explanation for the divisions within the church. Indeed, he used precisely that explanation in *Our Brother in Black*. Doing so would have likely helped Haygood make the rest of his case, but he refused. He left the issue of "affinity" to those who might follow it,

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<sup>59</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 188 [Emphasis in the original].

<sup>60</sup> Haygood, *Pleas for Progress*, 17.

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and Haygood knew that his reason was because, in his own life, he happily interacted with African American neighbors. He opted not to betray them to satisfy the prejudices of his reader. Indeed, in the pages that followed his statement on political equality, he directly attacked efforts to stop African American education as the result of white Southern ignorance, stinginess, fear and prejudice that he described as “cowardly and ignoble; it is, root and branch, utterly unchristian. If any think that my language is too strong, let them test their prejudices. Take them to Jesus Christ and ask him to approve them. Test them in light of the Sermon on the Mount and of the judgment day. How mean they look in that light!”<sup>61</sup>

In *Reply to Senator Eustis*, Haygood wrote that “the social question” was something that “I do not now, or at any time, argue about; it is more than useless. It will adjust itself or else never be adjusted. But this is very clear to me: If the white man be so superior as Senator Eustis thinks, he has no reason to be afraid for his position.”<sup>62</sup> Haygood did not explicitly state who ought to “adjust,” but it is clear from the text that he left the issue at the feet of white Americans. However, Haygood raised the issue out of necessity only to dismiss it in a way that implicitly condemned white supremacy but changed the subject. Even so, the logic of Haygood’s argument necessarily implied social equality as an eventual outcome unless white Southerners actively resisted it.<sup>63</sup> Chappell may regret that Haygood was not more explicit on the matter, but historians should trust their subjects to know the limit before which that author might experience persecution—or worse.

### PLAIN FACTS IN THE PROTESTANT IMAGINATION

Haygood situated the rapid improvement in the post-war lives of African American in a divine view of history. In keeping with his American Methodist upbringing, he had a strong sense of God’s providence, and the case of slavery and emancipation was merely yet another example of how God could redeem a person or even a nation from the gravest sins and, in

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<sup>61</sup> Haygood, *Pleas for Progress*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Haygood, *Reply to Senator Eustis*, 10–11.

<sup>63</sup> In this respect, he agreed with George Washington Cable, *The Silent South*, 34, who said of the issue, “Social Equality! What a godsend it would be if the advocates of the old Southern regime could only see that the color line points straight in the direction of social equality by tending toward the equalization of all whites on one side of the line and of all blacks on the other. We may reach the moon some day, not social equality; but the only class that really effects anything toward it are the makers and holders of arbitrary and artificial social distinctions interfering with society’s natural self-distribution.”

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that redemption, could usher in a renewed opportunity for doing the work of the gospel. As mentioned briefly above, Haygood expressed gratitude to God that so many slaves, if they were to be enslaved at all, came to the United States where so many masters and their families would evangelize them without knowing the role they played ending slavery itself. The gospel provided the slaves and their future generations the spiritual lives necessary to embrace economic independence and republican government after emancipation. These blessings could redeem the South, provided that white Southerners defend the civil rights of African Americans. Moreover, in a genuinely startling vision of Providence, Haygood believed that God's plan for the black church was to evangelize the nations from which they had been violently kidnapped.

Haygood gave contemporary scholars no reason to doubt his sincerity in these claims, but he also proved himself a capable, if not savvy, debater. He understood that his arguments had strong opposition among white Southerners; hence, he needed to find an authority outside of his own to which he could appeal. What better authority could a clergyman have than God? The appeal to Providence shifted the policy recommendations away from Haygood's own recommendations to the will of God operating in history and rendered comprehensible by human reason and divine revelation. To argue with Haygood, then, was to argue with God. He did not shrink from direct warnings against white Southern impiety. Instead, he saved this charge for last in his debates, having illustrated the plain facts available to an intelligent observer.

