

# **A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin**

## **Part 4**

**By**

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***Free*editorial** 

## CHAPTER I.

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH ON SLAVERY.

There is no country in the world where the religious influence has a greater ascendancy than in America. There is no country where the clergy are more powerful. This is the more remarkable, because in America religion is entirely divorced from the state, and the clergy have none of those artificial means for supporting their influence which result from rank and wealth. Taken as a body of men, the American clergy are generally poor. The salaries given to them afford only a bare support, and yield them no means of acquiring property. Their style of living can be barely decent and respectable, and no more. The fact that, under these circumstances, the American clergy are probably the most powerful body of men in the country, is of itself a strong presumptive argument in their favor. It certainly argues in them, as a class, both intellectual and moral superiority.

It is a well-known fact that the influence of the clergy is looked upon by our statesmen as a most serious element in making up their political combinations; and that that influence is so great, that no statesman would ever undertake to carry a measure against which all the clergy of the country should unite. Such a degree of power, though it be only a power of opinion, argument and example, is not without its dangers to the purity of any body of men. To be courted by political partisans is always a dangerous thing for the integrity and spirituality of men who profess to be governed by principles which are not of this world. The possession, too, of so great a power as we have described, involves a most weighty responsibility; since, if the clergy do possess the power to rectify any great national immorality, the fact of its not being done seems in some sort to bring the sin of the omission to their door.

We have spoken, thus far, of the clergy alone; but in America, where the clergyman is, in most denominations, elected by the church, and supported by its voluntary contributions, the influence of the church and that of the clergy are, to a very great extent, identical. The clergyman is the very ideal and expression of the church. They choose him, and retain him, because he expresses more perfectly than any other man they can obtain, their ideas of truth and right. The clergyman is supported, in all cases, by his church, or else he cannot retain his position in it. The fact of his remaining there is generally proof of identity of opinion, since if he differed very materially from them, they have the power to withdraw from him and choose another.

The influence of a clergyman, thus retained by the free consent of the understanding and heart of his church, is in some respects greater even than

that of a papal priest. The priest can control only by a blind spiritual authority, to which, very often, the reason demurs, while it yields an outward assent; but the successful free minister takes captive the affections of the heart by his affections, overrules the reasoning powers by superior strength of reason, and thus, availing himself of affection, reason, conscience, and the entire man, possesses a power, from the very freedom of the organization, greater than can ever result from blind spiritual despotism. If a minister cannot succeed in doing this to some good extent in a church, he is called unsuccessful; and he who realizes this description most perfectly has the highest and most perfect kind of power, and expresses the idea of a successful American minister.

In speaking, therefore, of this subject, we shall speak of the church and the clergy as identical, using the word church in the American sense of the word, for that class of men, of all denominations, who are organized in bodies distinct from nominal Christians, as professing to be actually controlled by the precepts of Christ.

What, then, is the influence of the church on this great question of slavery?

Certain things are evident on the very face of the matter.

1. It has not put an end to it.
2. It has not prevented the increase of it.
3. It has not occasioned the repeal of the laws which forbid education to the slave.
4. It has not attempted to have laws passed forbidding the separation of families and legalizing the marriage of slaves.
5. It has not stopped the internal slavetrade.
6. It has not prevented the extension of this system, with all its wrongs, over new territories.

With regard to these assertions it is presumed there can be no difference of opinion.

What, then, have they done?

In reply to this, it can be stated,

1. That almost every one of the leading denominations have, at some time, in their collective capacity, expressed a decided disapprobation of the system, and recommended that something should be done with a view to its abolition.
2. One denomination of Christians has pursued such a course as entirely, and in fact, to free every one of its members from any participation in slaveholding. We refer to the Quakers. The course by which this result has been

effected will be shown by a pamphlet soon to be issued by the poet J. G. Whittier, one of their own body.

3. Individual members, in all denominations, animated by the spirit of Christianity, have in various ways entered their protest against it.

It will be well now to consider more definitely and minutely the sentiments which some leading ecclesiastical bodies in the church have expressed on this subject.

It is fair that the writer should state the sources from which the quotations are drawn. Those relating to the action of Southern judicatories are principally from a pamphlet compiled by the Hon. James G. Birney, and entitled "The Church the Bulwark of Slavery." The writer addressed a letter to Mr. Birney, in which she inquired the sources from which he compiled. His reply was, in substance, as follows: That the pamphlet was compiled from original documents, or files of newspapers, which had recorded these transactions at the time of their occurrence. It was compiled and published in England, in 1842, with a view of leading the people there to understand the position of the American church and clergy. Mr. Birney says that, although the statements have long been before the world, he has never known one of them to be disputed; that, knowing the extraordinary nature of the sentiments, he took the utmost pains to authenticate them.

We will first present those of the Southern States.

1. The Presbyterian Church.

HARMONY PRESBYTERY, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, sundry persons in Scotland and England, and others in the north, east and west of our country, have denounced slavery as obnoxious to the laws of God, some of whom have presented before the General Assembly of our church, and the Congress of the nation, memorials and petitions, with the avowed object of bringing into disgrace slave-holders, and abolishing the relation of master and slave: And whereas, from the said proceedings, and the statements, reasonings and circumstances connected therewith, it is most manifest that those persons "know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm;" and with this ignorance discover a spirit of self-righteousness and exclusive sanctity, &c., therefore,

1. Resolved, That as the kingdom of our Lord is not of this world, His church, as such, has no right to abolish, alter, or affect any institution or ordinance of men, political or civil, &c.

2. Resolved, That slavery has existed from the days of those good old slave-holders and patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (who are now in the

kingdom of heaven), to the time when the apostle Paul sent a runaway home to his master Philemon, and wrote a Christian and fraternal letter to this slaveholder, which we find still stands in the canon of the Scriptures; and that slavery has existed ever since the days of the apostle, and does now exist.

3. Resolved, That as the relative duties of master and slave are taught in the Scriptures, in the same manner as those of parent and child, and husband and wife, the existence of slavery itself is not opposed to the will of God; and whosoever has a conscience too tender to recognize this relation as lawful is “righteous over much,” is “wise above what is written,” and has submitted his neck to the yoke of men, sacrificed his Christian liberty of conscience, and leaves the infallible word of God for the fancies and doctrines of men.

#### THE CHARLESTON UNION PRESBYTERY.

It is a principle which meets the views of this body, that slavery, as it exists among us, is a political institution, with which ecclesiastical judicatories have not the smallest right to interfere; and in relation to which, any such interference, especially at the present momentous crisis, would be morally wrong, and fraught with the most dangerous and pernicious consequences. The sentiments which we maintain, in common with Christians at the South of every denomination, are sentiments which so fully approve themselves to our consciences, are so identified with our solemn convictions of duty, that we should maintain them under any circumstances.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Presbytery, the holding of slaves, so far from being a SIN in the sight of God, is nowhere condemned in his holy word; that it is in accordance with the example, or consistent with the precepts, of patriarchs, apostles and prophets, and that it is compatible with the most fraternal regard to the best good of those servants whom God may have committed to our charge.

The New-school Presbyterian Church in Petersburg, Virginia, Nov. 16, 1838, passed the following:

Whereas, the General Assembly did, in the year 1818, pass a law which contains provisions for slaves irreconcilable with our civil institutions, and solemnly declaring slavery to be sin against God—a law at once offensive and insulting to the whole Southern community,

1. Resolved, That, as slave-holders, we cannot consent longer to remain in connection with any church where there exists a statute conferring the right upon slaves to arraign their masters before the judicatory of the church—and that, too, for the act of selling them without their consent first had been obtained.

2. Resolved, That, as the Great Head of the church has recognized the

relation of master and slave, we conscientiously believe that slavery is not a sin against God, as declared by the General Assembly.

This sufficiently indicates the opinion of the Southern Presbyterian Church. The next extracts will refer to the opinions of Baptist Churches. In 1835 the Charleston Baptist Association addressed a memorial to the Legislature of South Carolina, which contains the following:

The undersigned would further represent that the said association does not consider that the Holy Scriptures have made the fact of slavery a question of morals at all. The Divine Author of our holy religion, in particular, found slavery a part of the existing institutions of society; with which, if not sinful, it was not his design to intermeddle, but to leave them entirely to the control of men. Adopting this, therefore, as one of the allowed arrangements of society, he made it the province of his religion only to prescribe the reciprocal duties of the relation. The question, it is believed, is purely one of political economy. It amounts, in effect, to this,—Whether the operatives of a country shall be bought and sold, and themselves become property, as in this state; or whether they shall be hirelings, and their labor only become property, as in some other states. In other words, whether an employer may buy the whole time of laborers at once, of those who have a right to dispose of it, with a permanent relation of protection and care over them; or whether he shall be restricted to buy it in certain portions only, subject to their control, and with no such permanent relation of care and protection. The right of masters to dispose of the time of their slaves has been distinctly recognized by the Creator of all things, who is surely at liberty to vest the right of property over any object in whomsoever he pleases. That the lawful possessor should retain this right at will, is no more against the laws of society and good morals, than that he should retain the personal endowments with which his Creator has blessed him, or the money and lands inherited from his ancestors, or acquired by his industry. And neither society nor individuals have any more authority to demand a relinquishment, without an equivalent, in the one case, than in the other.

As it is a question purely of political economy, and one which in this country is reserved to the cognizance of the state governments severally, it is further believed, that the State of South Carolina alone has the right to regulate the existence and condition of slavery within her territorial limits; and we should resist to the utmost every invasion of this right, come from what quarter and under whatever pretence it may.

The Methodist Church is, in some respects, peculiarly situated upon this subject, because its constitution and book of discipline contain the most vehement denunciations against slavery of which language is capable, and the most stringent requisitions that all members shall be disciplined for the

holding of slaves; and these denunciations and requisitions have been reëffirmed by its General Conference.

It seemed to be necessary, therefore, for the Southern Conference to take some notice of this fact, which they did, with great coolness and distinctness, as follows:

#### THE GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Resolved, unanimously, That, whereas there is a clause in the discipline of our church which states that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery; and whereas the said clause has been perverted by some, and used in such a manner as to produce the impression that the Methodist Episcopal Church believed slavery to be a moral evil:—

Therefore Resolved, That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil.

Resolved, That we view slavery as a civil and domestic institution, and one with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do, further than to ameliorate the condition of the slave by endeavoring to impart to him and his master the benign influences of the religion of Christ, and aiding both on their way to heaven.

On motion, it was Resolved, unanimously, That the Georgia Annual Conference regard with feelings of profound respect and approbation the dignified course pursued by our several superintendents, or bishops, in suppressing the attempts that have been made by various individuals to get up and protract an excitement in the churches and country on the subject of abolitionism.

Resolved, further, That they shall have our cordial and zealous support in sustaining them in the ground they have taken.

#### SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE.

The Rev. W. Martin introduced resolutions similar to those of the Georgia Conference.

The Rev. W. Capers, D.D., after expressing his conviction that “the sentiment of the resolutions was universally held, not only by the ministers of that conference, but of the whole South;” and after stating that the only true doctrine was, “it belongs to Cæsar, and not to the church,” offered the following as a substitute:

Whereas, we hold that the subject of slavery in these United States is not one proper for the action of the church, but is exclusively appropriate to the civil authorities,

Therefore Resolved, That this conference will not intermeddle with it, further than to express our regret that it has ever been introduced, in any form, into any one of the judicatures of the church.

Brother Martin accepted the substitute.

Brother Betts asked whether the substitute was intended as implying that slavery, as it exists among us, was not a moral evil? He understood it as equivalent to such a declaration.

Brother Capers explained that his intention was to convey that sentiment fully and unequivocally; and that he had chosen the form of the substitute for the purpose, not only of reproving some wrong doings at the North, but with reference also to the General Conference. If slavery were a moral evil (that is, sinful), the church would be bound to take cognizance of it; but our affirmation is, that it is not a matter for her jurisdiction, but is exclusively appropriate to the civil government, and of course not sinful.

The substitute was then unanimously adopted.

In 1836, an Episcopal clergyman in North Carolina, of the name of Freeman, preached, in the presence of his bishop (Rev. Levi. S. Ives, D.D., a native of a free state), two sermons on the rights and duties of slave-holders. In these he essayed to justify from the Bible the slavery both of white men and negroes, and insisted that “without a new revelation from heaven, no man was authorized to pronounce slavery WRONG.” The sermons were printed in a pamphlet, prefaced with a letter to Mr. Freeman from the Bishop of North Carolina, declaring that he had “listened with most unfeigned pleasure” to his discourses, and advised their publication, as being “urgently called for at the present time.”

“The Protestant Episcopal Society for the advancement of Christianity (!) in South Carolina” thought it expedient to republish Mr. Freeman’s pamphlet as a religious tract!

Afterwards, when the addition of the new State of Texas made it important to organize the Episcopal Church there, this Mr. Freeman was made Bishop of Texas.

The question may now arise,—it must arise to every intelligent thinker in Christendom,—Can it be possible that American slavery, as defined by its laws, and the decisions of its courts, including all the horrible abuses that the laws recognize and sanction, is considered to be a right and proper institution? Do these Christians merely recognize the relation of slavery, in the abstract, as one that, under proper legislation, might be made a good one, or do they justify it as it actually exists in America?



It is a fact that there is a large party at the South who justify not only slavery in the abstract, but slavery just as it exists in America, in whole and in part, and even its worst abuses.

There are four legalized parts or results of the system, which are of especial atrocity.

They are,—

1. The prohibition of the testimony of colored people in cases of trial.
2. The forbidding of education.
3. The internal slave-trade.
4. The consequent separation of families.

We shall bring evidence to show that every one of these practices has been either defended on principle, or recognized without condemnation, by decisions of judicatories of churches, or by writings of influential clergymen, without any expression of dissent being made to their opinions by the bodies to which they belong.

In the first place, the exclusion of colored testimony in the church. In 1840, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church passed the following resolution: “That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons in any state where they are denied that privilege by law.”

This was before the Methodist Church had separated on the question of slavery, as they subsequently did, into Northern and Southern Conferences. Both Northern and Southern members voted for this resolution.

After this was passed, the conscience of many Northern ministers was aroused, and they called for a reconsideration. The Southern members imperiously demanded that it should remain as a compromise and test of union. The spirit of the discussion may be inferred from one extract.

Mr. Peck, of New York, who moved the reconsideration of the resolution, thus expressed himself:

That resolution (said he) was introduced under peculiar circumstances, during considerable excitement, and he went for it as a peace-offering to the South, without sufficiently reflecting upon the precise import of its phraseology; but, after a little deliberation, he was sorry; and he had been sorry but once, and that was all the time; he was convinced that, if that resolution remain upon the journal, it would be disastrous to the whole Northern church.

Rev. Dr. A. J. Few, of Georgia, the mover of the original resolution, then

rose. The following are extracts from his speech. The Italics are the writers.

Look at it! What do you declare to us, in taking this course? Why, simply, as much as to say, “We cannot sustain you in the condition which you cannot avoid!” We cannot sustain you in the necessary conditions of slave-holding; one of its necessary conditions being the rejection of negro testimony! If it is not sinful to hold slaves, under all circumstances, it is not sinful to hold them in the only condition, and under the only circumstances, which they can be held. The rejection of negro testimony is one of the necessary circumstances under which slave-holding can exist; indeed, it is utterly impossible for it to exist without it; therefore it is not sinful to hold slaves in the condition and under the circumstances which they are held at the South, inasmuch as they can be held under no other circumstances. \* \* \* If you believe that slave-holding is necessarily sinful, come out with the abolitionists, and honestly say so. If you believe that slave-holding is necessarily sinful, you believe we are necessarily sinners; and, if so, come out and honestly declare it, and let us leave you. \* \* \* We want to know distinctly, precisely and honestly, the position which you take. We cannot be tampered with by you any longer. We have had enough of it. We are tired of your sickly sympathies. \* \* \* If you are not opposed to the principles which it involves, unite with us, like honest men, and go home, and boldly meet the consequences. We say again, you are responsible for this state of things; for it is you who have driven us to the alarming point where we find ourselves. \* \* \* You have made that resolution absolutely necessary to the quiet of the South! But you now revoke that resolution! And you pass the Rubicon! Let me not be misunderstood. I say, you pass the Rubicon! If you revoke, you revoke the principle which that resolution involves, and you array the whole South against you, and we must separate! \* \* \* If you accord to the principles which it involves, arising from the necessity of the case, stick by it, “though the heavens perish!” But, if you persist on reconsideration, I ask in what light will your course be regarded in the South? What will be the conclusion, there, in reference to it? Why, that you cannot sustain us as long as we hold slaves! It will declare, in the face of the sun, “We cannot sustain you, gentlemen, while you retain your slaves!” Your opposition to the resolution is based upon your opposition to slavery; you cannot, therefore, maintain your consistency, unless you come out with the abolitionists, and condemn us at once and forever; or else refuse to reconsider.

The resolution was therefore left in force, with another resolution appended to it, expressing the undiminished regard of the General Conference for the colored population.

It is quite evident that it was undiminished, for the best of reasons. That the colored population were not properly impressed with this last act of

condescension, appears from the fact that “the official members of the Sharpstreet and Asbury Colored Methodist Church in Baltimore” protested and petitioned against the motion. The following is a passage from their address:

The adoption of such a resolution, by our highest ecclesiastical judicatory,—a judicatory composed of the most experienced and wisest brethren in the church, the choice selection of twenty-eight Annual Conferences,—has inflicted, we fear, an irreparable injury upon eighty thousand souls for whom Christ died—souls, who, by this act of your body, have been stripped of the dignity of Christians, degraded in the scale of humanity, and treated as criminals, for no other reason than the color of their skin! Your resolution has, in our humble opinion, virtually declared, that a mere physical peculiarity, the handiwork of our all-wise and benevolent Creator, is *prima facie* evidence of incompetency to tell the truth, or is an unerring indication of unworthiness to bear testimony against a fellow-being whose skin is denominated white. \* \* \*

Brethren, out of the abundance of the heart we have spoken. Our grievance is before you! If you have any regard for the salvation of the eighty thousand immortal souls committed to your care; if you would not thrust beyond the pale of the church twenty-five hundred souls in this city, who have felt determined never to leave the church that has nourished and brought them up; if you regard us as children of one common Father, and can, upon reflection, sympathize with us as members of the body of Christ,—if you would not incur the fearful, the tremendous responsibility of offending not only one, but many thousands of his “little ones,” we conjure you to wipe from your journal the odious resolution which is ruining our people.

“A Colored Baltimorean,” writing to the editor of *Zion’s Watchman*, says:

The address was presented to one of the secretaries, a delegate of the Baltimore Conference, and subsequently given by him to the bishops. How many of the members of the conference saw it, I know not. One thing is certain, it was not read to the conference.

With regard to the second head,—of defending the laws which prevent the slave from being taught to read and write,—we have the following instance.

In the year 1835, the Chillicothe Presbytery, Ohio, addressed a Christian remonstrance to the presbytery of Mississippi on the subject of slavery, in which they specifically enumerated the respects in which they considered it to be unchristian. The eighth resolution was as follows:

That any member of our church, who shall advocate or speak in favor of such laws as have been or may yet be enacted, for the purpose of keeping the slaves in ignorance, and preventing them from learning to read the word of God, is guilty of a great sin, and ought to be dealt with as for other scandalous

crimes.