Haygood's starting point was the republican individual, and he presumed this individual to be a Protestant. The sovereign individual conscience, in the broadly American Protestant view, could observe the facts of a political controversy and, upon hearing the arguments over those facts, come to a reasonable and spiritually sound conclusion about the best course of action. Haygood understood his task to introduce those facts and illustrate how they prove his case and not those of his opponents.<sup>64</sup> His perspective is out of step with the contemporary, scholarly approach to facts and values. Theorists of deliberative democracy today often seek to place powerful constraints on moral interpretations of facts, while social

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<sup>64</sup> Haygood made constant appeals to plain facts in *Our Brother in Black*, numbering at well over fifty times. An example of how he deploys a general appeal to the command of conscience and facts appears on page 39, "The sins connected with [slavery] every good man deplores; for the blessings God brought the negroes while in slavery—whether by virtue of it, or in spite of it—every good man, who has knowledge of the facts, gives thanks to the giver of all Good."

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scientists deny that facts, empirically understood, could ever yield a moral conclusion. Haygood, on the other hand, lived in a thoroughly supernatural world in which the truth of “facts” and “values” mutually depended on divinely willed creation.<sup>65</sup> God wanted humankind to know the truth about the world and use their divinely endowed reason to use that truth to better know God. These truths, moreover, operated in history to extend divine truth, mediated through scripture and led by the church, into parts of the world shrouded in superstition. Therefore, facts and values were intimately united in a divine will that operates in human history and tasks confessing Christians with knowledge that the nature of the divine will was love and redemption.

The opening of Haygood’s arguments always began laying out these facts before providing the Christian values that explain their meaning and demand for action. The opening chapters to *Our Brother in Black* provided a view of the desperate conditions of the South but also the rate of recovery due to educational efforts. *The Case of the Negro* contained chart after chart of Census statistics illustrating the comparative poverty of the South, its illiteracy, poor productivity, and the like to explain how the fates of white and African American Southerners are closely tied.<sup>66</sup> *Reply to Senator Eustis* chided the senator from Louisiana (and, by extension, white supremacy) for his depiction of racial antagonism. Haygood framed his critique, again, on Eustis’s failure to grasp of the “facts leading up to the present conditions of life in the South—the bringing of the Negroes to this country, slavery and all its belongings, the War ... emancipation, enfranchisement and its consequents, all these are facts, not of Southern history only but of American history.”<sup>67</sup>

Inevitably, the facts white Southerners missed were facts concerning African Americans and their ways of life. The corollary to Haygood’s claim was that, having marshaled facts

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<sup>65</sup> The appeal to facts is part of the nineteenth century integration of Scottish common sense philosophy into the broader Protestant milieu. As Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 233–34 has argued, “Commonsense habits of mind that were axiomatic by the first third of the nineteenth century represented a series of overlapping intellectual commonplaces. First was an *ethical* common sense, or the assertion that just as humans know intuitively some basic realities about the physical world, so they may know certain foundational principles of morality by reflecting on their own consciousness. Second was *epistemological* common sense. It was the assertion that under moral conditions, when regulated carefully, human sense impressions revealed the world pretty much as it was.... The Third commonplace was a *methodological* common sense, or the assertion that truths about consciousness, the physical world, and religion could be authoritatively built by strict induction from the irreducible facts of experience” [Emphasis in the original].

<sup>66</sup> He provided details from three college case studies: Fisk University, Central Tennessee College, and Shaw University. He concluded the report with an appendix containing several tables containing 1880 Census data on race, education, and literacy.

<sup>67</sup> Haygood, *Reply to Senator Eustis*, 6.

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superior in number and truth, his opponents either lacked the education necessary to address the problem or possessed such education but sought to defraud the public on its nature and import. However, Haygood always assumed the former. When transitioning his arguments from facts to interpretations, Haygood let his opponents off the hook—pardoning them for their failure to secure the education they needed to make sober, intelligent decisions about issues of race. In *Reply to Senator Eustis*, Haygood commented on Eustis’s essay, saying:

The facts do not warrant the Senator’s despondent view.... But it is encouraging that Senator Eustis wrote his article. It is a good sign. Southern people are thinking about this subject more than heretofore. The Senator no doubt did his best; his effort may induce other men in his circle to ask concerning the facts. When they find out what the facts are they can write so as to make a contribution of value to the discussion.<sup>68</sup>