This remonstrance was answered by Rev. James Smylie, stated clerk of the Mississippi Presbytery, and afterwards of the Amity Presbytery of Louisiana, in a pamphlet of eighty-seven pages, in which he defended slavery generally and particularly, in the same manner in which all other abuses have always been defended—by the word of God. The tenth section of this pamphlet is devoted to the defence of this law. He devotes seven pages of fine print to this object. He says (p. 63):

There are laws existing in both states, Mississippi and Louisiana, accompanied with heavy penal sanctions, prohibiting the teaching of the slaves to read, and meeting the approbation of the religious part of the reflecting community.

He adds, still further:

The laws preventing the slaves from learning to read are a fruitful source of much ignorance and immorality among the slaves. The printing, publishing, and circulating of abolition and emancipatory principles in those states, was the cause of the passage of those laws.

He then goes on to say that the ignorance and vice which are the consequence of those laws do not properly belong to those who made the laws, but to those whose emancipating doctrines rendered them necessary. Speaking of these consequences of ignorance and vice, he says:

Upon whom must they be saddled? If you will allow me to answer the question, I will answer by saying, Upon such great and good men as John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Bishop Porteus, Paley, Horsley, Scott, Clark, Wilberforce, Sharpe, Clarkson, Fox, Johnson, Burke, and other great and good men, who, without examining the word of God, have concluded that it is a true maxim that slavery is in itself sinful.

He then illustrates the necessity of these laws by the following simile. He supposes that the doctrine had been promulgated that the authority of parents was an unjust usurpation, and that it was getting a general hold of society; that societies were being formed for the emancipation of children from the control of their parents; that all books were beginning to be pervaded by this sentiment; and that, under all these influences, children were becoming restless and fractious. He supposes that, under these circumstances, parents meet and refer the subject to legislators. He thus describes the dilemma of the legislators:

These meet, and they take the subject seriously and solemnly into consideration. On the one hand, they perceive that, if their children had access to these doctrines, they were ruined forever. To let them have access to them

was unavoidable, if they taught them to read. To prevent their being taught to read was cruel, and would prevent them from obtaining as much knowledge of the laws of Heaven as otherwise they might enjoy. In this sad dilemma, sitting and consulting in a legislative capacity, they must, of two evils, choose the least. With indignant feelings towards those, who, under the influence of “seducing spirits,” had sent and were sending among them “doctrines of devils,” but with aching hearts towards their children, they resolved that their children should not be taught to read, until the storm should be overblown; hoping that Satan’s being let loose will be but for a little season. And during this season they will have to teach them orally, and thereby guard against their being contaminated by these wicked doctrines.

So much for that law.

Now, as for the internal slave-trade,—the very essence of that trade is the buying and selling of human beings for the mere purposes of gain.

A master who has slaves transmitted to him, or a master who buys slaves with the purpose of retaining them on his plantation or in his family, can be supposed to have some object in it besides the mere purpose of gain. He may be supposed, in certain cases, to have some regard to the happiness or well-being of the slave. The trader buys and sells for the mere purpose of gain.

Concerning this abuse the Chillicothe Presbytery, in the document to which we have alluded, passed the following resolution:

Resolved, That the buying, selling, or holding of a slave, for the sake of gain, is a heinous sin and scandal, requiring the cognizance of the judicatories of the church.

In the reply from which we have already quoted, Mr. Smylie says (p. 13):

If the buying, selling and holding of a slave for the sake of gain, is, as you say, a heinous sin and scandal, then verily three-fourths of all Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, in the eleven states of the Union, are of the devil.

Again:

To question whether slave-holders or slave-buyers are of the devil, seems to me like calling in question whether God is or is not a true witness; that is, provided it is God’s testimony, and not merely the testimony of the Chillicothe Presbytery, that it is a “heinous sin and scandal” to buy, sell and hold slaves.

Again (p. 21):

If language can convey a clear and definite meaning at all, I know not how it can more plainly or unequivocally present to the mind any thought or idea, than the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus clearly and unequivocally

establishes the fact that slavery was sanctioned by God himself, and that buying, selling, holding and bequeathing slaves, as property, are regulations which are established by himself.

What language can more explicitly show, not that God winked at slavery merely, but that, to say the least, he gave a written permit to the Hebrews, then the best people in the world, to buy, hold and bequeath, men and women, to perpetual servitude! What, now, becomes of the position of the Chillicothe Presbytery? \* \* \* \* Is it, indeed, a fact, that God once gave a written permission to his own dear people [“ye shall buy”] to do that which is in itself sinful? Nay, to do that which the Chillicothe Presbytery says “is a heinous sin and scandal”?

God resolves that his own children may, or rather “shall,” “buy, possess and hold,” bond-men and bond-women, in bondage, forever. But the Chillicothe Presbytery resolves that “buying, selling, or holding slaves, for the sake of gain, is a heinous sin and scandal.”

We do not mean to say that Mr. Smylie had the internal slave-trade directly in his mind in writing these sentences; but we do say that no slave-trader would ask for a more explicit justification of his trade than this.

Lastly, in regard to that dissolution of the marriage relation, which is the necessary consequence of this kind of trade, the following decisions have been made by judicatories of the church.

The Savannah River (Baptist) Association, in 1835, in reply to the question,

Whether, in a case of involuntary separation, of such a character as to preclude all prospect of future intercourse, the parties ought to be allowed to marry again?

answered,

That such a separation, among persons situated as our slaves are, is civilly a separation by death, and they believe that, in the sight of God, it would be so viewed. To forbid second marriages, in such cases, would be to expose the parties, not only to stronger hardships and strong temptation, but to church censure, for acting in obedience to their masters, who cannot be expected to acquiesce in a regulation at variance with justice to the slaves, and to the spirit of that command which regulates marriage among Christians. The slaves are not free agents, and a dissolution by death, is not more entirely without their consent, and beyond their control, than by such separation.

At the Shiloh Baptist Association, which met at Gourdvine, a few years since, the following query, says the Religious Herald, was presented from

Hedgman church, viz:

Is a servant, whose husband or wife has been sold by his or her master into a distant country, to be permitted to marry again?

The query was referred to a committee, who made the following report; which, after discussion, was adopted:

That, in view of the circumstances in which servants in this country are placed, the committee are unanimous in the opinion that it is better to permit servants thus circumstanced to take another husband or wife.

The Reverend Charles C. Jones, who was an earnest and indefatigable laborer for the good of the slave, and one who, it would be supposed, would be likely to feel strongly on this subject, if any one would, simply remarks, in estimating the moral condition of the negroes, that, as husband and wife are subject to all the vicissitudes of property, and may be separated by division of estate, debts, sales or removals, &c. &c., the marriage relation naturally loses much of its sacredness, and says:

It is a contract of convenience, profit or pleasure, that may be entered into and dissolved at the will of the parties, and that without heinous sin, or injury to the property interests of any one.

In this sentence he is expressing, as we suppose, the common idea of slaves and masters of the nature of this institution, and not his own. We infer this from the fact that he endeavors in his catechism to impress on the slave the sacredness and perpetuity of the relation. But, when the most pious and devoted men that the South has, and those professing to spend their lives for the service of the slave, thus calmly, and without any reprobation, contemplate this state of things as a state with which Christianity does not call on them to interfere, what can be expected of the world in general?

It is to be remarked, with regard to the sentiments of Mr. Smylie's pamphlet, that they are endorsed in the appendix by a document in the name of two presbyteries, which document, though with less minuteness of investigation, takes the same ground with Mr. Smylie. This Rev. James Smylie was one who, in company with the Rev. John L. Montgomery, was appointed by the synod of Mississippi, in 1839, to write or compile a catechism for the instruction of the negroes.

Mr. Jones says, in his "History of the Religious Instruction of the Negroes" (p. 83): "The Rev. James Smylie and the Rev. C. Blair are engaged in this good work (of enlightening the negroes) systematically and constantly in Mississippi." The former clergyman is characterized as an "aged and indefatigable father." "His success in enlightening the negroes has been very great. A large proportion of the negroes in his old church can recite both

Williston's and the Westminster Catechism very accurately." The writer really wishes that it were in her power to make copious extracts from Mr. Smylie's pamphlet. A great deal could be learned from it as to what style of mind, and habits of thought, and modes of viewing religious subjects, are likely to grow up under such an institution. The man is undoubtedly and heartily sincere in his opinions, and appears to maintain them with a most abounding and triumphant joyfulness, as the very latest improvement in theological knowledge. We are tempted to present a part of his Introduction, simply for the light it gives us on the style of thinking which is to be found on our southwestern waters:

In presenting the following review to the public, the author was not entirely or mainly influenced by a desire or hope to correct the views of the Chillicothe Presbytery. He hoped the publication would be of essential service to others, as well as to the presbytery.

From his intercourse with religious societies of all denominations, in Mississippi and Louisiana, he was aware that the abolition maxim, namely, that slavery is in itself sinful, had gained on and entwined itself among the religious and conscientious scruples of many in the community so far as not only to render them unhappy, but to draw off the attention from the great and important duty of a householder to his household. The eye of the mind, resting on slavery itself as a corrupt fountain, from which, of necessity, nothing but corrupt streams could flow, was incessantly employed in search of some plan by which, with safety, the fountain could, in some future time, be entirely dried up; never reflecting, or dreaming, that slavery, in itself considered, was an innoxious relation, and that the whole error rested in the neglect of the relative duties of the relation.

If there be a consciousness of guilt resting on the mind, it is all the same, as to the effect, whether the conscience is or is not right. Although the word of God alone ought to be the guide of conscience, yet it is not always the case. Hence, conscientious scruples sometimes exist for neglecting to do that which the word of God condemns.

The Bornean who neglects to kill his father, and to eat him with his dates, when he has become old, is sorely tortured by the wringings of a guilty conscience, when his filial tenderness and sympathy have gained the ascendancy over his apprehended duty of killing his parent. In like manner, many a slave-holder, whose conscience is guided, not by the word of God, but by the doctrines of men, is often suffering the lashes of a guilty conscience, even when he renders to his slave "that which is just and equal," according to the Scriptures, simply because he does not emancipate his slave, irrespective of the benefit or injury done by such an act.



“How beautiful upon the mountains,” in the apprehension of the reviewer, “would be the feet of him that would bring” to the Bornean “the glad tidings” that his conduct, in sparing the life of his tender and affectionate parent, was no sin! \* \* \* \* Equally beautiful and delightful, does the reviewer trust, will it be, to an honest, scrupulous and conscientious slave-holder, to learn, from the word of God, the glad tidings that slavery itself is not sinful. Released now from an incubus that paralyzed his energies in discharge of duty towards his slaves, he goes forth cheerfully to energetic action. It is not now as formerly, when he viewed slavery as in itself sinful. He can now pray, with the hope of being heard, that God will bless his exertions to train up his slaves “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:” whereas, before, he was retarded by this consideration,—“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Instead of hanging down his head, moping and brooding over his condition, as formerly, without action, he raises his head, and moves on cheerfully, in the plain path of duty.

He is no more tempted to look askance at the word of God, and saying, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy,” come to “filch from me” my slaves, which, “while not enriching” them, “leaves me poor indeed?” Instead of viewing the word of God, as formerly, come with whips and scorpions to chastise him into paradise, he feels that its “ways are ways of pleasantness, and its paths peace.” Distinguishing now between the real word of God and what are only the doctrines and commandments of men, the mystery is solved, which was before insolvable, namely, “The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.”

If you should undertake to answer such a man by saying that his argument proves too much,—that neither Christ nor his apostles bore any explicit testimony against the gladiatorial shows and the sports of the arena, and, therefore, it would be right to get them up in America,—the probability seems to be that he would heartily assent to it, and think, on the whole, that it might be a good speculation. As a further specimen of the free-and-easy facetiousness which seems to be a trait in this production, see, on p. 58, where the Latin motto *Facilis descensus Averni sed revocare*, &c., receives the following quite free and truly Western translation, which, he good-naturedly says, is given for the benefit of those who do not understand Latin,—“It is easy to go to the devil, but the devil to get back.”

Some uncharitable people might, perhaps, say that the preachers of such doctrines are as likely as anybody to have an experimental knowledge on this point. The idea of this jovial old father instructing a class of black “Sams” and young “Topsys” in the mysteries of the Assembly’s Catechism is truly picturesque!

That Mr. Smylie’s opinions on the subject of slavery have been amply

supported and carried out by leading clergymen in every denomination, we might give volumes of quotations to show.

A second head, however, is yet to be considered, with regard to the influence of the Southern church and clergy.

It is well known that the Southern political community have taken their stand upon the position that the institution of slavery shall not be open to discussion. In many of the slave states stringent laws exist, subjecting to fine and imprisonment, and even death, any who speak or publish anything upon the subject, except in its favor. They have not only done this with regard to citizens of slave states, but they have shown the strongest disposition to do it with regard to citizens of free states; and when these discussions could not be repelled by regular law, they have encouraged the use of illegal measures. In the published letters and speeches of Horace Mann the following examples are given (p. 467). In 1831 the Legislature of Georgia offered five thousand dollars to any one who would arrest and bring to trial and conviction, in Georgia, a citizen of Massachusetts, named William Lloyd Garrison. This law was approved by W. Lumpkin, Governor, Dec. 26, 1831. At a meeting of slave-holders held at Sterling, in the same state, September 4, 1835, it was formally recommended to the governor to offer, by proclamation, five thousand dollars reward for the apprehension of any one of ten persons, citizens, with one exception, of New York and Massachusetts, whose names were given. The Milledgeville (Ga.) Federal Union of February 1st, 1836, contained an offer of ten thousand dollars for the arrest and kidnapping of the Rev. A. A. Phelps, of New York. The committee of vigilance of the parish of East Feliciana offered, in the Louisville Journal of Oct. 15, 1835, fifty thousand dollars to any person who would deliver into their hands Arthur Tappan, of New York. At a public meeting at Mount Meigs, Alabama, Aug. 13, 1836, the Hon. Bedford Ginress in the chair, a reward of fifty thousand dollars was offered for the apprehension of the same Arthur Tappan, or of Le Roy Sunderland, a Methodist clergyman of New York. Of course, as none of these persons could be seized except in violation of the laws of the state where they were citizens, this was offering a public reward for an act of felony. Throughout all the Southern States associations were formed, called committees of vigilance, for the taking of measures for suppressing abolition opinions, and for the punishment by Lynch law of suspected persons. At Charleston, South Carolina, a mob of this description forced open the post-office, and made a general inspection, at their pleasure, of its contents; and whatever publication they found there which they considered to be of a dangerous and anti-slavery tendency, they made a public bonfire of, in the street. A large public meeting was held, a few days afterwards, to complete the preparation for excluding anti-slavery principles from publication, and for ferreting out persons suspected of abolitionism, that they might be subjected to

Lynch law. Similar popular meetings were held through the Southern and Western States. At one of these, held in Clinton, Mississippi, in the year 1835, the following resolutions were passed:

Resolved, That slavery through the South and West is not felt as an evil, moral or political, but it is recognized in reference to the actual, and not to any Utopian condition of our slaves, as a blessing both to master and slave.

Resolved, That it is our decided opinion that any individual who dares to circulate, with a view to effectuate the designs of the abolitionists, any of the incendiary tracts or newspapers now in a course of transmission to this country, is justly worthy, in the sight of God and man, of immediate death; and we doubt not that such would be the punishment of any such offender in any part of the State of Mississippi where he may be found.

Resolved, That the clergy of the State of Mississippi be hereby recommended at once to take a stand upon this subject; and that their further silence in relation thereto, at this crisis, will, in our opinion, be subject to serious censure.

The treatment to which persons were exposed, when taken up by any of these vigilance committees, as suspected of anti-slavery sentiments, may be gathered from the following account. The writer has a distinct recollection of the circumstances at the present time, as the victim of this injustice was a member of the seminary then under the care of her father.

Amos Dresser, now a missionary in Jamaica, was a theological student at Lane Seminary, near Cincinnati. In the vacation (August 1835) he undertook to sell Bibles in the State of Tennessee, with a view to raise means further to continue his studios. Whilst there, he fell under suspicion of being an abolitionist, was arrested by the vigilance committee whilst attending a religious meeting in the neighborhood of Nashville, the capital of the state, and, after an afternoon and evening's inquisition, condemned to receive twenty lashes on his naked body. The sentence was executed on him, between eleven and twelve o'clock on Saturday night, in the presence of most of the committee, and of an infuriated and blaspheming mob. The vigilance committee (an unlawful association) consisted of sixty persons. Of these, twenty-seven were members of churches; one, a religious teacher; another, the Elder who but a few days before, in the Presbyterian church, handed Mr. Dresser the bread and wine at the communion of the Lord's supper.

It will readily be seen that the principle involved in such proceedings as these involves more than the question of slavery. The question was, in fact, this,—whether it is so important to hold African slaves that it is proper to deprive free Americans of the liberty of conscience, and liberty of speech, and liberty of the press, in order to do it. It is easy to see that very serious changes

would be made in the government of a country by the admission of this principle: because it is quite plain that, if all these principles of our free government may be given up for one thing, they may for another, and that its ultimate tendency is to destroy entirely that freedom of opinion and thought which is considered to be the distinguishing excellence of American institutions.

The question now is, Did the church join with the world in thinking the institution of slavery so important and desirable as to lead them to look with approbation upon Lynch law, and the sacrifice of the rights of free inquiry? We answer the reader by submitting the following facts and quotations.

At the large meeting which we have described above, in Charleston, South Carolina, the Charleston Courier informs us “that the clergy of all denominations attended in a body, lending their sanction to the proceedings, and adding by their presence to the impressive character of the scene.” There can be no doubt that the presence of the clergy of all denominations, in a body, at a meeting held for such a purpose, was an impressive scene, truly!

At this meeting it was Resolved,

That the thanks of this meeting are due to the reverend gentlemen of the clergy in this city, who have so promptly and so effectually responded to public sentiment, by suspending their schools in which the free colored population were taught; and that this meeting deem it a patriotic action, worthy of all praise, and proper to be imitated by other teachers of similar schools throughout the state.

The question here arises, whether their Lord, at the day of judgment, will comment on their actions in a similar strain.

The alarm of the Virginia slave-holders was not less; nor were the clergy in the city of Richmond, the capital, less prompt than the clergy in Charleston to respond to “public sentiment.” Accordingly, on the 29th of July, they assembled together, and Resolved, unanimously,

That we earnestly deprecate the unwarrantable and highly improper interference of the people of any other state with the domestic relations of master and slave.

That the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, in not interfering with the question of slavery, but uniformly recognizing the relations of master and servant, and giving full and affectionate instruction to both, is worthy of the imitation of all ministers of the gospel.

That we will not patronize nor receive any pamphlet or newspaper of the anti-slavery societies, and that we will discountenance the circulation of all

such papers in the community.

The Rev. J. C. Postell, a Methodist minister of South Carolina, concludes a very violent letter to the editor of *Zion's Watchman*, a Methodist anti-slavery paper published in New York, in the following manner. The reader will see that this taunt is an allusion to the offer of fifty thousand dollars for his body at the South which we have given before.

But, if you desire to educate the slaves, I will tell you how to raise the money without editing *Zion's Watchman*. You and old Arthur Tappan come out to the South this winter, and they will raise one hundred thousand dollars for you. New Orleans, itself, will be pledged for it. Desiring no further acquaintance with you, and never expecting to see you but once in time or eternity, that is at the judgment, I subscribe myself the friend of the Bible, and the opposer of abolitionists,

J. C. Postell.

Orangeburgh, July 21st, 1836.

The Rev. Thomas S. Witherspoon, a member of the Presbyterian Church, writing to the editor of the *Emancipator*, says:

I draw my warrant from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to hold the slave in bondage. The principle of holding the heathen in bondage is recognized by God. \* \* \* When the tardy process of the law is too long in redressing our grievances, we of the South have adopted the summary remedy of Judge Lynch—and really I think it one of the most wholesome and salutary remedies for the malady of Northern fanaticism that can be applied, and no doubt my worthy friend, the Editor of the *Emancipator* and Human Rights, would feel the better of its enforcement, provided he had a Southern administrator. I go to the Bible for my warrant in all moral matters. \* \* Let your emissaries dare venture to cross the Potomac, and I cannot promise you that their fate will be less than Haman's. Then beware how you goad an insulted but magnanimous people to deeds of desperation!

The Rev. Robert N. Anderson, also a member of the Presbyterian Church, says, in a letter to the Sessions of the Presbyterian Congregations within the bounds of the West Hanover Presbytery:

At the approaching stated meeting of our Presbytery, I design to offer a preamble and string of resolutions on the subject of the use of wine in the Lord's Supper: and also a preamble and string of resolutions on the subject of the treasonable and abominably wicked interference of the Northern and Eastern fanatics with our political and civil rights, our property and our domestic concerns. You are aware that our clergy, whether with or without reason, are more suspected by the public than the clergy of other

denominations. Now, dear Christian brethren, I humbly express it as my earnest wish, that you quit yourselves like men. If there be any stray goat of a minister among you, tainted with the bloodhound principles of abolitionism, let him be ferreted out, silenced, excommunicated, and left to the public to dispose of him in other respects.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

Robert N. Anderson.

The Rev. William S. Plummer, D.D., of Richmond, a member of the Old-school Presbyterian Church, is another instance of the same sort. He was absent from Richmond at the time the clergy in that city purged themselves, in a body, from the charge of being favorably disposed to abolition. On his return, he lost no time in communicating to the "Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence" his agreement with his clerical brethren. The passages quoted occur in his letter to the chairman:

I have carefully watched this matter from its earliest existence, and everything I have seen or heard of its character, both from its patrons and its enemies, has confirmed me, beyond repentance, in the belief, that, let the character of abolitionists be what it may in the sight of the Judge of all the earth, this is the most meddlesome, impudent, reckless, fierce, and wicked excitement I ever saw.

If abolitionists will set the country in a blaze, it is but fair that they should receive the first warming at the fire.

Lastly. Abolitionists are like infidels, wholly unaddicted to martyrdom for opinion's sake. Let them understand that they will be caught [Lynched] if they come among us, and they will take good heed to keep out of our way. There is not one man among them who has any more idea of shedding his blood in this cause than he has of making war on the Grand Turk.

The Rev. Dr. Hill, of Virginia, said, in the New School Assembly:

The abolitionists have made the servitude of the slave harder. If I could tell you some of the dirty tricks which these abolitionists have played, you would not wonder. Some of them have been Lynched, and it served them right.

These things sufficiently show the estimate which the Southern clergy and church have formed and expressed as to the relative value of slavery and the right of free inquiry. It shows, also, that they consider slavery as so important that they can tolerate and encourage acts of lawless violence, and risk all the dangers of encouraging mob law, for its sake. These passages and considerations sufficiently show the stand which the Southern church takes upon this subject.

For many of these opinions, shocking as they may appear, some apology may be found in that blinding power of custom and all those deadly educational influences which always attend the system of slavery, and which must necessarily produce a certain obtuseness of the moral sense in the mind of any man who is educated from childhood under them.

There is also, in the habits of mind formed under a system which is supported by continual resort to force and violence, a necessary deadening of sensibility to the evils of force and violence, as applied to other subjects. The whole style of civilization which is formed under such an institution has been not unaptly denominated by a popular writer “the bowie-knife style;” and we must not be surprised at its producing a peculiarly martial cast of religious character, and ideas very much at variance with the spirit of the gospel. A religious man, born and educated at the South, has all these difficulties to contend with, in elevating himself to the true spirit of the gospel.

It was said by one that, after the Reformation, the best of men, being educated under a system of despotism and force, and accustomed from childhood to have force, and not argument, made the test of opinion, came to look upon all controversies very much in a Smithfield light,—the question being not as to the propriety of burning heretics, but as to which party ought to be burned.

The system of slavery is a simple retrogression of society to the worst abuses of the middle ages. We must not therefore be surprised to find the opinions and practices of the middle ages, as to civil and religious toleration, prevailing.

However much we may reprobate and deplore those unworthy views of God and religion which are implied in such declarations as are here recorded,—however blasphemous and absurd they may appear,—still, it is apparent that their authors uttered them with sincerity: and this is the most melancholy feature of the case. They are as sincere as Paul when he breathed out threatenings and slaughter, and when he thought within himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. They are as sincere as the Brahmin or Hindoo, conscientiously supporting a religion of cruelty and blood. They are as sincere as many enlightened, scholarlike and Christian men in modern Europe, who, born and bred under systems of civil and religious despotism, and having them entwined with all their dearest associations of home and country, and having all their habits of thought and feeling biased by them, do most conscientiously defend them.

There is something in conscientious conviction, even in case of the worst kind of opinions, which is not without a certain degree of respectability. That the religion expressed by the declarations which we have quoted is as truly

Antichrist as the religion of the Church of Rome, it is presumed no sensible person out of the sphere of American influences will deny. That there may be very sincere Christians under this system of religion, with all its false principles and all its disadvantageous influences, liberality must concede. The Church of Rome has had its Fenelon, its Thomas à Kempis; and the Southern Church, which has adopted these principles, has had men who have risen above the level of their system. At the time of the Reformation, and now, the Church of Rome had in its bosom thousands of praying, devoted, humble Christians, which, like flowers in the clefts of rocks, could be counted by no eye, save God's alone. And so, amid the rifts and glaciers of this horrible spiritual and temporal despotism, we hope are blooming flowers of Paradise, patient, prayerful, and self-denying Christians; and it is the deepest grief, in attacking the dreadful system under which they have been born and brought up, that violence must be done to their cherished feelings and associations. In another and better world, perhaps, they may appreciate the motives of those who do this.

But now another consideration comes to the mind. These Southern Christians have been united in ecclesiastical relations with Christians of the northern and free states, meeting with them, by their representatives, yearly, in their various ecclesiastical assemblies. One might hope, in case of such a union, that those debasing views of Christianity, and that deadness of public sentiment, which were the inevitable result of an education under the slave system, might have been qualified by intercourse with Christians in free states, who, having grown up under free institutions, would naturally be supposed to feel the utmost abhorrence of such sentiments. One would have supposed that the church and clergy of the free states would naturally have used the most strenuous endeavors, by all the means in their power, to convince their brethren of errors so dishonorable to Christianity, and tending to such dreadful practical results. One would have supposed also, that, failing to convince their brethren, they would have felt it due to Christianity to clear themselves from all complicity with these sentiments, by the most solemn, earnest and reiterated protests.

Let us now inquire what has, in fact, been the course of the Northern church on this subject.

Previous to making this inquiry, let us review the declarations that have been made in the Southern church, and see what principles have been established by them.

1. That slavery is an innocent and lawful relation, as much as that of parent and child, husband and wife, or any other lawful relation of society. (Harmony Pres., S. C.)



2. That it is consistent with the most fraternal regard for the good of the slave. (Charleston Union Pres., S. C.)
3. That masters ought not to be disciplined for selling slaves without their consent. (New-school Pres. Church, Petersburg, Va.)
4. That the right to buy, sell, and hold men for purposes of gain, was given by express permission of God. (James Smylie and his Presbyteries.)
5. That the laws which forbid the education of the slave are right, and meet the approbation of the reflecting part of the Christian community. (Ibid.)
6. That the fact of slavery is not a question of morals at all, but is purely one of political economy. (Charleston Baptist Association.)
7. The right of masters to dispose of the time of their slaves has been distinctly recognized by the Creator of all things. (Ibid.)
8. That slavery, as it exists in these United States, is not a moral evil. (Georgia Conference, Methodist.)
9. That, without a new revelation from heaven, no man is entitled to pronounce slavery wrong.
10. That the separation of slaves by sale should be regarded as separation by death, and the parties allowed to marry again. (Shiloh Baptist Ass., and Savannah River Ass.)
11. That the testimony of colored members of the churches shall not be taken against a white person. (Methodist Church.)

In addition, it has been plainly avowed, by the expressed principles and practice of Christians of various denominations, that they regard it right and proper to put down all inquiry upon this subject by Lynch law.

One would have imagined that these principles were sufficiently extraordinary, as coming from the professors of the religion of Christ, to have excited a good deal of attention in their Northern brethren. It also must be seen that, as principles, they are principles of very extensive application, underlying the whole foundations of religion and morality. If not true, they were certainly heresies of no ordinary magnitude, involving no ordinary results. Let us now return to our inquiry as to the course of the Northern church in relation to them.

## **CHAPTER II.**

In the first place, have any of these opinions ever been treated in the church as heresies, and the teachers of them been subjected to the censures with which it is thought proper to visit heresy?

After a somewhat extended examination upon the subject, the writer has been able to discover but one instance of this sort. It may be possible that such cases have existed in other denominations, which have escaped inquiry.

A clergyman in the Cincinnati N. S. Presbytery maintained the doctrine that slaveholding was justified by the Bible, and for persistence in teaching this sentiment was suspended by that presbytery. He appealed to Synod, and the decision was confirmed by the Cincinnati Synod. The New School General Assembly, however, reversed this decision of the presbytery, and restored the standing of the clergyman. The presbytery, on its part, refused to receive him back, and he was received into the Old School Church.

The Presbyterian Church has probably exceeded all other churches of the United States in its zeal for doctrinal opinions. This church has been shaken and agitated to its very foundation with questions of heresy; but, except in this individual case, it is not known that any of these principles which have been asserted by Southern Presbyterian bodies and individuals have ever been discussed in its General Assembly as matters of heresy.

About the time that Smylie's pamphlet came out, the Presbyterian Church was convulsed with the trial of the Rev. Albert Barnes for certain alleged heresies. These heresies related to the federal headship of Adam, the propriety of imputing his sin to all his posterity, and the question whether men have any ability of any kind to obey the commandments of God.

For advancing certain sentiments on these topics, Mr. Barnes was silenced by the vote of the synod to which he belonged, and his trial in the General Assembly on these points was the all-engrossing topic in the Presbyterian Church for some time. The Rev. Dr. L. Beecher went through a trial with reference to similar opinions. During all this time, no notice was taken of the heresy, if such it be, that the right to buy, sell, and hold men for purposes of gain, was expressly given by God; although that heresy was publicly promulgated in the same Presbyterian Church, by Mr. Smylie, and the presbyteries with which he was connected.

If it be accounted for by saying that the question of slavery is a question of practical morals, and not of dogmatic theology, we are then reminded that questions of morals of far less magnitude have been discussed with absorbing interest.

The Old School Presbyterian Church, in whose communion the greater part of the slave-holding Presbyterians of the South are found, has never felt called

upon to discipline its members for upholding a system which denies legal marriage to all slaves. Yet this church was agitated to its very foundation by the discussion of a question of morals which an impartial observer would probably consider of far less magnitude, namely, whether a man might lawfully marry his deceased wife's sister. For the time, all the strength and attention of the church seemed concentrated upon this important subject. The trial went from Presbytery to Synod, and from Synod to General Assembly; and ended with deposing a very respectable minister for this crime.

Rev. Robert P. Breckenridge, D.D., a member of the Old School Assembly, has thus described the state of the slave population as to their marriage relations: "The system of slavery denies to a whole class of human beings the sacredness of marriage and of home, compelling them to live in a state of concubinage; for in the eye of the law no colored slave-man is the husband of any wife in particular, nor any slave-woman the wife of any husband in particular; no slave-man is the father of any children in particular, and no slave-child is the child of any parent in particular."

Now, had this church considered the fact that three million men and women were, by the laws of the land, obliged to live in this manner, as of equally serious consequence, it is evident, from the ingenuity, argument, vehemence, Biblical research, and untiring zeal, which they bestowed on Mr. McQueen's trial, that they could have made a very strong case with regard to this also.

The history of the united action of denominations which included churches both in the slave and free states is a melancholy exemplification, to a reflecting mind, of that gradual deterioration of the moral sense which results from admitting any compromise, however slight, with an acknowledged sin. The best minds in the world cannot bear such a familiarity without injury to the moral sense. The facts of the slave system and of the slave laws, when presented to disinterested judges in Europe, have excited a universal outburst of horror; yet, in assemblies composed of the wisest and best clergymen of America, these things have been discussed from year to year, and yet brought no results that have, in the slightest degree, lessened the evil. The reason is this. A portion of the members of these bodies had pledged themselves to sustain the system, and peremptorily to refuse and put down all discussion of it; and the other part of the body did not consider this stand so taken as being of sufficiently vital consequence to authorize separation.

Nobody will doubt that, had the Southern members taken such a stand against the divinity of our Lord, the division would have been immediate and unanimous; but yet the Southern members do maintain the right to buy and sell, lease, hire and mortgage, multitudes of men and women, whom, with the same breath, they declared to be members of their churches and true

Christians. The Bible declares of all such that they are temples of the Holy Ghost; that they are members of Christ's body, of his flesh and bones. Is not the doctrine that men may lawfully sell the members of Christ, his body, his flesh and bones, for purposes of gain, as really a heresy as the denial of the divinity of Christ; and is it not a dishonor to Him who is over all, God blessed forever, to tolerate this dreadful opinion, with its more dreadful consequences, while the smallest heresies concerning the imputation of Adam's sin are pursued with eager vehemence? If the history of the action of all the bodies thus united can be traced downwards, we shall find that, by reason of this tolerance of an admitted sin, the anti-slavery testimony has every year grown weaker and weaker. If we look over the history of all denominations, we shall see that at first they used very stringent language with relation to slavery. This is particularly the case with the Methodist and Presbyterian bodies, and for that reason we select these two as examples. The Methodist Society especially, as organized by John Wesley, was an anti-slavery society, and the Book of Discipline contained the most positive statutes against slave-holding. The history of the successive resolutions of the conference of this church is very striking. In 1780, before the church was regularly organized in the United States, they resolved as follows:

The conference acknowledges that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and true religion; and doing what we would not others should do unto us.

In 1784, when the church was fully organized, rules were adopted prescribing the times at which members who were already slave-holders should emancipate their slaves. These rules were succeeded by the following:

Every person concerned, who will not comply with these rules, shall have liberty quietly to withdraw from our society within the twelve months following the notice being given him, as aforesaid; otherwise the assistants shall exclude him from the society.

No person holding slaves shall in future be admitted into society, or to the Lord's Supper, till he previously comply with these rules concerning slavery.

Those who buy, sell, or give [slaves] away, unless on purpose to free them, shall be expelled immediately.

In 1801:

We declare that we are more than ever convinced of the great evil of African slavery, which still exists in these United States.

Every member of the society who sells a slave shall, immediately after full proof, be excluded from the society, &c.

The Annual Conferences are directed to draw up addresses, for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, to the legislature. Proper committees shall be appointed by the Annual Conferences, out of the most respectable of our friends, for the conducting of the business; and the presiding elders, deacons, and travelling preachers, shall procure as many proper signatures as possible to the addresses; and give all the assistance in their power, in every respect, to aid the committees, and to further the blessed undertaking. Let this be continued from year to year, till the desired end be accomplished.

In 1836 let us notice the change. The General Conference held its annual session in Cincinnati, and resolved as follows:

Resolved, By the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention, to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slave-holding states of this Union.

These resolutions were passed by a very large majority. An address was received from the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in England, affectionately remonstrating on the subject of slavery. The Conference refused to publish it. In the pastoral address to the churches are these passages:

It cannot be unknown to you that the question of slavery in the United States, by the constitutional compact which binds us together as a nation, is left to be regulated by the several state legislatures themselves; and thereby is put beyond the control of the general government, as well as that of all ecclesiastical bodies; it being manifest that in the slave-holding states themselves the entire responsibility of its existence, or non-existence, rests with those state legislatures. \* \* \* \* These facts, which are only mentioned here as a reason for the friendly admonition which we wish to give you, constrain us, as your pastors, who are called to watch over your souls as they must give account, to exhort you to abstain from all abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronizing any of their publications, &c. \* \*

The subordinate conferences showed the same spirit.

In 1836 the New York Annual Conference resolved that no one should be elected a deacon or elder in the church, unless he would give a pledge to the church that he would refrain from discussing this subject.

In 1838 the conference resolved:

As the sense of this conference, that any of its members, or probationers, who shall patronize Zion's Watchman, either by writing in commendation of its character, by circulating it, recommending it to our people, or procuring subscribers, or by collecting or remitting moneys, shall be deemed guilty of

indiscretion, and dealt with accordingly.

It will be recollected that Zion's Watchman was edited by Le Roy Sunderland, for whose abduction the State of Alabama had offered fifty thousand dollars.

In 1840, the General Conference at Baltimore passed the resolution that we have already quoted, forbidding preachers to allow colored persons to give testimony in their churches. It has been computed that about eighty thousand people were deprived of the right of testimony by this act. This Methodist Church subsequently broke into a Northern and Southern Conference. The Southern Conference is avowedly all pro-slavery, and the Northern Conference has still in its communion slave-holding conferences and members.

Of the Northern conferences, one of the largest, the Baltimore, passed the following:

Resolved, That this conference disclaims having any fellowship with abolitionism. On the contrary, while it is determined to maintain its well-known and long-established position, by keeping the travelling preachers composing its own body free from slavery, it is also determined not to hold connection with any ecclesiastical body that shall make non-slaveholding a condition of membership in the church; but to stand by and maintain the discipline as it is.

The following extract is made from an address of the Philadelphia Annual Conference to the societies under its care, dated Wilmington Del., April 7, 1847:

If the plan of separation gives us the pastoral care of you, it remains to inquire whether we have done anything, as a conference, or as men, to forfeit your confidence and affection. We are not advised that even in the great excitement which has distressed you for some months past, any one has impeached our moral conduct, or charged us with unsoundness in doctrine, or corruption or tyranny in the administration of discipline. But we learn that the simple cause of the unhappy excitement among you is, that some suspect us, or affect to suspect us, of being abolitionists. Yet no particular act of the conference, or any particular member thereof, is adduced, as the ground of the erroneous and injurious suspicion. We would ask you, brethren, whether the conduct of our ministry among you for sixty years past ought not to be sufficient to protect us from this charge. Whether the question we have been accustomed, for a few years past, to put to candidates for admission among us, namely, Are you an abolitionist? and, without each one answered in the negative, he was not received, ought not to protect us from the charge. Whether the action of the last conference on this particular matter ought not to

satisfy any fair and candid mind that we are not, and do not desire to be, abolitionists. \* \* \* We cannot see how we can be regarded as abolitionists, without the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South being considered in the same light.