However, Haygood added, “no question involving the rights and wrongs of men, civilized or savage, white or black, was ever yet settled so that it would stay settled by any system of mere repression. And to those who believe in Jesus Christ it is equally certain that nothing can be rightly settled that is not settled in harmony with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.”<sup>69</sup> In addition, Haygood explained that many Southerners thought they knew the facts but, instead, merely harbored a grudge from the worst elements of Reconstruction. To use a previous example, in *Our Brother in Black* Haygood detailed about how many white Southerners believed that African Americans still expected direct financial reparations portioned directly from white Southern-held property. Worse, African Americans learned of this scheme from opportunistic, demagogic Northern preachers hoping to pick up where John Brown and General Sherman left off.<sup>70</sup> Haygood accomplished two goals in this effort. First, he elevated himself as the sober judge of facts between two extremist parties of passion. Second, he offered both parties an honorable way to back down by conceding the “truth” in both positions. Southerners could air their grievances about the sense of mistreatment during Reconstruction while not standing in the way of civil liberties, economic growth, and the work of the gospel in both.

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<sup>68</sup> Haygood, *Reply to Senator Eustis*, 11.

<sup>69</sup> Haygood, *Reply to Senator Eustis*, 11.

<sup>70</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 111-22. His account ends with an anecdote in a note in which an African American preacher, Rev. Nicholas Graves, stopped by Haygood’s house with the mail to talk about a horse trade. The two joke about Northerners promising reparations and how Graves fell for the pitch, but also how he had learned from the experience to make his own way and buy his own horses (120-21).

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The movement from facts to interpretation was a movement to combine prudence and revelation. As shown in the previous section, prudence, for Haygood, dictated that white Southerners should provide resources for improving the already rapidly improving conditions among their African American neighbors. Revelation, however, demonstrated that to do well—that is, to benefit from prudence—was also to do good. The biblical demand that whites treat their neighbors as themselves did not only provide spiritual salvation but also material progress. That progress could then be put to use for spreading the good news. When witnessing the virtuous cycle, Haygood drew his readers back from the South to the nation and from the nation to the world to reveal how God’s hand guided a nearly redeemed white South to raise up among its black sons and daughters a population of missionaries that would return for a time to their ancestral homes with the good news, mysteriously enough, their old captors gave them.

### THE GREAT WORK OF THE SOUTHERN NEHEMIAD

Haygood placed the broader effort to educate African Americans and provide better education to the entire South in a biblical narrative I have elsewhere referred to the “American nehemiad.”<sup>71</sup> The American nehemiad refers to the efforts of American and usually Protestant clergy to explain the relationship between church and state. There are two kinds of nehemiads, the “nehemiad on the wall” and the “nehemiad of the great work.”<sup>72</sup> The “nehemiad on the wall” refers to the kind of relationship articulated by Puritan divine Jonathan Mitchell in his 1667 election sermon, “Nehemiah on the Wall in Troublesom [*sic*] Times.” The nehemiad on the wall draws from the biblical figure’s commitment to God’s Law as a source for love of country, his perseverance in the face of gentile political opponents such as Sanballat, and the close cooperation between secular leaders and the church. The “nehemiad of the great work” refers to later invocations of the biblical story to explain how American government can cooperate with the church’s mission by protecting religious liberty and conforming its laws to church teaching on human equality. Whereas the nehemiad on the wall favored religious establishment and its close relationship with government authority,

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<sup>71</sup> James M. Patterson, “The American Nehemiad, or a Tale of Two Walls,” *Journal of Church and State* 57, no. 3 (Summer 2015): 450–68.

<sup>72</sup> Patterson, “I Am Doing a Great Work, So That I Cannot Come Down’: Civil Liberty and the Nehemiad of the Early American Republic,” *Anamnesis* 5 (2016), 68–98.

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the nehemiad of the great work focused on evangelization and the importance of religious liberty. Indeed, evangelization often demanded that government authority make radical changes. For example, the great evangelist Charles Finney in his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* used the nehemiad of the great work to describe hindrances to revivals. One great hindrance, in his view, was the continued enslavement of African Americans in the South. Finney preached that slavery violated God's laws, which meant that the South put the entire nation in danger.<sup>73</sup> Were slavery to continue, he preached, God would "push [the nation] to decide."<sup>74</sup> The nehemiad of the great work, therefore, demands the same kind of cooperation between church and state but one wherein the government keeps the church free so that the church can preach the gospel and either deliver the nation to God or at least spare it divine wrath.