Wishing you all heavenly benedictions, we are, dear brethren, yours, in Christ Jesus,

J. P. Durbin, J. Kennaday, Ignatius T. Cooper, Comm. William H. Gilder, Joseph Castle.

These facts sufficiently define the position of the Methodist Church. The history is melancholy, but instructive. The history of the Presbyterian Church is also of interest.

In 1793, the following note to the eighth commandment was inserted in the Book of Discipline, as expressing the doctrine of the church upon slaveholding:

1 Tim. 1:10. The law is made for MAN-STEALERS. This crime among the Jews exposed the perpetrators of it to capital punishment, Exodus 21:15; and the apostle here classes them with sinners of the first rank. The word he uses, in its original import, comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in retaining them in it. *Hominum fures, qui servos vel liberos abducunt, retinent, vendunt, vel emunt.* Stealers of men are all those who bring off slaves or freemen, and KEEP, SELL, or BUY THEM. To steal a free man, says Grotius, is the highest kind of theft. In other instances, we only steal human property; but when we steal or retain men in slavery, we seize those who, in common with ourselves, are constituted by the original grant lords of the earth.

No rules of church discipline were enforced, and members whom this passage declared guilty of this crime remained undisturbed in its communion, as ministers and elders. This inconsistency was obviated in 1816 by expunging the passage from the Book of Discipline. In 1818 it adopted an expression of its views on slavery. This document is a long one, conceived and written in a very Christian spirit. The Assembly's Digest says, p. 341, that it was unanimously adopted. The following is its testimony as to the nature of slavery:

We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature: as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoin that "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Slavery creates a

paradox in the moral system—it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery,—consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence. The evils to which the slave is always exposed often take place in fact, and in their very worst degree and form: and where all of them do not take place,—as we rejoice to say that in many instances, through the influence of the principles of humanity and religion on the minds of masters, they do not,—still the slave is deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries which inhumanity and avarice may suggest.

This language was surely decided, and it was unanimously adopted by slave-holders and non-slaveholders. Certainly one might think the time of redemption was drawing nigh. The declaration goes on to say:

It is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery both with the dictates of humanity and religion has been demonstrated and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use honest, earnest, unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to OBTAIN THE COMPLETE ABOLITION of slavery throughout Christendom and throughout the world.

Here we have the Presbyterian Church, slave-holding and non-slaveholding, virtually formed into one great abolition society, as we have seen the Methodist was.

The assembly then goes on to state that the slaves are not at present prepared to be free,—that they tenderly sympathize with the portion of the church and country that has had this evil entailed upon them, where as they say “a great and the most virtuous part of the community ABHOR SLAVERY and wish ITS EXTERMINATION.” But they exhort them to commence immediately the work of instructing slaves, with a view to preparing them for freedom; and to let no greater delay take place than “a regard to public welfare indispensably demands.” “To be governed by no other considerations than an honest and impartial regard to the happiness of the injured party, uninfluenced by the expense and inconvenience which such regard may involve.” It warns against “unduly extending this plea of necessity,” against making it a cover for



the love and practice of slavery. It ends by recommending that any one who shall sell a fellow-Christian without his consent be immediately disciplined and suspended.

If we consider that this was unanimously adopted by slave-holders and all, and grant, as we certainly do, that it was adopted in all honesty and good faith, we shall surely expect something from it. We should expect forthwith the organizing of a set of common schools for the slave-children; for an efficient religious ministration; for an entire discontinuance of trading in Christian slaves; for laws which make the family relations sacred. Was any such thing done or attempted? Alas! Two years after this came the admission of Missouri, and the increase of demand in the southern slave-market and the internal slave-trade. Instead of schoolteachers, they had slave-traders; instead of gathering schools, they gathered slave-coffles; instead of building school-houses, they built slave-pens and slave-prisons, jails, barracoons, factories, or whatever the trade pleases to term them; and so went the plan of gradual emancipation.

In 1834, sixteen years after, a committee of the Synod of Kentucky, in which state slavery is generally said to exist in its mildest form, appointed to make a report on the condition of the slaves, gave the following picture of their condition. First, as to their spiritual condition, they say:

After making all reasonable allowances, our colored population can be considered, at the most, but semi-heathen. As to their temporal estate—Brutal stripes, and all the various kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses. The law does not recognize the family relations of the slave, and extends to him no protection in the enjoyment of domestic endearments. The members of a slave-family may be forcibly separated, so that they shall never more meet until the final judgment. And cupidity often induces the masters to practise what the law allows. Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and the agony often witnessed on such occasions proclaim with a trumpet-tongue the iniquity and cruelty of our system. The cries of these sufferers go up to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. There is not a neighborhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear. Our church, years ago, raised its voice of solemn warning against this flagrant violation of every principle of mercy, justice, and humanity. Yet we blush to announce to you and to the world that this warning has been often disregarded, even by those who hold to our communion. Cases have occurred, in our own

denomination, where professors of the religion of mercy have torn the mother from her children, and sent her into a merciless and returnless exile. Yet acts of discipline have rarely followed such conduct.

Hon. James G. Birney, for years a resident of Kentucky, in his pamphlet, amends the word rarely by substituting never. What could show more plainly the utter inefficiency of the past act of the Assembly, and the necessity of adopting some measures more efficient? In 1835, therefore, the subject was urged upon the General Assembly, entreating them to carry out the principles and designs they had avowed in 1818.

Mr. Stuart, of Illinois, in a speech he made upon the subject, said:

I hope this assembly are prepared to come out fully and declare their sentiments, that slave-holding is a most flagrant and heinous SIN. Let us not pass it by in this indirect way, while so many thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures are writhing under the lash, often inflicted, too, by ministers and elders of the Presbyterian Church.

In this church a man may take a free-born child, force it away from its parents, to whom God gave it in charge, saying "Bring it up for me," and sell it as a beast or hold it in perpetual bondage, and not only escape corporeal punishment, but really be esteemed an excellent Christian. Nay, even ministers of the gospel and doctors of divinity may engage in this unholy traffic, and yet sustain their high and holy calling.

Elders, ministers, and doctors of divinity, are, with both hands, engaged in the practice.

One would have thought facts like these, stated in a body of Christians, were enough to wake the dead; but, alas! we can become accustomed to very awful things. No action was taken upon these remonstrances, except to refer them to a committee, to be reported on at the next session, in 1836.

The moderator of the assembly in 1836 was a slave-holder, Dr. T. S. Witherspoon, the same who said to the editor of the Emancipator, "I draw my warrant from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to hold my slaves in bondage. The principle of holding the heathen in bondage is recognized by God. When the tardy process of the law is too long in redressing our grievances, we at the South have adopted the summary process of Judge Lynch."

The majority of the committee appointed made a report as follows:

Whereas the subject of slavery is inseparably connected with the laws of many of the states in this Union, with which it is by no means proper for an ecclesiastical judicature to interfere, and involves many considerations in

regard to which great diversity of opinion and intensity of feeling are known to exist in the churches represented in this Assembly; And whereas there is great reason to believe that any action on the part of this Assembly, in reference to this subject, would tend to distract and divide our churches, and would probably in no wise promote the benefit of those whose welfare is immediately contemplated in the memorials in question.

Therefore, Resolved,

1. That it is not expedient for the Assembly to take any further order in relation to this subject.

2. That as the notes which have been expunged from our public formularies, and which some of the memorials referred to the committee request to have restored, were introduced irregularly, never had the sanction of the church, and therefore never possessed any authority, the General Assembly has no power, nor would they think it expedient, to assign them a place in the authorized standards of the church.

The minority of the committee, the Rev. Messrs. Dickey and Beman, reported as follows:

Resolved,

1. That the buying, selling, or holding a human being as property, is in the sight of God a heinous sin, and ought to subject the doer of it to the censures of the church.

2. That it is the duty of every one, and especially of every Christian, who may be involved in this sin, to free himself from its entanglement without delay.

3. That it is the duty of every one, especially of every Christian, in the meekness and firmness of the gospel to plead the cause of the poor and needy, by testifying against the principle and practice of slave-holding; and to use his best endeavors to deliver the church of God from the evil; and to bring about the emancipation of the slaves in these United States, and throughout the world.

The slave-holding delegates, to the number of forty-eight, met apart, and Resolved,

That if the General Assembly shall undertake to exercise authority on the subject of slavery, so as to make it an immorality, or shall in any way declare that Christians are criminal in holding slaves, that a declaration shall be presented by the Southern delegation declining their jurisdiction in the case, and our determination not to submit to such decision.

In view of these conflicting reports, the Assembly resolved as follows:

Inasmuch as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, in its preliminary and fundamental principles, declares that no church judicatories ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and as the urgency of the business of the Assembly, and the shortness of the time during which they can continue in session, render it impossible to deliberate and decide judiciously on the subject of slavery in its relation to the church; therefore, Resolved, That this whole subject be indefinitely postponed.

The amount of the slave-trade at the time when the General Assembly refused to act upon the subject of slavery at all, may be inferred from the following items. The Virginia Times, in an article published in this very year of 1836, estimated the number of slaves exported for sale from that state alone, during the twelve months preceding, at forty thousand. The Natchez (Miss.) Courier says that in the same year the States of Alabama, Missouri and Arkansas, received two hundred and fifty thousand slaves from the more northern states. If we deduct from these all who may be supposed to have emigrated with their masters, still what an immense trade is here indicated!

The Rev. James H. Dickey, who moved the resolutions above presented, had seen some sights which would naturally incline him to wish the Assembly to take some action on the subject, as appears from the following account of a slave-coffle, from his pen.

In the summer of 1822, as I returned with my family from a visit to the Barrens of Kentucky, I witnessed a scene such as I never witnessed before, and such as I hope never to witness again. Having passed through Paris, in Bourbon county, Ky., the sound of music (beyond a little rising ground) attracted my attention. I looked forward, and saw the flag of my country waving. Supposing that I was about to meet a military parade, I drove hastily to the side of the road; and, having gained the ascent, I discovered (I suppose) about forty black men all chained together after the following manner: each of them was handcuffed, and they were arranged in rank and file. A chain perhaps forty feet long, the size of a fifth-horse-chain, was stretched between the two ranks, to which short chains were joined, which connected with the handcuffs. Behind them were, I suppose, about thirty women, in double rank, the couples tied hand to hand. A solemn sadness sat on every countenance, and the dismal silence of this march of despair was interrupted only by the sound of two violins; yes, as if to add insult to injury, the foremost couple were furnished with a violin apiece; the second couple were ornamented with cockades, while near the centre waved the republican flag, carried by a hand literally in chains. I could not forbear exclaiming to the lordly driver who rode at his ease along-side, "Heaven will curse that man who engages in such traffic, and the government that protects him in it!" I pursued my journey till evening, and put up for the night, when I mentioned the scene I had witnessed.

“Ah!” cried my landlady, “that is my brother!” From her I learned that his name is Stone, of Bourbon county, Kentucky, in partnership with one Kinningham, of Paris; and that a few days before he had purchased a negro-woman from a man in Nicholas county. She refused to go with him; he attempted to compel her, but she defended herself. Without further ceremony, he stepped back, and, by a blow on the side of her head with the butt of his whip, brought her to the ground; he tied her, and drove her off. I learned further, that besides the drove I had seen, there were about thirty shut up in the Paris prison for safe-keeping, to be added to the company, and that they were designed for the Orleans market. And to this they are doomed for no other crime than that of a black skin and curled locks. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

It cannot be possible that these Christian men realized these things, or, at most, they realized them just as we realize the most tremendous truths of religion, dimly and feebly.

Two years after, the General Assembly, by a sudden and very unexpected movement, passed a vote excinding, without trial, from the communion of the church, four synods, comprising the most active and decided anti-slavery portions of the church. The reasons alleged were, doctrinal differences and ecclesiastical practices inconsistent with Presbyterianism. By this act about five hundred ministers and sixty thousand members were cut off from the Presbyterian Church.

That portion of the Presbyterian Church called New School, considering this act unjust, refused to assent to it, joined the excinded synods, and formed themselves into the New School General Assembly. In this communion only three slave-holding presbyteries remained. In the old there were between thirty and forty.

The course of the Old School Assembly, after the separation, in relation to the subject of slavery, may be best expressed by quoting one of their resolutions, passed in 1845. Having some decided anti-slavery members in its body, and being, moreover, addressed on the subject of slavery by associated bodies, they presented, on this year, the following deliberate statement of their policy. (Minutes for 1845, p. 18.)

Resolved, 1st. That the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was originally organized, and has since continued the bond of union in the church, upon the conceded principle that the existence of domestic slavery, under the circumstances in which it is found in the Southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion.

2. That the petitions that ask the Assembly to make the holding of slaves in itself a matter of discipline do virtually require this judicatory to dissolve

itself, and abandon the organization under which, by the divine blessing, it has so long prospered. The tendency is evidently to separate the Northern from the Southern portion of the church,—a result which every good Christian must deplore, as tending to the dissolution of the Union of our beloved country, and which every enlightened Christian will oppose, as bringing about a ruinous and unnecessary schism between brethren who maintain a common faith.

Yeas, Ministers and Elders, 168.

Nays, Ministers and Elders, 13.

It is scarcely necessary to add a comment to this very explicit declaration. It is the plainest possible disclaimer of any protest against slavery; the plainest possible statement that the existence of the ecclesiastical organization is of more importance than all the moral and social considerations which are involved in a full defence and practice of American slavery.

The next year a large number of petitions and remonstrances were presented, requesting the Assembly to utter additional testimony against slavery.

In reply to the petitions, the General Assembly reëffirmed all their former testimonies on the subject of slavery for sixty years back, and also affirmed that the previous year's declaration must not be understood as a retraction of that testimony; in other words, they expressed it as their opinion, in the words of 1818, that slavery is "wholly opposed to the law of God," and "totally irreconcilable with the precepts of the gospel of Christ;" and yet that they "had formed their church organization upon the conceded principle that the existence of it, under the circumstances in which it is found in the Southern States of the Union, is no bar to Christian communion."

Some members protested against this action. (Minutes, 1846. Overture No. 17.)

Great hopes were at first entertained of the New School body. As a body, it was composed mostly of anti-slavery men. It had in it those synods whose anti-slavery opinions and actions had been, to say the least, one very efficient cause for their excision from the church. It had only three slave-holding presbyteries. The power was all in its own hands. Now, if ever, was their time to cut this loathsome incumbrance wholly adrift, and stand up, in this age of concession and conformity to the world, a purely protesting church, free from all complicity with this most dreadful national immorality.

On the first session of the General Assembly, this course was most vehemently urged, by many petitions and memorials. These memorials were referred to a committee of decided anti-slavery men. The argument on one side was, that the time was now come to take decided measures to cut free wholly

from all pro-slavery complicity, and avow their principles with decision, even though it should repel all such churches from their communion as were not prepared for immediate emancipation.

On the other hand, the majority of the committee were urged by opposing considerations. The brethren from slave states made to them representations somewhat like these: "Brethren, our hearts are with you. We are with you in faith, in charity, in prayer. We sympathized in the injury that had been done you by excision. We stood by you then, and are ready to stand by you still. We have no sympathy with the party that have expelled you, and we do not wish to go back to them. As to this matter of slavery, we do not differ from you. We consider it an evil. We mourn and lament over it. We are trying, by gradual and peaceable means, to exclude it from our churches. We are going as far in advance of the sentiment of our churches as we consistently can. We cannot come up to more decided action without losing our hold over them, and, as we think, throwing back the cause of emancipation. If you begin in this decided manner, we cannot hold our churches in the union; they will divide, and go to the Old School."

Here was a very strong plea, made by good and sincere men. It was an appeal, too, to the most generous feelings of the heart. It was, in effect, saying, "Brothers, we stood by you, and fought your battles, when everything was going against you; and, now that you have the power in your hands, are you going to use it so as to cast us out?"

These men, strong anti-slavery men as they were, were affected. One member of the committee foresaw and feared the result. He felt and suggested that the course proposed conceded the whole question. The majority thought, on the whole, that it was best to postpone the subject. The committee reported that the applicants, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, had withdrawn their papers.

The next year, in 1839, the subject was resumed; and it was again urged that the Assembly should take high and decided and unmistakable ground; and certainly, if we consider that all this time not a single church had emancipated its slaves, and that the power of the institution was everywhere stretching and growing and increasing, it would certainly seem that something more efficient was necessary than a general understanding that the church agreed with the testimony delivered in 1818. It was strongly represented that it was time something was done. This year the Assembly decided to refer the subject to presbyteries, to do what they deemed advisable. The words employed were these: "Solemnly referring the whole subject to the lower judicatories, to take such action as in their judgment is most judicious, and adapted to remove the evil." This of course deferred, but did not avert, the main question.

This brought, in 1840, a much larger number of memorials and petitions; and very strong attempts were made by the abolitionists to obtain some decided action.

The committee this year referred to what had been done last year, and declared it inexpedient to do anything further. The subject was indefinitely postponed. At this time it was resolved that the Assembly should meet only once in three years. Accordingly, it did not meet till 1843. In 1843, several memorials were again presented, and some resolutions offered to the Assembly, of which this was one (Minutes of the General Assembly for 1843, p. 15):

Resolved, That we affectionately and earnestly urge upon the Ministers, Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods connected with this Assembly, that they treat this as all other sins of great magnitude; and, by a diligent, kind and faithful application of the means which God has given them, by instruction, remonstrance, reproof and effective discipline, seek to purify the church of this great iniquity.

This resolution they declined. They passed the following:

Whereas there is in this Assembly great diversity of opinion as to the proper and best mode of action on the subject of slavery; and whereas, in such circumstances, any expression of sentiment would carry with it but little weight, as it would be passed by a small majority, and must operate to produce alienation and division; and whereas the Assembly of 1839, with great unanimity, referred this whole subject to the lower judicatories, to take such order as in their judgment might be adapted to remove the evil;—Resolved, That the Assembly do not think it for the edification of the church for this body to take any action on the subject.

They, however, passed the following:

Resolved, That the fashionable amusement of promiscuous dancing is so entirely unscriptural, and eminently and exclusively that of “the world which lieth in wickedness,” and so wholly inconsistent with the spirit of Christ, and with that propriety of Christian deportment and that purity of heart which his followers are bound to maintain, as to render it not only improper and injurious for professing Christians either to partake in it, or to qualify their children for it, by teaching them the art, but also to call for the faithful and judicious exercise of discipline on the part of Church Sessions, when any of the members of their churches have been guilty.

Three years after, in 1846, the General Assembly published the following declaration of sentiment:

1. The system of slavery, as it exists in these United States, viewed either



in the laws of the several states which sanction it, or in its actual operation and results in society, is intrinsically unrighteous and oppressive; and is opposed to the prescriptions of the law of God, to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, and to the best interests of humanity.

2. The testimony of the General Assembly, from A. D. 1787 to A. D. 1818, inclusive, has condemned it; and it remains still the recorded testimony of the Presbyterian Church of these United States against it, from which we do not recede.

3. We cannot, therefore, withhold the expression of our deep regret that slavery should be continued and countenanced by any of the members of our churches; and we do earnestly exhort both them and the churches among whom it exists to use all means in their power to put it away from them. Its perpetuation among them cannot fail to be regarded by multitudes, influenced by their example, as sanctioning the system portrayed in it, and maintained by the statutes of the several slave-holding states, wherein they dwell. Nor can any mere mitigation of its severity, prompted by the humanity and Christian feeling of any who continue to hold their fellow-men in bondage, be regarded either as a testimony against the system, or as in the least degree changing its essential character.

4. But, while we believe that many evils incident to the system render it important and obligatory to bear testimony against it, yet would we not undertake to determine the degree of moral turpitude on the part of individuals involved by it. This will doubtless be found to vary, in the sight of God, according to the degree of light and other circumstances pertaining to each. In view of all the embarrassments and obstacles in the way of emancipation interposed by the statutes of the slave-holding states, and by the social influence affecting the views and conduct of those involved in it, we cannot pronounce a judgment of general and promiscuous condemnation, implying that destitution of Christian principle and feeling which should exclude from the table of the Lord all who should stand in the legal relation of masters to slaves, or justify us in withholding our ecclesiastical and Christian fellowship from them. We rather sympathize with, and would seek to succor them in their embarrassments, believing that separation and secession among the churches and their members are not the methods God approves and sanctions for the reformation of his church.

5. While, therefore, we feel bound to bear our testimony against slavery, and to exhort our beloved brethren to remove it from them as speedily as possible, by all appropriate and available means, we do at the same time condemn all divisive and schismatical measures, tending to destroy the unity and disturb the peace of our church, and deprecate the spirit of denunciation and inflicting severities, which would cast from the fold those whom we are

rather bound, by the spirit of the gospel, and the obligations of our covenant, to instruct, to counsel, to exhort, and thus to lead in the ways of God; and towards whom, even though they may err, we ought to exercise forbearance and brotherly love.

6. As a court of our Lord Jesus Christ, we possess no legislative authority; and as the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, we possess no judiciary authority. We have no right to institute and prescribe a test of Christian character and church membership, not recognized and sanctioned in the sacred Scriptures, and in our standards, by which we have agreed to walk. We must leave, therefore, this matter with the sessions, presbyteries and synods,—the judicatories to whom pertains the right of judgment to act in the administration of discipline, as they may judge it to be their duty, constitutionally subject to the General Assembly only in the way of general review and control.

When a boat is imperceptibly going down stream on a gentle but strong current, we can see its passage only by comparing objects with each other on the shore.

If this declaration of the New-school General Assembly be compared with that of 1818, it will be found to be far less outspoken and decided in its tone, while in the mean time slavery had become four-fold more powerful. In 1818 the Assembly states that the most virtuous portion of the community in slave states abhor slavery, and wish its extermination. In 1846 the Assembly states with regret that slavery is still continued and countenanced by any of the members of our churches. The testimony of 1818 has the frank, outspoken air of a unanimous document, where there was but one opinion. That of 1846 has the guarded air of a compromise ground out between the upper and nether millstone of two contending parties,—it is winnowed, guarded, cautious and careful.

Considering the document, however, in itself, it is certainly a very good one; and it would be a very proper expression of Christian feeling, had it related to an evil of any common magnitude, and had it been uttered in any common crisis; but let us consider what was the evil attacked, and what was the crisis. Consider the picture which the Kentucky Synod had drawn of the actual state of things among them:—"The members of slave-families separated, never to meet again until the final judgment; brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, daily torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more; the shrieks and agonies, proclaiming as with trumpet-tongue the iniquity and cruelty of the system; the cries of the sufferers going up to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth not a neighborhood where those heart-rending scenes are not displayed; not a village or road without the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell

they are exiled by force from all that heart holds dear; Christian professors rending the mother from her child, to sell her into returnless exile.”

This was the language of the Kentucky Synod fourteen years before; and those scenes had been going on ever since, and are going on now, as the advertisements of every Southern paper show; and yet the church of Christ since 1818 had done nothing but express regret, and hold grave metaphysical discussions as to whether slavery was an “evil per se,” and censure the rash action of men who, in utter despair of stopping the evil any other way, tried to stop it by excluding slave-holders from the church. As if it were not better that one slave-holder in a hundred should stay out of the church, if he be peculiarly circumstanced, than that all this horrible agony and iniquity should continually receive the sanction of the church’s example! Should not a generous Christian man say, “If church excision will stop this terrible evil, let it come, though it does bear hardly upon me! Better that I suffer a little injustice than that this horrible injustice be still credited to the account of Christ’s church. Shall I embarrass the whole church with my embarrassments? What if I am careful and humane in my treatment of my slaves,—what if, in my heart, I have repudiated the wicked doctrine that they are my property, and am treating them as my brethren,—what am I then doing? All the credit of my example goes to give force to the system. The church ought to reprove this fearful injustice, and reprovers ought to have clean hands: and if I cannot really get clear of this, I had better keep out of the church till I can.”

Let us consider, also, the awful intrenchments and strength of the evil against which this very moderate resolution was discharged. “A money power of two thousand millions of dollars, held by a small body of able and desperate men; that body raised into a political aristocracy by special constitutional provisions: cotton, the product of slave-labor, forming the basis of our whole foreign commerce, and the commercial class thus subsidized; the press bought up; the Southern pulpit reduced to vassalage; the heart of the common people chilled by a bitter prejudice against the black race; and our leading men bribed by ambition either to silence or open hostility.” And now, in this condition of things, the whole weight of these churches goes in support of slavery, from the fact of their containing slave-holders. No matter if they did not participate in the abuses of the system; nobody wants them to do that. The slave-power does not wish professors of religion to separate families, or over-work their slaves, or do any disreputable thing,—that is not their part. The slave power wants pious, tender-hearted, generous and humane masters, and must have them, to hold up the system against the rising moral sense of the world; and the more pious and generous the better. Slavery could not stand an hour without these men. What then? These men uphold the system, and that great anti-slavery body of ministers uphold these men. That is the final upshot of the matter.

Paul says that we must remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them. Suppose that this General Assembly had been made up of men who had been fugitives. Suppose one of them had had his daughters sent to the New Orleans slave-market, like Emily and Mary Edmondson; that another's daughter had died on the overland passage in a slave-coffle, with no nurse but a slave-driver, like poor Emily Russell; another's wife died broken-hearted, when her children were sold out of her bosom; and another had a half-crazed mother, whose hair had been turned prematurely white with agony. Suppose these scenes of agonizing partings, with shrieks and groans, which the Kentucky Synod says have been witnessed so long among the slaves, had been seen in these ministers' families, and that they had come up to this discussion with their hearts as scarred and seared as the heart of poor old Paul Edmondson, when he came to New York to beg for his daughters. Suppose that they saw that the horrid system by which all this had been done was extending every hour; that professed Christians in every denomination at the South declared it to be an appointed institution of God; that all the wealth, and all the rank, and all the fashion, in the country, were committed in its favor; and that they, like Aaron, were sent to stand between the living and the dead, that the plague might be stayed.

Most humbly, most earnestly, let it be submitted to the Christians of this nation, and to Christians of all nations, for such an hour and such a crisis was this action sufficient? Did it do anything? Has it had the least effect in stopping the evil? And, in such a horrible time, ought not something to be done which will have that effect?

Let us continue the history. It will be observed that the resolution concludes by referring the subject to subordinate judicatories. The New School Presbytery of Cincinnati, in which were the professors of Lane Seminary, suspended Mr. Graham from the ministry for teaching that the Bible justified slavery; thereby establishing the principle that this was a heresy inconsistent with Christian fellowship. The Cincinnati Synod confirmed this decision. The General Assembly reversed this decision, and restored Mr. Graham. The delegate from that presbytery told them that they would never retrace their steps, and so it proved. The Cincinnati Presbytery refused to receive him back. All honor be to them for it! Here, at least, was a principle established, as far as the New School Cincinnati Presbytery is concerned,—and a principle as far as the General Assembly is concerned. By this act the General Assembly established the fact that the New School Presbyterian Church had not decided the Biblical defence of slavery to be a heresy.

For a man to teach that there are not three persons in the Trinity is heresy.

For a man to teach that all these three Persons authorize a system which even Mahometan princes have abolished from mere natural shame and

conscience, is no heresy!

The General Assembly proceeded further to show that it considered this doctrine no heresy, in the year 1846, by inviting the Old School General Assembly to the celebration of the Lord's supper with them. Connected with this Assembly were, not only Dr. Smylie, and all those bodies who, among them, had justified not only slavery in the abstract, but some of its worst abuses, by the word of God; yet the New School body thought these opinions no heresy which should be a bar to Christian communion!

In 1849 the General Assembly declared that there had been no information before the Assembly to prove that the members in slave states were not doing all that they could, in the providence of God, to bring about the possession and enjoyment of liberty by the enslaved. This is a remarkable declaration, if we consider that in Kentucky there are no stringent laws against emancipation, and that, either in Kentucky or Virginia, the slave can be set free by simply giving him a pass to go across the line into the next state.

In 1850 a proposition was presented in the Assembly, by the Rev. H. Curtiss, of Indiana, to the following effect: "That the enslaving of men, or holding them as property, is an offence, as defined in our Book of Discipline, ch. 1, sec. 3; and as such it calls for inquiry, correction and removal, in the manner prescribed by our rules, and should be treated with a due regard to all the aggravating or mitigating circumstances in each case." Another proposition was from an elder in Pennsylvania, affirming "that slaveholding was, *prima facie*, an offence within the meaning of our Book of Discipline, and throwing upon the slave-holder the burden of showing such circumstances as will take away from him the guilt of the offence."

Both these propositions were rejected. The following was adopted: "That slavery is fraught with many and great evils; that they deplore the workings of the whole system of slavery; that the holding of our fellow-men in the condition of slavery, except in those cases where it is unavoidable from the laws of the state, the obligations of guardianship, or the demands of humanity, is an offence, in the proper import of that term, as used in the Book of Discipline, and should be regarded and treated in the same manner as other offences; also referring this subject to sessions and presbyteries." The vote stood eighty-four to sixteen, under a written protest of the minority, who were for no action in the present state of the country. Let the reader again compare this action with that of 1818, and he will see that the boat is still drifting,—especially as even this moderate testimony was not unanimous. Again, in this year of 1850, they avow themselves ready to meet, in a spirit of fraternal kindness and Christian love, any overtures for reünion which may be made to them by the Old School body.

In 1850 was passed the cruel fugitive slave law. What deeds were done then! Then to our free states were transported those scenes of fear and agony before acted only on slave soil. Churches were broken up. Trembling Christians fled. Husbands and wives were separated. Then to the poor African was fulfilled the dread doom denounced on the wandering Jew,—“Thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life.” Then all the world went one way,—all the wealth, all the power, all the fashion. Now, if ever, was a time for Christ’s church to stand up and speak for the poor.

The General Assembly met. She was earnestly memorialized to speak out. Never was a more glorious opportunity to show that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. A protest then, from a body so numerous and respectable, might have saved the American church from the disgrace it now wears in the eyes of all nations. O that she had once spoken! What said the Presbyterian Church? She said nothing, and the thanks of political leaders were accorded to her. She had done all they desired.

Meanwhile, under this course of things, the number of presbyteries in slave-holding states had increased from three to twenty! and this church has now under its care from fifteen to twenty thousand members in slave states.

So much for the course of a decided anti-slavery body in union with a few slave-holding churches. So much for a most discreet, judicious, charitable, and brotherly attempt to test by experience the question, What communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial? The slave-system is darkness,—the slave-system is Belial! and every attempt to harmonize it with the profession of Christianity will be just like these. Let it be here recorded, however, that a small body of the most determined opponents of slavery in the Presbyterian Church seceded and formed the Free Presbyterian Church, whose terms of communion are, an entire withdrawal from slave-holding. Whether this principle be a correct one, or not, it is worthy of remark that it was adopted and carried out by the Quakers,—the only body of Christians involved in this evil who have ever succeeded in freeing themselves from it.

Whether church discipline and censure is an appropriate medium for correcting such immoralities and heresies in individuals, or not, it is enough for the case that this has been the established opinion and practice of the Presbyterian Church.

If the argument of Charles Sumner be contemplated, it will be seen that the history of this Presbyterian Church and the history of our United States have strong points of similarity. In both, at the outset, the strong influence was anti-

slavery, even among slave-holders. In both there was no difference of opinion as to the desirableness of abolishing slavery ultimately; both made a concession, the smallest which could possibly be imagined; both made the concession in all good faith, contemplating the speedy removal and extinction of the evil; and the history of both is alike. The little point of concession spread, and absorbed, and acquired, from year to year, till the United States and the Presbyterian Church stand just where they do. Worse has been the history of the Methodist Church. The history of the Baptist Church shows the same principle; and, as to the Episcopal Church, it has never done anything but comply, either North or South. It differs from all the rest in that it has never had any resisting element, except now and then a protestant, like William Jay, a worthy son of him who signed the Declaration of Independence.

The slave power has been a united, consistent, steady, uncompromising principle. The resisting element has been, for many years, wavering, self-contradictory, compromising. There has been, it is true, a deep, and ever increasing hostility to slavery in a decided majority of ministers and church-members in free states, taken as individuals. Nevertheless, the sincere opponents of slavery have been unhappily divided among themselves as to principles and measures, the extreme principles and measures of some causing a hurtful reaction in others. Besides this, other great plans of benevolence have occupied their time and attention; and the result has been that they have formed altogether inadequate conceptions of the extent to which the cause of God on earth is imperilled by American slavery, and of the duty of Christians in such a crisis. They have never had such a conviction as has aroused, and called out, and united their energies, on this, as on other great causes. Meantime, great organic influences in church and state are, much against their wishes, neutralizing their influence against slavery,—sometimes even arraying it in its favor. The perfect inflexibility of the slave-system, and its absolute refusal to allow any discussion of the subject, has reduced all those who wish to have religious action in common with slave-holding churches to the alternative of either giving up the support of the South for that object, or giving up their protest against slavery.

This has held out a strong temptation to men who have had benevolent and laudable objects to carry, and who did not realize the full peril of the slave-system, nor appreciate the moral power of Christian protest against it. When, therefore, cases have arisen where the choice lay between sacrificing what they considered the interests of a good object, or giving up their right of protest, they have generally preferred the latter. The decision has always gone in this way: The slave power will not concede,—we must. The South says, “We will take no religious book that has anti-slavery principles in it.” The Sunday School Union drops Mr. Gallaudet’s History of Joseph. Why? Because

they approve of slavery? Not at all. They look upon slavery with horror. What then? "The South will not read our books, if we do not do it. They will not give up, and we must. We can do more good by introducing gospel truth with this omission than we can by using our protestant power." This, probably, was thought and said honestly. The argument is plausible, but the concession is none the less real. The slave power has got the victory, and got it by the very best of men from the very best of motives; and, so that it has the victory, it cares not how it gets it. And although it may be said that the amount in each case of these concessions is in itself but small, yet, when we come to add together all that have been made from time to time by every different denomination, and by every different benevolent organization, the aggregate is truly appalling; and, in consequence of all these united, what are we now reduced to?

Here we are, in this crisis,—here in this nineteenth century, when all the world is dissolving and reconstructing on principles of universal liberty,—we Americans, who are sending our Bibles and missionaries to Christianize Mahometan lands, are upholding, with all our might and all our influence, a system of worn-out heathenism which even the Bey of Tunis has repudiated!

The Southern church has baptized it in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This worn-out, old, effete system of Roman slavery, which Christianity once gradually but certainly abolished, has been dug up out of its dishonored grave, a few laws of extra cruelty, such as Rome never knew, have been added to it, and now, baptized and sanctioned by the whole Southern church, it is going abroad conquering and to conquer! The only power left to the Northern church is the protesting power; and will they use it? Ask the Tract Society if they will publish a tract on the sinfulness of slavery, though such tract should be made up solely from the writings of Jonathan Edwards or Dr. Hopkins! Ask the Sunday School Union if it will publish the facts about this heathenism, as it has facts about Burmah and Hindostan! Will they? O, that they would answer Yes!

Now, it is freely conceded that all these sad results have come in consequence of the motions and deliberations of good men, who meant well; but it has been well said that, in critical times, when one wrong step entails the most disastrous consequences, to mean well is not enough.

In the crisis of a disease, to mean well and lose the patient,—in the height of a tempest, to mean well and wreck the ship,—in a great moral conflict, to mean well and lose the battle,—these are things to be lamented. We are wrecking the ship,—we are losing the battle. There is no mistake about it. A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep, and we shall awake in the whirls of that maelstrom which has but one passage, and that downward.



There is yet one body of Christians whose influence we have not considered, and that a most important one,—the Congregationalists of New England and of the West. From the very nature of Congregationalism, she cannot give so united a testimony as Presbyterianism; yet Congregationalism has spoken out on slavery. Individual bodies have spoken very strongly, and individual clergymen still stronger. They have remonstrated with the General Assembly, and they have very decided anti-slavery papers. But, considering the whole state of public sentiment, considering the critical nature of the exigency, the mighty sweep and force of all the causes which are going in favor of slavery, has the vehemence and force of the testimony of Congregationalism, as a body, been equal to the dreadful emergency? It has testimonies on record, very full and explicit, on the evils of slavery; but testimonies are not all that is wanted. There is abundance of testimonies on record in the Presbyterian Church, for that matter, quite as good and quite as strong as any that have been given by Congregationalism. There have been quite as many anti-slavery men in the New School Presbyterian Church as in the Congregational,—quite as strong anti-slavery newspapers; and the Presbyterian Church has had trial of this matter that the Congregational Church has never been exposed to. It has had slave-holders in its own communion; and from this trial Congregationalism has, as yet, been mostly exempt. Being thus free, ought not the testimony of Congregationalism to have been more than equal? ought it not to have done more than testify?—ought it not to have fought for the question? Like the brave three hundred in Thermopylæ left to defend the liberties of Greece, when all others had fled, should they not have thrown in heart and soul, body and spirit? Have they done it?

Compare the earnestness which Congregationalism has spent upon some other subjects with the earnestness which has been spent upon this. Dr. Taylor taught that all sin consists in sinning, and therefore that there could be no sin till a person had sinned; and Dr. Bushnell teaches some modifications of the doctrine of the Trinity, nobody seeming to know precisely what. The South Carolina presbyteries teach that slavery is approved by God, and sanctioned by the example of patriarchs and prophets. Supposing these, now, to be all heresies, which of them is the worst?—which will bring the worst practical results? And, if Congregationalism had fought this slavery heresy as some of her leaders fought Dr. Bushnell and Dr. Taylor, would not the style of battle have been more earnest? Have not both these men been denounced as dangerous heresiarchs, and as preaching doctrines that tend to infidelity? And pray where does this other doctrine tend? As sure as there is a God in heaven is the certainty that, if the Bible really did defend slavery, fifty years hence would see every honorable and high-minded man an infidel.