Haygood adopted the nehemiad of the great work. He understood his place as a Methodist minister as one to preach the truth to the nation in order to enlist its support in the great work of rebuilding the South for both white and African Americans. The newly rebuilt South would be like that of a rebuilt Jerusalem under Nehemiah, one in which the South kept to God's Law of protecting civil liberties for all citizens and protect property rights to ensure their future prosperity. About Nehemiah, Haygood said that history "does not record a fairer, truer patriotism than his.... His friends were dispirited and unorganized; his enemies were strong, bold, scoffing."<sup>75</sup> Nehemiah's rival, Sanballat, "jeered" Nehemiah and his "small but united and determined company" as they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and the South had a similar experience. Haygood explained, "The South has heard this Sanballat voice many times since Appomattox. And Sanballat has had to help him a class of Southern men, as greedy as vultures and as remorseless as death, who have done nothing to rebuild our broken walls ... [but] only to hold faster the poor and helpless of their own brethren."<sup>76</sup> In Haygood's providential view of history, the South experienced a just destruction and exile for the sins of slavery, and during these periods had learned the moral and spiritual lessons necessary for rebuilding the states in keeping with emancipation.<sup>77</sup> The North also paid for its sins and would continue to by dedicating its significantly superior wealth to ensuring the

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<sup>73</sup> Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 256-84.

<sup>74</sup> Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 260.

<sup>75</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 76.

<sup>76</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 77-78.

<sup>77</sup> Haygood, *Sermons and Speeches* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1883), 321.

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uplift of its old foe. In *Reply to Senator Eustis*, Haygood tellingly called public schools the “Great Work of Negro Education Done by the South.”<sup>78</sup> Haygood informed white audiences about how the black churches of the South confronted their own problems with the resources at their disposal.<sup>79</sup> The only hope for rebuilding the once exiled Southern people would be for each of them to observe God’s law anew to avoid just punishment and, instead, experience the material and spiritual blessings from following the gospel.

Haygood’s Southern nehemias of the great work was part of an even greater divine plan. At the end of *Our Brother in Black*, Haygood prophesied that educating and evangelizing African Americans was part of God’s plan to bring the gospel to their ancestral homelands. Haygood expanded on this vision:

This Great preparation that is to “make straight the way of the Lord” is being helped forward every day and hour; it is helped forward every time a negro is taught a truth, or is lifted up, or in any way is placed in a better position to make a man. It is helped forward every time a negro school is established, a negro church built, a negro family toned up to better thinking and better living. In a word, every good thing that has been done, that is being done, and that may yet be done for the negro here, is helping him to get ready for the moral conquest of a continent.<sup>80</sup>

Though the South’s black brothers and sisters came to America in bondage, they would return, for a time, to Africa free in body and spirit. Indeed, Haygood observed, “Some of the loftier spirits among them are already looking with longing eyes and burning hearts to the home of their fathers.”<sup>81</sup> If white Americans, especially Southerners, sought redemption for African slavery, God would bless them not only with reconciliation at home but with a new continent brought to salvation by the hands of their former slaves. What would be a more fitting form of redemption for white slave-owners? What better use of newfound freedom for the emancipated slaves? In a lengthy exhortation, the preacher offered, “Every dollar consecrated to giving them the Gospel while they were slaves, and since they were made free; every sermon preached to them; every lesson taught them; every good book printed for

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<sup>78</sup> Haygood, *Reply to Senator Eustis*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> The available copies of Haygood’s essay lack publication information, but it is estimated to have been published in 1889. See above, note 9.

<sup>80</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 247. The quotation comes from Isaiah and spoken by John the Baptist. See Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1, Matthew 3:3; John 1:23. Coincidentally, Martin Luther King Jr. invoked the same language in his famous “I Have a Dream Speech” speech in 1963.

<sup>81</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 245.

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them—all has been helping toward the salvation of a continent” and, if this salvation comes, the sins of the old masters would find redemption, “And when the day of God declares all things, although it may appear that thousands of slave owners in the old days ... did not realize their sacred relation to this great race movement toward the cross of our common Lord, yet will it be found that thousands did recognize and discharge, to the best of their ability, their duty to these sons of the strangers.”<sup>82</sup> By the end of *Our Brother in Black*, Haygood completely adopted the voice of a prophet, pronouncing:

Do we not owe this debt to Africa? Her sons helped mightily to clear the forests before the march of our population. Their toils have added untold millions to the wealth of our country. Their hands have helped to build up great cities and great highways in all our States. They, at least, are not to blame for the horrors and exasperations of our fratricidal war. They deserve everlasting honor for their heroic patience and Christian waiting during the fiery trial of their faith. Modern times have not given to the world a sunblimer [*sic*] expression of a steadfast faith in the all-wise providence of God.<sup>83</sup>

The great work of education for African Americans brought together Southern whites and their former slaves as brothers and sisters. Once so related, they could look north to those who emancipated them and rebuilt the South as brothers and sisters. The nation, so united, could look out to the world and seek, through faith, brothers and sisters among the population the South once plundered for labor. Haygood’s vision was one of always broadening the scope of significance to illustrate that individuals are tied in a network of relationships as fraternal equals under God’s providence. The task of each individual was to find salvation in God and, once saved, to bring it others. This view of human relationships assists a persistent problem in political theory, that of democratic individualism.

### FAITH AND THE LIMITS OF DEMOCRATIC INDIVIDUALISM

What relevance does Haygood have to the study of race and American political thought? Is he merely a historical curiosity, or perhaps a curious outlier among a sea of white supremacy? No, Haygood had faith in the efforts to rebuild the South on robust protection of African American civil liberties, and he hoped to persuade those within his denomination to

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<sup>82</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 246.

<sup>83</sup> Haygood, *Our Brother in Black*, 250.

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reimagine white Southern religious identity as part of an integrated, universal, missionary church. The concepts Haygood deployed drew from the fraternal bonds necessary for republican government and grounded in the Christian religion. Therefore, individuals were not isolated, autonomous objects floating from one purpose to the next. On the contrary, white and black Southerners were part of a broad Southern family. They were, as the title said, brothers. However, contemporary scholarship on race and American political thought stresses theories that separate individuals into isolated selves who regard others as threats to autonomy and, worse, as bearers of privilege that the state must coercively remove. Such a vision of race necessarily promotes discord among individuals who compete for political authority to punish the other.

Alexis de Tocqueville famously worried about the problem of individualism in America. For all their faults, the old European aristocracies provided all of their subjects with a hierarchy that provided a sense of place and purpose. Even as peasants suffered under great constraints to liberty, they nonetheless felt a sense of belonging by virtue of ancient relationships.<sup>84</sup> Tocqueville explained, “As each class [within a democracy] comes closer to the others and mixes with them, its members become indifferent and almost like strangers among themselves. Aristocracy had made of all citizens a long chain that went from the peasant up to the king; democracy breaks the chain and sets each link apart.”<sup>85</sup> Americans lived in constant motion and with little time to reflect. While the absence of a formal hierarchy provided Americans greater individual liberty, they suffered from a lack of place and purpose.<sup>86</sup> Individualism left each American to her own physical and spiritual resources, and these resources were never enough. In the absence of individual strength, these Americans could eventually look among their number to find another who would be strong for them. Hence, as Tocqueville concluded, the equality that grounds democratic individualism might be the cause of its own eventual undoing. Tocqueville explained:

Despotism...sees the most certain guarantee of its own duration in the isolation of men, and it ordinarily puts all its care into isolating them .... [A] despot readily pardons the governed for not loving him, provided that they do not love each other. He does not ask them to aid him in leading the state; it is enough that they do not

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<sup>84</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, eds. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 481-84; 617-35.

<sup>85</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 483.

<sup>86</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 403-10.

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aspire to direct it themselves. He calls those who aspire to unite their efforts to create common prosperity turbulent and restive spirits, and changing the natural sense of words, he names those who confine themselves narrowly to themselves good citizens.

Thus, the vices to which despotism gives birth are precisely those that equality favors. These two things complement and aid each other in a fatal manner.