Has, then, the past influence of Congregationalism been according to the

nature of the exigency and the weight of the subject? But the late convention of Congregationalists at Albany, including ministers both from New England and the Western States, did take a stronger and more decided ground. Here is their resolution:

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this convention, it is the tendency of the gospel, wherever it is preached in its purity, to correct all social evils, and to destroy sin in all its forms; and that it is the duty of Missionary Societies to grant aid to churches in slave-holding states in the support of such ministers only as shall so preach the gospel, and inculcate the principles and application of gospel discipline, that, with the blessing of God, it shall have its full effect in awakening and enlightening the moral sense in regard to slavery, and in bringing to pass the speedy abolition of that stupendous wrong; and that wherever a minister is not permitted so to preach, he should, in accordance with the directions of Christ, “depart out of that city.”

This resolution is a matter of hope and gratulation in many respects. It was passed in a very large convention,—the largest ever assembled in this country, fully representing the Congregationalism of the United States,—and the occasion of its meeting was considered, in some sort, as marking a new era in the progress of this denomination.

The resolution was passed unanimously. It is decided in its expression, and looks to practical action, which is what is wanted. It says it will support no ministers in slave states whose preaching does not tend to destroy slavery; and that, if they are not allowed to preach freely on the subject, they must depart.

That the ground thus taken will be efficiently sustained, may be inferred from the fact that the Home Missionary Society, which is the organ of this body, as well as of the New School Presbyterian Church, has uniformly taken decided ground upon this subject in their instructions to missionaries sent into slave states. These instructions are ably set forth in their report of March, 1853. When application was made to them, in 1850, from a slave state, for missionaries who would let slavery alone, they replied to them, in the most decided language, that it could not be done; that, on the contrary, they must understand that one grand object in sending missionaries to slave states is, as far as possible, to redeem society from all forms of sin; and that, “if utter silence respecting slavery is to be maintained, one of the greatest inducements to send or retain missionaries in the slave states is taken away.”

The society furthermore instructed their missionaries, if they could not be heard on this subject in one city or village, to go to another; and they express their conviction that their missionaries have made progress in awakening the consciences of the people. They say that they do not suffer the subject to sleep; that they do not let it alone because it is a delicate subject, but they

discharge their consciences, whether their message be well received, or whether, as in some instances, it subjects them to opposition, opprobrium, and personal danger; and that where their endeavors to do this have not been tolerated, they have, in repeated cases, at great sacrifice, resigned their position, and departed to other fields. In their report of this year they also quote letters from ministers in slave-holding states, by which it appears that they have actually secured, in the face of much opposition, the right publicly to preach and propagate their sentiments upon this subject.

One of these missionaries says, speaking of slavery, "We are determined to remove this great difficulty in our way, or die in the attempt. As Christians and as freemen, we will suffer this libel on our religion and institutions to exist no longer."

This is noble ground.

And, while we are recording the protesting power, let us not forget the Scotch seceders and covenanters, who, with a pertinacity and decision worthy of the children of the old covenant, have kept themselves clear from the sin of slavery, and have uniformly protested against it. Let us remember, also, that the Quakers did pursue a course which actually freed all their body from the sin of slave-holding, thus showing to all other denominations that what has been done once can be done again. Also, in all denominations, individual ministers and Christians, in hours that have tried men's souls, have stood up to bear their testimony. Albert Barnes, in Philadelphia, standing in the midst of a great, rich church, on the borders of a slave state, and with all those temptations to complicity which have silenced so many, has stood up, in calm fidelity, and declared the whole counsel of God upon this subject. Nay, more: he recorded his solemn protest, that "NO INFLUENCES OUT OF THE CHURCH COULD SUSTAIN SLAVERY AN HOUR, IF IT WERE NOT SUSTAINED IN IT;" and, in the last session of the General Assembly, which met at Washington, disregarding all suggestions of policy, he boldly held the Presbyterian Church up to the strength of her past declarations, and declared it her duty to attempt the entire abolition of slavery throughout the world. So, in darkest hour, Dr. Channing bore a noble testimony in Boston, for which his name shall ever live. So, in Illinois, E. P. Lovejoy and Edward Beecher, with their associates, formed the Illinois Anti-slavery Society, amid mobs and at the hazard of their lives; and, a few hours after, Lovejoy was shot down in attempting to defend the twice-destroyed anti-slavery press. In the Old-school Presbyterian Church, William and Robert Breckenridge, President Young, and others, have preached in favor of emancipation in Kentucky. Le Roy Sunderland, in the Methodist Church, kept up his newspaper under ban of his superiors, and with a bribe on his life of fifty thousand dollars, Torrey, meekly patient, died in a prison, saying, "If I am a guilty man I am a very guilty one,

for I have helped four hundred slaves to freedom, who but for me would have died slaves.” Dr. Nelson was expelled by mobs from Missouri for the courageous declaration of the truth on slave soil. All these were in the ministry. Nor are these all. Jesus Christ has not wholly deserted us yet. There have been those who have learned how joyful it is to suffer shame and brave death in a good cause.

Also there have been private Christians who have counted nothing too dear for this sacred cause. Witness Richard Dillingham, and John Garrett, and a host of others, who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.

But yet, notwithstanding this, the awful truth remains, that the whole of what has been done by the church has not, as yet, perceptibly abated the evil. The great system is stronger than ever. It is confessedly the dominant power of the nation. The whole power of the government, and the whole power of the wealth, and the whole power of the fashion, and the practical organic workings of the large bodies of the church, are all gone one way. The church is familiarly quoted as being on the side of slavery. Statesmen on both sides of the question have laid that down as a settled fact. Infidels point to it with triumph; and America, too, is beholding another class of infidels,—a class that could have grown up only under such an influence. Men, whose whole life is one study and practice of benevolence, are now ranked as infidels, because the position of church organizations misrepresents Christianity, and they separate themselves from the church. We would offer no excuse for any infidels who take for their religion mere anti-slavery zeal, and, under this guise, gratify a malignant hatred of real Christianity. But such defences of slavery from the Bible as some of the American clergy have made are exactly fitted to make infidels of all honorable and high-minded men. The infidels of olden times were not much to be dreaded, but such infidels as these are not to be despised. Woe to the church when the moral standard of the infidel is higher than the standard of the professed Christian! for the only armor that ever proved invincible to infidelity is the armor of righteousness.

Let us see how the church organizations work now, practically. What do Bruin & Hill, Pulliam & Davis, Bolton, Dickins & Co., and Matthews, Branton & Co., depend upon to keep their slave-factories and slave-barracoons full, and their business brisk? Is it to be supposed that they are not men like ourselves? Do they not sometimes tremble at the awful workings of fear, and despair, and agony, which they witness when they are tearing asunder living hearts in the depths of those fearful slave-prisons? What, then, keeps down the consciences of these traders? It is the public sentiment of the community where they live; and that public sentiment is made by ministers and church-members. The trader sees plainly enough a logical sequence between the declarations of the church and the practice of his trade. He sees plainly enough

that, if slavery is sanctioned by God, and it is right to set it up in a new territory, it is right to take the means to do this; and, as slaves do not grow on bushes in Texas, it is necessary that there should be traders to gather up coffles and carry them out there;—and, as they cannot always take whole families, it is necessary that they should part them; and, as slaves will not go by moral suasion, it is necessary that they should be forced; and, as gentle force will not do, they must whip and torture. Hence come gags, thumb-screws, cowhides, blood,—all necessary measures of carrying out what Christians say God sanctions.

So goes the argument one way. Let us now trace it back the other. The South Carolina and Mississippi Presbyteries maintain opinions which, in their legitimate results, endorse the slave-trader. The Old School General Assembly maintains fellowship with these Presbyteries, without discipline or protest. The New School Assembly signifies its willingness to reunite with the Old, while, at the same time, it declares the system of slavery an abomination, a gross violation of the most sacred rights, and so on. Well, now the chain is as complete as need be. All parts are in; every one standing in his place, and saying just what is required, and no more. The trader does the repulsive work, the Southern church defends him, the Northern church defends the South. Every one does as much for slavery as would be at all expedient, considering the latitude they live in. This is the practical result of the thing.

The melancholy part of the matter is, that while a large body of New School men, and many Old School, are decided anti-slavery men, this denominational position carries their influence on the other side. As goes the General Assembly, so goes their influence. The following affecting letter on this subject was written by that eminently pious man, Dr. Nelson, whose work on Infidelity is one of the most efficient popular appeals that has ever appeared:

I have resided in North Carolina more than forty years, and been intimately acquainted with the system, and I can scarcely even think of its operations without shedding tears. It causes me excessive grief to think of my own poor slaves, for whom I have for years been trying to find a free home. It strikes me with equal astonishment and horror to hear Northern people make light of slavery. Had they seen and known as much of it as I, they could not thus treat it, unless callous to the deepest woes and degradation of humanity, and dead both to the religion and philanthropy of the gospel. But many of them are doing just what the hardest-hearted tyrants of the South most desire. Those tyrants would not, on any account, have them advocate or even apologize for slavery in an unqualified manner. This would be bad policy with the North. I wonder that Gerritt Smith should understand slavery so much better than most of the Northern people. How true was his remark, on a certain occasion,

namely, that the South are laughing in their sleeves, to think what dupes they make of most of the people at the North in regard to the real character of slavery! Well did Mr. Smith remark that the system, carried out on its fundamental principle, would as soon enslave any laboring white man as the African. But, if it were not for the support of the North, the fabric of blood would fall at once. And of all the efforts of public bodies at the North to sustain slavery, the Connecticut General Association has made the best one. I have never seen anything so well constructed in that line as their resolutions of June, 1836. The South certainly could not have asked anything more effectual. But, of all Northern periodicals, the New York Observer must have the preference, as an efficient support of slavery. I am not sure but it does more than all things combined to keep the dreadful system alive. It is just the succor demanded by the South. Its abuse of the abolitionists is music in Southern ears, which operates as a charm. But nothing is equal to its harping upon the “religious privileges and instruction” of the slaves of the South. And nothing could be so false and injurious (to the cause of freedom and religion) as the impression it gives on that subject. I say what I know when I speak in relation to this matter. I have been intimately acquainted with the religious opportunities of slaves,—in the constant habit of hearing the sermons which are preached to them. And I solemnly affirm, that, during the forty years of my residence and observation in this line, I never heard a single one of these sermons but what was taken up with the obligations and duties of slaves to their masters. Indeed, I never heard a sermon to slaves but what made obedience to masters by the slaves the fundamental and supreme law of religion. Any candid and intelligent man can decide whether such preaching is not, as to religious purposes, worse than none at all.

Again: it is wonderful how the credulity of the North is subjected to imposition in regard to the kind treatment of slaves. For myself, I can clear up the apparent contradictions found in writers who have resided at or visited the South. The “majority of slave-holders,” say some, “treat their slaves with kindness.” Now, this may be true in certain states and districts setting aside all questions of treatment except such as refer to the body. And yet, while the “majority of slave-holders” in a certain section may be kind, the majority of slaves in that section will be treated with cruelty. This is the truth in many such cases, that while there may be thirty men who may have but one slave apiece, and that a house-servant, a single man in their neighborhood may have a hundred slaves,—all field-hands, half-fed, worked excessively, and whipped most cruelly. This is what I have often seen. To give a case, to show the awful influence of slavery upon the master, I will mention a Presbyterian elder, who was esteemed one of the best men in the region,—a very kind master. I was called to his death-bed to write his will. He had what was considered a favorite house-servant, a female. After all other things were disposed of, the elder

paused, as if in doubt what to do with “Su.” I entertained pleasing expectations of hearing the word “liberty” fall from his lips; but who can tell my surprise when I heard the master exclaim, “What shall be done with Su? I am afraid she will never be under a master severe enough for her.” Shall I say that both the dying elder and his “Su” were members of the same church, the latter stately receiving the emblems of a Saviour’s dying love from the former!

All this temporizing and concession has been excused on the plea of brotherly love. What a plea for us Northern freemen! Do we think the slave-system such a happy, desirable thing for our brothers and sisters at the South? Can we look at our common schools, our neat, thriving towns and villages, our dignified, intelligent, self-respecting farmers and mechanics, all concomitants of free labor, and think slavery any blessing to our Southern brethren? That system which beggars all the lower class of whites, which curses the very soil, which eats up everything before it, like the palmer-worm, canker and locust,—which makes common schools an impossibility, and the preaching of the gospel almost as much so,—this system a blessing! Does brotherly love require us to help the South preserve it?

Consider the educational influences under which such children as Eva and Henrique must grow up there! We are speaking of what many a Southern mother feels, of what makes many a Southern father’s heart sore. Slavery has been spoken of in its influence on the family of the slave. There are those, who never speak, who could tell, if they would, its influence on the family of the master. It makes one’s heart ache to see generation after generation of lovely, noble children exposed to such influences. What a country the South might be, could she develop herself without this curse! If the Southern character, even under all these disadvantages, retains so much that is noble, and is fascinating even in its faults, what might it do with free institutions?

Who is the real, who is the true and noble lover of the South?—they who love her with all these faults and incumbrances, or they who fix their eyes on the bright ideal of what she might be, and say that these faults are no proper part of her? Is it true love to a friend to accept the ravings of insanity as a true specimen of his mind? Is it true love to accept the disfigurement of sickness as a specimen of his best condition? Is it not truer love to say, “This curse is no part of our brother; it dishonors him; it does him injustice; it misrepresents him in the eyes of all nations. We love his better self, and we will have no fellowship with his betrayer. This is the part of true, generous, Christian love.”

But will it be said. “The abolition enterprise was begun in a wrong spirit, by reckless, meddling, impudent fanatics”? Well, supposing that this were true, how came it to be so? If the church of Christ had begun it right, these so-called fanatics would not have begun it wrong. In a deadly pestilence, if the right physicians do not prescribe, everybody will prescribe,—men, women and

children, will prescribe,—because something must be done. If the Presbyterian Church in 1818 had pursued the course the Quakers did, there never would have been any fanaticism. The Quakers did all by brotherly love. They melted the chains of Mammon only in the fires of a divine charity. When Christ came into Jerusalem, after all the mighty works that he had done, while all the so-called better classes were non-committal or opposed, the multitude cut down branches of palm-trees and cried Hosanna! There was a most indecorous tumult. The very children caught the enthusiasm, and were crying Hosannas in the temple. This was contradictory to all ecclesiastical rules. It was a highly improper state of things. The Chief Priests and Scribes said unto Jesus, “Master, speak unto these that they hold their peace.” That gentle eye flashed as he answered, “I tell you, if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out.”

Suppose a fire bursts out in the streets of Boston, while the regular conservators of the city, who have the keys of the fire-engines, and the regulation of fire-companies, are sitting together in some distant part of the city, consulting for the public good. The cry of fire reaches them, but they think it a false alarm. The fire is no less real, for all that. It burns, and rages, and roars, till everybody in the neighborhood sees that something must be done. A few stout leaders break open the doors of the engine-houses, drag out the engines, and begin, regularly or irregularly, playing on the fire. But the destroyer still advances. Messengers come in hot haste to the hall of these deliberators, and, in the unselect language of fear and terror, revile them for not coming out.

“Bless me!” says a decorous leader of the body, “what horrible language these men use!”

“They show a very bad spirit,” remarks another; “we can’t possibly join them in such a state of things.”

Here the more energetic members of the body rush out, to see if the thing be really so: and in a few minutes come back, if possible more earnest than the others.

“O! there is a fire!—a horrible, dreadful fire! The city is burning,—men, women, children, all burning, perishing! Come out, come out! As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between us and death!”

“I am not going out; everybody that goes gets crazy,” says one.

“I’ve noticed,” says another, “that as soon as anybody goes out to look, he gets just so excited.—I won’t look.”

But by this time the angry fire has burned into their very neighborhood. The red demon glares into their windows. And now, fairly aroused, they get up



and begin to look out.

“Well, there is a fire, and no mistake!” says one.

“Something ought to be done,” says another.

“Yes,” says a third; “if it wasn’t for being mixed up with such a crowd and rabble of folks, I’d go out.”

“Upon my word,” says another, “there are women in the ranks, carrying pails of water! There, one woman is going up a ladder to get those children out. What an indecorum! If they’d manage this matter properly, we would join them.”

And now come lumbering over from Charlestown the engines and fire-companies.

“What impudence of Charlestown,” say these men, “to be sending over here,—just as if we could not put our own fires out! They have fires over there, as much as we do.”

And now the flames roar and burn, and shake hands across the streets. They leap over the steeples, and glare demoniacally out of the church-windows.

“For Heaven’s sake, DO SOMETHING!” is the cry. “Pull down the houses! Blow up those blocks of stores with gunpowder! Anything to stop it.”

“See, now, what ultra, radical measures they are going at,” says one of these spectators.

Brave men, who have rushed into the thickest of the fire, come out, and fall dead in the street.

“They are impracticable enthusiasts. They have thrown their lives away in foolhardiness,” says another.

So, church of Christ, burns that awful fire! Evermore burning, burning, burning, over church and altar; burning over senate-house and forum; burning up liberty, burning up religion! No earthly hands kindled that fire. From its sheeted flame and wreaths of sulphurous smoke glares out upon thee the eye of that ENEMY who was a murderer from the beginning. It is a fire that BURNS TO THE LOWEST HELL!

Church of Christ, there was an hour when this fire might have been extinguished by thee. Now, thou standest like a mighty man astonished,—like a mighty man that cannot save. But the Hope of Israel is not dead. The Saviour thereof in time of trouble is yet alive.

If every church in our land were hung with mourning,—if every Christian

should put on sack-cloth,—if “the priest should weep between the porch and the altar,” and say, “Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach!”—that were not too great a mourning for such a time as this.

O, church of Jesus! consider what hath been said in the midst of thee. What a heresy hast thou tolerated in thy bosom! Thy God the defender of slavery!—thy God the patron of slave-law! Thou hast suffered the character of thy God to be slandered. Thou hast suffered false witness against thy Redeemer and thy Sanctifier. The Holy Trinity of heaven has been foully traduced in the midst of thee; and that God whose throne is awful in justice has been made the patron and leader of oppression.

This is a sin against every Christian on the globe.

Why do we love and adore, beyond all things, our God? Why do we say to him, from our inmost souls, “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee”? Is this a bought up worship?—is it a cringing and hollow subserviency, because he is great and rich and powerful, and we dare not do otherwise? His eyes are a flame of fire;—he reads the inmost soul, and will accept no such service. From our souls we adore and love him, because he is holy and just and good, and will not at all acquit the wicked. We love him because he is the father of the fatherless, the judge of the widow;—because he lifteth all who fall, and raiseth them that are bowed down. We love Jesus Christ, because he is the Lamb without spot, the one altogether lovely. We love the Holy Comforter, because he comes to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. O, holy church universal, throughout all countries and nations! O, ye great cloud of witnesses, of all people and languages and tongues!—differing in many doctrines, but united in crying Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for he hath redeemed us from all iniquity!—awake!—arise up!—be not silent! Testify against this heresy of the latter day, which, if it were possible, is deceiving the very elect. Your God, your glory, is slandered. Answer with the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings! Answer with the innumerable multitude in heaven, who cry, day and night, Holy, holy, holy! just and true are thy ways, O King of saints!