Equality places men beside one another without a common bond to hold them. Despotism raises barriers between them and separates them. Equality disposes them not to think of those like themselves, and for them despotism makes a sort of public virtue of indifference.<sup>87</sup>

In short, democracies tend toward equality, and equality tends towards despotism. Somehow, contemporary American political thought has missed this critical—if not central—issue at the heart of Tocqueville's *oeuvre*.

In *Awakening to Race*, Jack Turner has argued that the solution to the Tocquevillian problem is a deepening in the resources of the self. By charting the thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin, he concludes that the most essential of these resources of the self is self-trust as first defined by Emerson and articulated best, in Turner's view, by Baldwin. As Turner explains, "Baldwin's deployment of the idea of self-trust ... [is] politically insurgent: self-trust enables the oppressed to heed the evidence of their own senses against prevailing ideologies that downplay their oppression."<sup>88</sup> As a result, self-trust:

...leads the individual to dedicate himself to the principle of equality. Urging him to acknowledge his own inner wildness and internal contradictions, self-trust acquaints him with both individual infinitude and human fallibility. The lessons of infinitude, on the one hand, and fallibility, on the other, force the individual to recognize the miraculousness of every person's existence and the impossibility of ranking human beings. If each individual's infinitude does not by itself constitute a type of human equality, then it at least counsels us to accept equality as the most responsible

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<sup>87</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 485. Haygood, *Pleas for Progress*, 16, in his own way, agreed but with a greater emphasis on education: "If the argument that supports this apprehension [of educating African Americans] be worth any thing [*sic*], it proves too much, for it is just as good as an argument against the education of the poor whites. Education will as certainly spoil them for laborers. The spirit that is capable of such an objection to the education of the poor of any race is selfish, cowardly, and essentially mean. It is worthy only of the Dark Ages. It is at bottom a plea for the tyranny of 'bossism.' Put into form, it says this: 'I am, by virtue of money, or shrewdness, or learning a sort of "boss" among my fellow-men; I must keep them in ignorance that I may keep them down and be better able to play the "boss."' But there is nothing in the argument; it is false all through. For no man is better for any thing [*sic*] in the world to be done because he is ignorant.... Ignorance is not a qualification for any thing [*sic*] that God intended man to do. It is first, last, and all the time disqualification rather. Every principle of right and justice denies it; every law of political economy condemns it; the history of the human race repudiates it."

<sup>88</sup> Turner, *Awakening to Race*, 107.

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operating assumption. Assuming otherwise might tempt us to grade human being in ways that insult their infinitude.<sup>89</sup>

Under these conditions, Turner believes one can move from self-trust to self-creation. Again, grounded in his reading of Baldwin, he describes self-creation as “transforming given materials—the body and mind history has begotten—into a work of art.”<sup>90</sup> Self-creation is the point at which encounters with other individuals offers the possibility for a “long, hard look at one’s connections to others,” but these connections must provoke a political response that drives self-trusting, self-creating individuals into self-examination that then produces a “Baldwinian conversation” of face-to-face encounters to found a “polity that will for the first time in history guarantee *everyone* equal effectual freedom” and “redefining the very terms of both personal and national self-understanding.”<sup>91</sup> To reach this end, however, requires recognition of historical privileges among whites and their relinquishment, what Turner calls “self-correction.”<sup>92</sup> Again, the purpose of looking outside the self is to become acquainted with the history that shaped the self, “Historical consciousness helps citizens inventory the ways history has unjustly distributed advantages and disadvantages, and determine where they sit within that historical distribution. It also enables them to track the genealogy of their social identities and stay alert to how those identified may be implicated in others’ degradation. Finally, appreciation of relinquishment as a virtuous act encourages citizens to give up advantage in accordance with justice.”<sup>93</sup> Once Turner’s refounding commences, selves would no longer need to know history but autonomously self-create out of separate infinitudes. Presumably, once autonomous, these isolated selves would no longer even have reason for conversations, since they were merely of instrumental value for perfecting individual autonomy.

Turner’s solution is Tocqueville’s nightmare. Far from solving the problem of individualism, Turner actually illustrates it. Turner’s constant use of the “self-” prefix illustrates how shorn of human relationships democratic individualism necessarily becomes. Turner would have us look only to thinkers who deny or strongly limit the relationships

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<sup>89</sup> Turner, *Awakening to Race*, 109.