### **CHAPTER III.**

### **MARTYRDOM.**

At the time when the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches passed the anti-slavery resolutions which we have recorded, the system of slavery could

probably have been extirpated by the church with comparatively little trouble. Such was the experience of the Quakers, who tried the experiment at that time, and succeeded. The course they pursued was the simplest possible. They districted their church, and appointed regular committees, whose business it was to go from house to house, and urge the rules of the church individually on each slave-holder, one by one. This was done in a spirit of such simplicity and brotherly love that very few resisted the appeal. They quietly yielded up, in obedience to their own consciences, and the influence of their brethren. This mode of operation, though gentle, was as efficient as the calm sun of summer, which, by a few hours of patient shining, dissolves the iceberg on which all the storms of winter have beat in vain. O, that so happy a course had been thought of and pursued by all the other denominations! But the day is past when this monstrous evil would so quietly yield to gentle and persuasive measures.

At the time that the Quakers made their attempt, this Leviathan in the reeds and rushes of America was young and callow, and had not learned his strength. Then he might have been “drawn out with a hook;” then they might have “made a covenant with him, and taken him for a servant forever;” but now Leviathan is full-grown. “Behold, the hope of him is vain. Shall not men be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal; one is so near to another that no air can come between them. The flakes of his flesh are joined together. They are firm in themselves, they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone, yea, as hard as the nether millstone. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. Arrows cannot make him flee; sling-stones are turned with him into stubble. He laugheth at the shaking of a spear. Upon the earth there is not his like: he is king over all the children of pride.”

There are those who yet retain the delusion that, somehow or other, without any very particular effort or opposition, by a soft, genteel, rather apologetic style of operation, Leviathan is to be converted, baptized and Christianized. They can try it. Such a style answers admirably as long as it is understood to mean nothing. But just the moment that Leviathan finds they are in earnest, then they will see the consequences. The debates of all the synods in the United States, as to whether he is an evil per se, will not wake him. In fact, they are rather a pleasant humdrum. Nor will any resolutions that they “behold him with regret” give him especial concern; neither will he be much annoyed by the expressed expectation that he is to die somewhere about the millennium. Notwithstanding all the recommendations of synods and conferences, Leviathan himself has but an indifferent opinion of his own Christianity, and an impression that he would not be considered quite in keeping with the universal reign of Christ on earth; but he doesn’t much concern himself about the prospect of giving up the ghost at so very remote a

period.

But let any one, either North or South, take the sword of the Spirit and make one pass under his scales that he shall feel, and then he will know what sort of a conflict Christian had with Apollyon. Let no one, either North or South, undertake this warfare, to whom fame, or ease, or wealth, or anything that this world has to give, are too dear to be sacrificed. Let no one undertake it who is not prepared to hate his own good name, and, if need be, his life also. For this reason, we will give here the example of one martyr who died for this cause; for it has been well said that “the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church.”

The Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy was the son of a Maine woman, a native of that state which, barren in all things else, is fruitful in noble sentiments and heroic deeds. Of his early days we say nothing. Probably they were like those of other Maine boys. We take up his history where we find him a clergyman in St. Louis, Mo., editing a religious newspaper. Though professing not to be a technical abolitionist, he took an open and decided stand against slavery. This aroused great indignation, and called forth threats of violence. Soon after, a mob, composed of the most respectable individuals of the place, burned alive a negro-man in the streets of St. Louis, for stabbing the officers who came to arrest him. This scene of protracted torture lasted till the deed was completed, and the shrieks of the victim for a more merciful death were disregarded. In his charge to the grand jury, Judge Lawless decided that no legal redress could be had for this outrage, because, being the act of an infuriated multitude, it was above the law. Elijah Lovejoy expressed, in determined language, his horror of the transaction and of the decision. For these causes, his office was torn down and destroyed by the mob. Happening to be in St. Charles, a mob of such men as only slavery could raise attacked the house to take his life. His distracted wife kept guard at his door, struggling with men armed with bludgeons and bowie-knives, who swore that they would have his heart's blood. A woman's last despair, and the aid of friends, repelled the first assault; but when the mob again returned, he made his escape. Lovejoy came to Alton, Illinois, and there set up his paper. The mob followed him. His press was twice destroyed, and he was daily threatened with assassination.

Before his press was destroyed the third time, a call was issued in his paper for a convention of the enemies of slavery and friends of free inquiry in Illinois, for the purpose of considering and recommending measures adapted to meet the existing crisis. This call was signed by about two hundred and fifty persons from different parts of the state, among whom was the Rev. E. Beecher, then President of Illinois College. This gathering brought together a large number. When they met for discussion, the mobocrats came also among them, and there was a great ferment. The mob finally out-voted and dissolved

the convention. It was then resolved to form an anti-slavery society, and to issue a declaration of sentiments, and an address to the people of the state. Threats were expressed that, if Mr. Lovejoy continued to print his paper, the mob would destroy his expected press. In this state of excitement, Mr. Beecher, at the request of the society, preached two sermons, setting forth the views and course of conduct which were contemplated in the proposed movement. They were subsequently set forth in a published document, an extract from which will give the reader an idea of what they were:

1. We shall endeavor to induce all our fellow-citizens to elevate their minds above all selfish, pecuniary, political, and local interests; and, from a deep sense of the presence of God, to regard solely the eternal and immutable principles of truth, which no human legislature or popular sentiment can alter or remove.

2. We shall endeavor to present the question as one between this community and God,—a subject on which He deeply feels, and on which we owe great and important duties to Him and to our fellow-citizens.

3. We shall endeavor, as far as possible, to allay the violence of party strife, to remove all unholy excitement, and to produce mutual confidence and kindness, and a deep interest in the welfare of all parts of our nation; and a strong desire to preserve its union and promote its highest welfare.

Our entire reliance is upon truth and love, and the influences of the Holy Spirit. We desire to compel no one to act against his judgment or conscience by an oppressive power of public sentiment; but to arouse all men to candid thought, and impartial inquiry in the fear of God, we do desire.

And, to accomplish this end, we shall use the same means that are used to enlighten and elevate the public mind on all other great moral subjects,—personal influence, public address, the pulpit and the press.

4. We shall endeavor to produce a new and radical investigation of the principles of human rights, and of the relations of all just legislation to them, deriving our principles from the nature of the human mind, the relations of man to God, and the revealed will of the Creator.

5. We shall then endeavor to examine the slave-laws of our land in the light of these principles, and to prove that they are essentially sinful, and that they are at war alike with the will of God and all the interests of the master, the slave, and the community at large.

6. We shall then endeavor to show in what manner communities where such laws exist may relieve themselves at once, in perfect safety and peace, both of the guilt and dangers of the system.

7. And, until communities can be aroused to do their duties, we shall endeavor to illustrate and enforce the duties of individual slave-holders in such communities.

To views presented in this spirit and manner one would think there could have been no rational objection. The only difficulty with them was, that, though calm and kind, they were felt to be in earnest; and at once Leviathan was wide awake.

The next practical question was, Shall the third printing-press be defended, or shall it also be destroyed?

There was a tremendous excitement, and a great popular tumult. The timid, prudent, peace-loving majority, who are to be found in every city, who care not what principles prevail, so they promote their own interest, were wavering and pusillanimous, and thus encouraged the mob. Every motive was urged to induce Mr. Beecher and Mr. Lovejoy to forego the attempt to reëstablish the press. The former was told that a price had been set on his head in Missouri,—a fashionable mode of meeting argument in the pro-slavery parts of this country. Mr. Lovejoy had been so long threatened with assassination, day and night, that the argument with him was something musty. Mr. Beecher was also told that the interests of the college of which he was president would be sacrificed, and that, if he chose to risk his own safety, he had no right to risk those interests. But Mr. Beecher and Mr. Lovejoy both felt that the very foundation principle of free institutions had at this time been seriously compromised, all over the country, by yielding up the right of free discussion at the clamors of the mob; that it was a precedent of very wide and very dangerous application.

In a public meeting, Mr. Beecher addressed the citizens on the right of maintaining free inquiry, and of supporting every man in the right of publishing and speaking his conscientious opinions. He read to them some of those eloquent passages in which Dr. Channing had maintained the same rights in very similar circumstances in Boston. He read to them extracts from foreign papers, which showed how the American character suffered in foreign lands from the prevalence in America of Lynch law and mob violence. He defended the right of Mr. Lovejoy to print and publish his conscientious opinions; and, finally, he read from some Southern journals extracts in which they had strongly condemned the course of the mob, and vindicated Mr. Lovejoy's right to express his opinions. He then proposed to them that they should pass resolutions to the following effect:

That the free communication of opinion is one of the invaluable rights of man; and that every citizen may freely speak, write or print, on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of the liberty.

That maintenance of these principles should be independent of all regard to persons and sentiments.

That they should be especially maintained with regard to unpopular sentiments, since no others need the protection of law.

That on these grounds alone, and without regard to political and moral differences, we agree to protect the press and property of the editor of the Alton Observer, and support him in his right to publish whatever he pleases, holding him responsible only to the laws of the land.

These resolutions, so proposed, were to be taken into consideration at a final meeting of the citizens, which was to be held the next day.

That meeting was held. Their first step was to deprive Mr. Beecher, and all who were not citizens of that county, of the right of debating on the report to be presented. The committee then reported that they deeply regretted the excited state of feeling; that they cherished strong confidence that the citizens would refrain from undue excitements; that the exigences of the time required a course of moderation and compromise; and that, while there was no disposition to prevent free discussion in general, they deemed it indispensable to the public tranquillity that Mr. Lovejoy should not publish a paper in that city; not wishing to reflect in the slightest degree upon Mr. Lovejoy's character and motives. All that the meeting waited for now was, to hear whether Mr. Lovejoy would comply with their recommendation.

One of the committee arose, and expressed his sympathy for Mr. Lovejoy, characterizing him as an unfortunate individual, hoping that they would all consider that he had a wife and family to support, and trusting that they would disgrace him as little as possible; but that he and all his party would see the necessity of making a compromise, and departing from Alton. What followed is related in the words of Mr. Beecher, who was present at the meeting:

As Brother Lovejoy rose to reply to the speech above mentioned, I watched his countenance with deep interest, not to say anxiety. I saw no tokens of disturbance. With a tranquil, self-possessed air, he went up to the bar within which the chairman sat, and, in a tone of deep, tender and subdued feeling, spoke as follows:

"I feel, Mr. Chairman, that this is the most solemn moment of my life. I feel, I trust, in some measure the responsibilities which at this hour I sustain to these my fellow-citizens, to the church of which I am a minister, to my country, and to God. And let me beg of you, before I proceed further, to construe nothing I shall say as being disrespectful to this assembly. I have no such feeling; far from it. And if I do not act or speak according to their wishes at all times, it is because I cannot conscientiously do it.

“It is proper I should state the whole matter, as I understand it, before this audience. I do not stand here to argue the question as presented by the report of the committee. My only wonder is that the honorable gentleman the chairman of that committee, for whose character I entertain great respect, though I have not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance,—my only wonder is how that gentleman could have brought himself to submit such a report.

“Mr. Chairman, I do not admit that it is the business of this assembly to decide whether I shall or shall not publish a newspaper in this city. The gentlemen have, as the lawyers say, made a wrong issue. I have the right to do it. I know that I have the right freely to speak and publish my sentiments, subject only to the laws of the land for the abase of that right. This right was given me by my Maker; and is solemnly guaranteed to me by the constitution of these United States, and of this state. What I wish to know of you is, whether you will protect me in the exercise of this right; or whether, as heretofore, I am to be subjected to personal indignity and outrage. These resolutions, and the measures proposed by them, are spoken of as a compromise—a compromise between two parties. Mr. Chairman, this is not so. There is but one party here. It is simply a question whether the law shall be enforced, or whether the mob shall be allowed, as they now do, to continue to trample it under their feet, by violating with impunity the rights of an innocent individual.

“Mr. Chairman, what have I to compromise? If freely to forgive those who have so greatly injured me, if to pray for their temporal and eternal happiness, if still to wish for the prosperity of your city and state, notwithstanding all the indignities I have suffered in it,—if this be the compromise intended, then do I willingly make it. My rights have been shamefully, wickedly outraged; this I know, and feel, and can never forget. But I can and do freely forgive those who have done it.

“But if by a compromise is meant that I should cease from doing that which duty requires of me, I cannot make it. And the reason is, that I fear God more than I fear man. Think not that I would lightly go contrary to public sentiment around me. The good opinion of my fellow-men is dear to me, and I would sacrifice anything but principle to obtain their good wishes; but when they ask me to surrender this, they ask for more than I can, than I dare give. Reference is made to the fact that I offered a few days since to give up the editorship of the Observer into other hands. This is true; I did so because it was thought or said by some that perhaps the paper would be better patronized in other hands. They declined accepting my offer, however, and since then we have heard from the friends and supporters of the paper in all parts of the state. There was but one sentiment among them, and this was that the paper could be sustained in no other hands than mine. It is also a very different question,



whether I shall voluntarily, or at the request of friends, yield up my post; or whether I shall forsake it at the demand of a mob. The former I am at all times ready to do, when circumstances occur to require it; as I will never put my personal wishes or interests in competition with the cause of that Master whose minister I am. But the latter, be assured. I NEVER will do. God, in his providence,—so say all my brethren, and so I think,—has devolved upon me the responsibility of maintaining my ground here; and, Mr. Chairman, I am determined to do it. A voice comes to me from Maine, from Massachusetts, from Connecticut, from New-York, from Pennsylvania,—yea, from Kentucky, from Mississippi, from Missouri,—calling upon me, in the name of all that is dear in heaven or earth, to stand fast; and, by the help of God, I WILL STAND. I know I am but one, and you are many. My strength would avail but little against you all. You can crush me, if you will; but I shall die at my post, for I cannot and will not forsake it.

“Why should I flee from Alton? Is not this a free state? When assailed by a mob at St. Louis, I came hither, as to the home of freedom and of the laws. The mob has pursued me here, and why should I retreat again? Where can I be safe, if not here? Have not I a right to claim the protection of the laws? What more can I have in any other place? Sir, the very act of retreating will embolden the mob to follow me wherever I go. No, sir, there is no way to escape the mob, but to abandon the path of duty; and that, God helping me, I will never do.

“It has been said here, that my hand is against every man, and every man’s hand against me. The last part of the declaration is too painfully true. I do indeed find almost every hand lifted against me; but against whom in this place has my hand been raised? I appeal to every individual present; whom of you have I injured? Whose character have I traduced? Whose family have I molested? Whose business have I meddled with? If any, let him rise here and testify against me.—No one answers.

“And do not your resolutions say that you find nothing against my private or personal character? And does any one believe that, if there was anything to be found, it would not be found and brought forth? If in anything I have offended against the law, I am not so popular in this community as that it would be difficult to convict me. You have courts and judges and juries; they find nothing against me. And now you come together for the purpose of driving out a confessedly innocent man, for no cause but that he dares to think and speak as his conscience and his God dictate. Will conduct like this stand the scrutiny of your country, of posterity, above all, of the judgment-day? For remember, the Judge of that day is no respecter of persons. Pause, I beseech you, and reflect! The present excitement will soon be over; the voice of conscience will at last be heard. And in some season of honest thought, even

in this world, as you review the scenes of this hour, you will be compelled to say, 'He was right; he was right.'

"But you have been exhorted to be lenient and compassionate, and in driving me away to affix no unnecessary disgrace upon me. Sir, I reject all such compassion. You cannot disgrace me. Scandal and falsehood and calumny have already done their worst. My shoulders have borne the burthen till it sits easy upon them. You may hang me up, as the mob hung up the individuals of Vicksburg! You may burn me at the stake, as they did McIntosh at St. Louis; or you may tar and feather me, or throw me into the Mississippi, as you have often threatened to do; but you cannot disgrace me. I, and I alone, can disgrace myself; and the deepest of all disgrace would be, at a time like this, to deny my Master by forsaking his cause. He died for me; and I were most unworthy to bear his name, should I refuse, if need be, to die for him.

"Again, you have been told that I have a family, who are dependent on me; and this has been given as a reason why I should be driven off as gently as possible. It is true, Mr. Chairman, I am a husband and a father; and this it is that adds the bitterest ingredient to the cup of sorrow I am called to drink. I am made to feel the wisdom of the apostle's advice; 'It is better not to marry.' I know, sir, that in this contest I stake not my life only, but that of others also. I do not expect my wife will ever recover the shock received at the awful scenes through which she was called to pass at St. Charles. And how was it the other night, on my return to my house? I found her driven to the garret, through fear of the mob, who were prowling round my house. And scarcely had I entered the house ere my windows were broken in by the brickbats of the mob, and she so alarmed that it was impossible for her to sleep or rest that night. I am hunted as a partridge upon the mountains; I am pursued as a felon through your streets; and to the guardian power of the law I look in vain for that protection against violence which even the vilest criminal may claim.

"Yet think not that I am unhappy. Think not that I regret the choice that I have made. While all around me is violence and tumult, all is peace within. An approving conscience, and the rewarding smile of God, is a full recompense for all that I forego and all that I endure. Yes, sir, I enjoy a peace which nothing can destroy. I sleep sweetly and undisturbed, except when awaked by the brickbats of the mob.

"No, sir, I am not unhappy. I have counted the cost, and stand prepared freely to offer up my all in the service of God. Yes, sir, I am fully aware of all the sacrifice I make, in here pledging myself to continue this contest to the last.—(Forgive these tears—I had not intended to shed them, and they flow not for myself but others.) But I am commanded to forsake father and mother and wife and children for Jesus' sake; and as his professed disciple I stand prepared to do it. The time for fulfilling this pledge in my case, it seems to me,

has come. Sir, I dare not flee away from Alton. Should I attempt it, I should feel that the angel of the Lord, with his flaming sword, was pursuing me wherever I went. It is because I fear God that I am not afraid of all who oppose me in this city. No, sir, the contest has commenced here; and here it must be finished. Before God and you all, I here pledge myself to continue it, if need be, till death. If I fall, my grave shall be made in Alton.”

In person Lovejoy was well formed, in voice and manners refined; and the pathos of this last appeal, uttered in entire simplicity, melted every one present, and produced a deep silence. It was one of those moments when the feelings of an audience tremble in the balance, and a grain may incline them to either side. A proposition to support him might have carried, had it been made at that moment. The charm was broken by another minister of the gospel, who rose and delivered a homily on the necessity of compromise, recommending to Mr. Lovejoy especial attention to the example of Paul, who was let down in a basket from a window in Damascus; as if Alton had been a heathen city under a despotic government! The charm once broken, the meeting became tumultuous and excited, and all manner of denunciations were rained down upon abolitionists. The meeting passed the resolutions reported by the committee, and refused to resolve to aid in sustaining the law against illegal violence; and the mob perfectly understood that, do what they might, they should have no disturbance. It being now understood that Mr. Lovejoy would not retreat, it was supposed that the crisis of the matter would develop itself when his printing-press came on shore.

During the following three days there seemed to be something of a reëction. One of the most influential of the mob-leaders was heard to say that it was of no use to go on destroying presses, as there was money enough on East to bring new ones, and that they might as well let the fanatics alone.

This somewhat encouraged the irresolute city authorities, and the friends of the press thought, if they could get it once landed, and safe into the store of Messrs. Godfrey & Gilman, that the crisis would be safely passed. They therefore sent an express to the captain to delay the landing of the boat till three o’clock in the morning, and the leaders of the mob, after watching till they were tired, went home; the press was safely landed and deposited, and all supposed that the trouble was safely passed. Under this impression Mr. Beecher left Alton, and returned home.