<sup>90</sup> Turner, *Awakening to Race*, 110.

<sup>91</sup> Turner, *Awakening to Race*, 111.

<sup>92</sup> Turner, *Awakening to Race*, 115.

<sup>93</sup> Turner, *Awakening to Race*, 115.

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individuals naturally have with their parents, the communities into which they were born, and the religious traditions that shaped the world around them. The “miraculousness of existence” is the result; the world seems almost impossible to understand except as an act of divine will.<sup>94</sup> However, the miraculousness is not the result of insight but the avoidance of it; Turner rejects the supernatural and its grounding of human relationships. Finally, Turner describes the human person as a “mind and body” delivered by “history.” This definition precludes consideration of natural human relationships by strangely presupposing that history—and not relationships between persons—are responsible for the conception and birth of children. It is a strange theory that writes these out of consideration and attributes them to an unseen force. It is also something that Tocqueville anticipated and explicitly rejected.<sup>95</sup> Marital relationships between spouses lead to parental relationships with children, and these families relate to each other as neighbors. These were precisely the kinds of relationships that Haygood sought to demonstrate and reveal as essential to a racially harmonious South. White and black families grew up next to each other as neighbors, and the social lives they already shared were grounds for a post-war South.

Turner also misunderstands history when treating it as merely a chronicle of grievances. When he discusses history, he intends for it only to inform isolated selves of their relative advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, Turner admits that this view of history is simply one of a “usable past” intended to “unsettle our present thinking” or “combine historical

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<sup>94</sup> It is precisely this way of thinking that led Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 403–4, to remark: “America is therefore the one country in the world where the precepts of Descartes are least studied and best followed.... Americans do not read Descartes’s works because their social state turns them away from speculative studies, and they follow his maxims because this same social state naturally disposes their minds to adopt them. Amidst the continual movement that reigns in the heart of a democratic society, the bond that unites generations is relaxed or broken; each man easily loses track of ideas of his ancestors or scarcely worries about them.... As for the action the intellect of one man can have on another, it is necessarily very restricted in a country where citizens, having become nearly the same, all see each other from very close, and, not perceiving in anyone among themselves incontestable signs of greatness and superiority, are constantly led back toward their own reason as the most visible and closest source of truth. Then not only is trust in such and such a man destroyed, but the taste for believing any man whosoever on his word. Each therefore withdraws narrowly into himself and claims to judge the world from there.” Therefore, miraculousness is not so much an observable fact of democratic individualism as much as it is the consequence of the worst aspects of it. Americans, in so far as they are democratic individuals, drift toward a feeling of separation only combated by institutions that reaffirm social bonds. See also L. Joseph Herbert, “Individualism and Intellectual Liberty in Tocqueville and Descartes,” *Journal of Politics* 69, no. 2 (May 2007): 525–37.

<sup>95</sup> See Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 411–15; 425–26. In particular, the following passage explains the issue Tocqueville would have with Turner: “As conditions become more equal and each man in particular becomes more like all the others, weaker and smaller, one gets used to no longer viewing citizens so as to consider only the people; one forgets individuals so as to think only of the species” (426).

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fidelity with interpretive flexibility.”<sup>96</sup> In other words, Turner redefines history as unequal privilege because this view supports his prior political commitments, and yet he makes no case for these commitments or why they should dictate the version of history he self-consciously bends. Histories in the South are replete with relationships among individuals hoping to redeem wrongs of the past by forging better relationships for the future.<sup>97</sup> Haygood illustrated such possibilities in his account of Daniel Martin. Between them, equal respect was the result of the protection of civil liberties, economic independence, and personal improvement. One does not need to sign on to Haygood’s faith or African missionary vision to see how drawing white and African Americans Southerners together reduces the need for the implied state coercion in Turner’s argument. For Turner, privilege redistribution clears the way for the greatest autonomy of self and purest potentiality for its creation. However, precisely this condition—and this very way of thinking—was what drove Tocqueville to fear for America. Americans most of all had to regard each other as relational beings. They had to preserve their familial, civic, and religious bonds. These bonds provided the physical and spiritual resources that individuals by themselves would always lack. Strong families, friendships, and communities ensured equality by preserving free and local institutions, as well as situated the individual within a life filled with purpose and place. In light of Haygood’s treatment of black and white Southerners as “brothers,” Tocqueville’s language has an even more profound importance for race relations:

Under democratic laws children are perfectly equal and consequently independent; nothing forces them to come together, but also nothing draws them apart; and as they have a common origin, are raised under the same roof, are the objects of the same cares, and are not distinguished or separated by any particular prerogative, one sees the sweet, childlike intimacy of the first years arise easily among them. With the bond

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<sup>96</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 12.

<sup>97</sup> These histories, however, experience constant state coercion. One example is Slabtown, a town built out fleeing, newly emancipated slaves near Yorktown, Virginia. After the Second World War, the federal government decided that residents had to abandon the town, and by 1981 it was gone and replaced with more federal park land, thus betraying the notion of a coercive state as a source for redistributing privilege. When a reporter interviewed former residents, Ethel Curtis said, “This was a neighborhood where we all looked out for each other—and where just about everybody was related. So when we had to move, it was not a very easy time for people who had put down such strong roots.” Hettie Hill observed, “I was born here—right down that lane. I was reared here, had my grandchildren here ... [but] after all these years you realize that nobody owns the land that he’s paid for.” The federal government treated Slabtown as a collection of isolated individuals and pushed them off the land without much difficulty but with tremendous disgrace. Notice how the displaced African American families did not lament their loss of autonomy—something they quickly secured when moving—but their loss of community. They stressed the relational, the fraternal, and not the self. See Mark St. John Erickson, “Lost black township in York County lives on in memory,” *Daily Press*, February 22, 2016.

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thus formed at the beginning of life, there are scarcely any occasions to break it, for fraternity brings them together daily without hindrance.

It is therefore not by interests but by community of memories and free sympathy of opinions and tastes that democracy attaches brothers to one another. It divides their inheritance, but it permits their souls to intermingle.<sup>98</sup>

Despite his many faults, Haygood provides a better example in his thought than Emerson, Thoreau, or Baldwin ever could. Haygood did not regard the past as “usable” but as shared among South and North, black and white. The meaning of this past depended on how each of these populations chose to treat each other in the present and future. Haygood called for these relationships to be fraternal. To preserve democratic fraternity required a common purpose that redeemed the sins of the past and introduced blessings and trust across populations. As a Methodist preacher, Haygood clearly understood that purpose to be preaching and keeping the gospel. In so doing, he affirmed precisely the role of religion that Tocqueville observed. When speaking about issues of racial reconciliation, Haygood did not speak in abstractions of “privilege” but in shared obligations among his white and black neighbors. Haygood hoped that his reader would recognize in Martin a fellow African American in his or her own life and regard such person with respect and care rather than suspicion or grievance.

As it turns out, scholars on race in American political thought may skip the history of the white Southern dissenters for that of Jim Crow because the dissenters are not usable for their political purposes. The study of American political thought, however, demands more than pursuing our own political ends; it requires contemplating attempts to meet the principles of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>99</sup> Haygood represents a failed movement to keep those principles for the men and women his family once enslaved. His efforts earned him little love among his former friends and fellow Georgians. Four generations after Haygood’s death, Mann—his biographer—sought to explain Haygood’s “Negrophilia” as the result of epilepsy, heresy, and moral weakness. He too made a “usable past” out of Haygood’s life to minimize and ridicule Haygood’s efforts at educating and integrating African Americans. However, Haygood earned great admiration among African American populations across

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<sup>98</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 562.

<sup>99</sup> James W. Ceaser, *Liberal Democracy and Political Science* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 177–210.

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the South. His stewardship at the Slater Fund kept institutions like Fisk University open, which in turn provided the United States with one of the greatest minds of African American political thought, W.E.B. DuBois. Haygood’s life earned respect and admiration among his black brothers and sisters. His death brought out their tearful lamentations, despite Haygood’s tarnished reputation.<sup>100</sup> In his own small, fallible way, he had helped former slaves find their way into the communities, churches, and schools that would keep the hope of racial reconciliation alive after Jim Crow.

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<sup>100</sup> Mann, *Atticus Greene Haygood*, 183.