We will give a few extracts from Mr. Beecher’s narrative, which describe his last interview with Mr. Lovejoy on that night, after they had landed and secured the press:

Shortly after the hour fixed on for the landing of the boat, Mr. Lovejoy arose, and called me to go with him to see what was the result. The moon had

set and it was still dark, but day was near; and here and there a light was glimmering from the window of some sick room, or of some early riser. The streets were empty and silent, and the sounds of our feet echoed from the walls as we passed along. Little did he dream, at that hour, of the contest which the next night would witness; that these same streets would echo with the shouts of an infuriate mob, and be stained with his own heart's blood.

We found the boat there, and the press in the warehouse; aided in raising it to the third story. We were all rejoiced that no conflict had ensued, and that the press was safe; and all felt that the crisis was over. We were sure that the store could not be carried by storm by so few men as had ever yet acted in a mob; and though the majority of the citizens would not aid to defend the press, we had no fear that they would aid in an attack. So deep was this feeling that it was thought that a small number was sufficient to guard the press afterward; and it was agreed that the company should be divided into sections of six, and take turns on successive nights. As they had been up all night, Mr. Lovejoy and myself offered to take charge of the press till morning; and they retired.

The morning soon began to dawn; and that morning I shall never forget. Who that has stood on the banks of the mighty stream that then rolled before me can forget the emotions of sublimity that filled his heart, as in imagination he has traced those channels of intercourse opened by it and its branches through the illimitable regions of this western world? I thought of future ages, and of the countless millions that should dwell on this mighty stream; and that nothing but the truth would make them free. Never did I feel as then the value of the right for which we were contending thoroughly to investigate and fearlessly to proclaim that truth. O, the sublimity of moral power! By it God sways the universe. By it he will make the nations free.

I passed through the scuttle to the roof, and ascended to the highest point of the wall. The sky and the river were beginning to glow with approaching day, and the busy hum of business to be heard. I looked with exultation on the scenes below. I felt that a bloodless battle had been gained for God and for the truth; and that Alton was redeemed from eternal shame. And as all around grew brighter with approaching day, I thought of that still brighter sun, even now dawning on the world, and soon to bathe it with floods of glorious light.

Brother Lovejoy, too, was happy. He did not exult; he was tranquil and composed, but his countenance indicated the state of his mind. It was a calm and tranquil joy, for he trusted in God that the point was gained: that the banner of an unfettered press would soon wave over that mighty stream.

Vain hopes! How soon to be buried in a martyr's grave! Vain, did I say? No: they are not vain. Though dead he still speaketh; and a united world can never silence his voice.

The conclusion of the tragedy is briefly told. A volunteer company, of whom Lovejoy was one, was formed to act under the mayor in defence of the law. The next night the mob assailed the building at ten o'clock. The store consisted of two stone buildings in one block, with doors and windows at each end, but no windows at the sides. The roof was of wood. Mr. Gilman, opening the end door of the third story, asked what they wanted. They demanded the press. He refused to give it up, and earnestly entreated them to go away without violence, assuring them that, as the property had been committed to their charge, they should defend it at the risk of their lives. After some ineffectual attempts, the mob shouted to set fire to the roof. Mr. Lovejoy, with some others, went out to defend it from this attack, and was shot down by the deliberate aim of one of the mob. After this wound he had barely strength to return to the store, went up one flight of stairs, fell and expired.

Those within then attempted to capitulate, but were refused with curses by the mob, who threatened to burn the store, and shoot them as they came out. At length the building was actually on fire, and they fled out, fired on as they went by the mob. So terminated the Alton tragedy.

When the noble mother of Lovejoy heard of his death, she said, "It is well. I had rather he would die so than forsake his principles." All is not over with America while such mothers are yet left. Was she not blessed who could give up such a son in such a spirit? Who was that woman whom God pronounced blessed above all women? Was it not she who saw her dearest crucified? So differently does God see from what man sees.

## **CHAPTER IV.**

### **SERVITUDE IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH COMPARED WITH AMERICAN SLAVERY.**

"Look now upon this picture!——and on this."

Hamlet.

It is the standing claim of those professors of religion at the South who support slavery that they are pursuing the same course in relation to it that Christ and his apostles did. Let us consider the course of Christ and his apostles, and the nature of the kingdom which they founded, and see if this be the fact.

Napoleon said, "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself, have founded empires; but upon what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon LOVE."

The desire to be above others in power, rank and station, is one of the deepest in human nature. If there is anything which distinguishes man from other creatures, it is that he is par excellence an oppressive animal. On this principle, as Napoleon observed, all empires have been founded; and the idea of founding a kingdom in any other way had not even been thought of when Jesus of Nazareth appeared.

When the serene Galilean came up from the waters of Jordan, crowned and glorified by the descending Spirit, and began to preach, saying, "The kingdom of God is at hand," what expectations did he excite? Men's heads were full of armies to be marshalled, of provinces to be conquered, of cabinets to be formed, and offices to be distributed. There was no doubt at all that he could get all these things for them, for had he not miraculous power?

Therefore it was that Jesus of Nazareth was very popular, and drew crowds after him.

Of these, he chose, from the very lowest walk of life, twelve men of the best and most honest heart which he could find, that he might make them his inseparable companions, and mould them, by his sympathy and friendship, into some capacity to receive and transmit his ideas to mankind.

But they too, simple-hearted and honest though they were, were bewildered and bewitched by the common vice of mankind; and, though they loved him full well, still had an eye on the offices and ranks which he was to confer, when, as they expected, this miraculous kingdom should blaze forth.

While his heart was struggling and laboring, and nerving itself by nights of prayer to meet desertion, betrayal, denial, rejection, by his beloved people, and ignominious death, they were forever wrangling about the offices in the new kingdom. Once and again, in the plainest way, he told them that no such thing was to be looked for; that there was to be no distinction in his kingdom, except the distinction of pain, and suffering, and self-renunciation, voluntarily assumed for the good of mankind.

His words seemed to them as idle tales. In fact, they considered him as a kind of a myth,—a mystery,—a strange, supernatural, inexplicable being, forever talking in parables, and saying things which they could not understand.

One thing only they held fast to: he was a king, he would have a kingdom; and he had told them that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And so, when he was going up to Jerusalem to die,—when that anguish long wrestled with in the distance had come, almost face to face, and he was walking in front of them, silent, abstracted, speaking occasionally in broken sentences, of which they feared to ask the meaning,—they, behind, beguiled

the time with the usual dispute of “who should be greatest.”

The mother of James and John came to him, and, breaking the mournful train of revery, desired a certain thing of him,—that her two sons might sit at his right hand and his left, as prime ministers, in the new kingdom. With his sad, far-seeing eye still fixed upon Gethsemane and Calvary, he said, “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup which I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I shall be baptized?”

James and John were both quite certain that they were able. They were willing to fight through anything for the kingdom’s sake. The ten were very indignant. Were they not as willing as James and John? And so there was a contention among them.

“But Jesus called them to him and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you.

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant,—yea, the servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Let us now pass on to another week in this history. The disciples have seen their Lord enter triumphantly into Jerusalem, amid the shouts of the multitude. An indescribable something in his air and manner convinces them that a great crisis is at hand. He walks among men as a descended God. Never were his words so thrilling and energetic. Never were words spoken on earth which so breathe and burn as these of the last week of the life of Christ. All the fervor and imagery and fire of the old prophets seemed to be raised from the dead, etherealized and transfigured in the person of this Jesus. They dare not ask him, but they are certain that the kingdom must be coming. They feel, in the thrill of that mighty soul, that a great cycle of time is finishing, and a new era in the world’s history beginning. Perhaps at this very feast of the Passover is the time when the miraculous banner is to be unfurled, and the new, immortal kingdom proclaimed. Again the ambitious longings arise. This new kingdom shall have ranks and dignities. And who is to sustain them? While therefore their Lord sits lost in thought, revolving in his mind that simple ordinance of love which he is about to constitute the sealing ordinance of his kingdom, it is said again, “There was a strife among them which should be accounted the greatest.”

This time Jesus does not remonstrate. He expresses no impatience, no weariness, no disgust. What does he, then? Hear what St. John says:

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that

he was come from God and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." "After he had washed their feet and had taken his garments and was sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

"Verily, verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Here, then, we have the king, and the constitution of the kingdom. The king on his knees at the feet of his servants, performing the lowest menial service, with the announcement, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

And when, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, all these immortal words of Christ, which had lain buried like dead seed in the heart, were quickened and sprang up in celestial verdure, then these twelve became, each one in his place, another Jesus, filled with the spirit of him who had gone heavenward. The primitive church, as organized by them, was a brotherhood of strict equality. There was no more contention who should be greatest; the only contention was, who should suffer and serve the most. The Christian church was an imperium in imperio; submitting outwardly to the laws of the land, but professing inwardly to be regulated by a higher faith and a higher law. They were dead to the world, and the world to them. Its customs were not their customs; its relations not their relations. All the ordinary relations of life, when they passed into the Christian church, underwent a quick, immortal change; so that the transformed relation resembled the old and heathen one no more than the glorious body which is raised in incorruption resembles the mortal one which was sown in corruption. The relation of marriage was changed, from a tyrannous dominion of the stronger sex over the weaker, to an intimate union, symbolizing the relation of Christ and the church. The relation of parent and child, purified from the harsh features of heathen law, became a just image of the love of the heavenly Father; and the relation of master and servant, in like manner, was refined into a voluntary relation between two equal brethren, in which the servant faithfully performed his duties as to the Lord, and the master gave him a full compensation for his services.

No one ever doubted that such a relation as this is an innocent one. It exists in all free states. It is the relation which exists between employer and employed generally, in the various departments of life. It is true, the master



was never called upon to perform the legal act of enfranchisement,—and why? Because the very nature of the kingdom into which the master and slave had entered enfranchised him. It is not necessary for a master to write a deed of enfranchisement when he takes his slaves into Canada, or even into New York or Pennsylvania. The moment the master and slave stand together on this soil, their whole relations to each other are changed. The master may remain master, and the servant a servant; but, according to the constitution of the state they have entered, the service must be a voluntary one on the part of the slave, and the master must render a just equivalent. When the water of baptism passed over the master and the slave, both alike came under the great constitutional law of Christ's empire, which is this:

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, yea, the servant of all.” Under such a law, servitude was dignified and made honorable, but slavery was made an impossibility.

That the church was essentially, and in its own nature, such an institution of equality, brotherhood, love and liberty, as made the existence of a slave, in the character of a slave, in it, a contradiction and an impossibility, is evident from the general scope and tendency of all the apostolic writings, particularly those of Paul.

And this view is obtained, not from a dry analysis of Greek words, and dismal discussions about the meaning of *doulos*, but from a full tide of celestial, irresistible spirit, full of life and love, that breathes in every description of the Christian church.

To all, whether bond or free, the apostle addresses these inspiring words: “There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” “For through him we all have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.” “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ, himself, being the chief corner-stone.” “Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

“For, as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

It was the theory of this blessed and divine unity, that whatever gift, or superiority, or advantage, was possessed by one member, was possessed by every member. Thus Paul says to them, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Having thus represented the church as one living body, inseparably united, the apostle uses a still more awful and impressive simile. The church, he says, is one body, and that body is the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. That is, He who filleth all in all seeks this church to be the associate and complement of himself, even as a wife is of the husband. This body of believers is spoken of as a bright and mystical bride, in the world, but not of it; spotless, divine, immortal, raised from the death of sin to newness of life, redeemed by the blood of her Lord, and to be presented at last unto him, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

A delicate and mysterious sympathy is supposed to pervade this church, like that delicate and mysterious tracery of nerves that overspreads the human body; the meanest member cannot suffer without the whole body quivering in pain. Thus says Paul, who was himself a perfect realization of this beautiful theory: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also."

But still further, individual Christians were reminded, in language of awful solemnity, "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and that ye are not your own?" And again, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." Nor was this sublime language in those days passed over as a mere idle piece of rhetoric, but was the ever-present consciousness of the soul.

Every Christian was made an object of sacred veneration to his brethren, as the temple of the living God. The soul of every Christian was hushed into awful stillness, and inspired to carefulness, watchfulness and sanctity, by the consciousness of an indwelling God. Thus Ignatius, who for his preëminent piety was called, par excellence, by his church, "Theophorus, the God-bearer," when summoned before the Emperor Trajan, used the following remarkable language: "No one can call Theophorus an evil spirit \* \* \* \* for, bearing in my heart Christ the king of heaven, I bring to nothing the arts and devices of the evil spirits."

"Who, then, is 'the God-bearer'?" asked Trajan.

"He who carries Christ in his heart," was the reply. \* \* \* \*

"Dost thou mean him whom Pontius Pilate crucified?"

“He is the one I mean,” replied Ignatius. \* \* \*

“Dost thou then bear the crucified one in thy heart?” asked Trajan.

“Even so,” said Ignatius; “for it is written, ‘I will dwell in them and rest in them.’”

So perfect was the identification of Christ with the individual Christian in the primitive church, that it was a familiar form of expression to speak of an injury done to the meanest Christian as an injury done to Christ. So St. Paul says, “When ye sin so against the weak brethren, and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ.” He says of himself, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

See, also, the following extracts from a letter by Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, to some poor Numidian churches, who had applied to him to redeem some of their members from slavery among bordering savage tribes. (Neander Denkw. I. 340.)

We could view the captivity of our brethren no otherwise than as our own, since we belong to one body, and not only love, but religion, excites us to redeem in our brethren the members of our own body. We must, even if affection were not sufficient to induce us to keep our brethren,—we must reflect that the temples of God are in captivity, and these temples of God ought not, by our neglect, long to remain in bondage. \* \* \*

Since the apostle says “as many of you as are baptized have put on Christ,” so in our captive brethren we must see before us Christ, who hath ransomed us from the danger of captivity, who hath redeemed us from the danger of death; Him who hath freed us from the abyss of Satan, and who now remains and dwells in us, to free Him from the hands of barbarians! With a small sum of money to ransom Him who hath ransomed us by his cross and blood; and who hath permitted this to take place that our faith may be proved thereby!

Now, because the Greek word *doulos* may mean a slave, and because it is evident that there were men in the Christian church who were called *douloi*, will anybody say, in the whole face and genius of this beautiful institution, that these men were held actually as slaves in the sense of Roman and American law? Of all dry, dull, hopeless stupidities, this is the most stupid. Suppose Christian masters did have servants who were called *douloi*, as is plain enough they did, is it not evident that the word *douloi* had become significant of something very different in the Christian church from what it meant in Roman law? It was not the business of the apostles to make new dictionaries; they did not change words,—they changed things. The baptized, regenerated, new-created *doulos*, of one body and one spirit with his master, made one with his master, even as Christ is one with the Father, a member with him of that

church which is the fulness of Him who filleth all in all,—was his relation to his Christian master like that of an American slave to his master? Would he who regarded his weakest brother as being one with Christ hold his brother as a chattel personal? Could he hold Christ as a chattel personal? Could he sell Christ for money? Could he hold the temple of the Holy Ghost as his property, and gravely defend his right to sell, lease, mortgage or hire the same, at his convenience, as that right has been argued in the slave-holding pulpits of America?

What would have been said at such a doctrine announced in the Christian church? Every member would have stopped his ears, and cried out, “Judas!” If he was pronounced accursed who thought that the gift of the Holy Ghost might be purchased with money, what would have been said of him who held that the very temple of the Holy Ghost might be bought and sold, and Christ the Lord become an article of merchandise? Such an idea never was thought of. It could not have been refuted, for it never existed. It was an unheard-of and unsupposable work of the devil, which Paul never contemplated as even possible, that one Christian could claim a right to hold another Christian as merchandise, and to trade in the “member of the body, flesh and bones” of Christ. Such a horrible doctrine never polluted the innocence of the Christian church even in thought.

The directions which Paul gives to Christian masters and servants sufficiently show what a redeeming change had passed over the institution. In 1st Timothy, St. Paul gives the following directions, first to those who have heathen masters, second, to those who have Christian masters. That concerning heathen masters is thus expressed: “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.” In the next verse the direction is given to the servants of Christian masters: “They that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.” Notice, now, the contrast between these directions. The servant of the heathen master is said to be under the yoke, and it is evidently implied that the servant of the Christian master was not under the yoke. The servant of the heathen master was under the severe Roman law; the servant of the Christian master is an equal, and a brother. In these circumstances, the servant of the heathen master is commanded to obey for the sake of recommending the Christian religion. The servant of the Christian master, on the other hand, is commanded not to despise his master because he is his brother; but he is to do him service because his master is faithful and beloved, a partaker of the same glorious hopes with himself. Let us suppose, now, a clergyman, employed as a chaplain on a cotton plantation, where most of the members on the plantation, as we are informed is sometimes the case, are members of the same Christian church as

their master, should assemble the hands around him and say, "Now, boys, I would not have you despise your master because he is your brother. It is true you are all one in Christ Jesus; there is no distinction here; there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither negro nor white man, neither bond nor free, but ye are all brethren,—all alike members of Christ, and heirs of the same kingdom; but you must not despise your master on this account. You must love him as a brother, and be willing to do all you can to serve him; because you see he is a partaker of the same benefit with you, and the Lord loves him as much as he does you." Would not such an address create a certain degree of astonishment both with master and servants; and does not the fact that it seems absurd show that the relation of the slave to his master in American law is a very different one from what it was in the Christian church? But again, let us quote another passage, which slave-owners are much more fond of. In Colossians 4:22 and 5:1,—“Servants, obey, in all things, your masters, according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart as fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.” “Masters, give unto servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

Now, there is nothing in these directions to servants which would show that they were chattel servants in the sense of slave-law; for they will apply equally well to every servant in Old England and New England; but there is something in the direction to masters which shows that they were not considered chattel servants by the church, because the master is commanded to give unto them that which is just and equal, as a consideration for their service. Of the words “just and equal,” “just” means that which is legally theirs, and “equal” means that which is in itself equitable, irrespective of law.

Now, we have the undoubted testimony of all legal authorities on American slave-law that American slavery does not pretend to be founded on what is just or equal either. Thus Judge Ruffin says: “Merely in the abstract it may well be asked which power of the master accords with right. The answer will probably sweep away all of them;” and this principle, so unequivocally asserted by Judge Ruffin, is all along implied and taken for granted, as we have just seen, in all the reasonings upon slavery and the slave-law. It would take very little legal acumen to see that the enacting of these words of Paul into a statute by any state would be a practical abolition of slavery in that state.

But it is said that St. Paul sent Onesimus back to his master. Indeed! but how? When, to our eternal shame and disgrace, the horrors of the fugitive slave-law were being enacted in Boston, and the very Cradle of Liberty resounded with the groans of the slave, and men harder-hearted than Saul of Tarsus made havoc of the church, entering into every house, haling men and

women, committing them to prison; when whole churches of humble Christians were broken up and scattered like flocks of trembling sheep; when husbands and fathers were torn from their families, and mothers, with poor, helpless children, fled at midnight, with bleeding feet, through snow and ice, towards Canada;—in the midst of these scenes, which have made America a by-word and a hissing and an astonishment among all nations, there were found men, Christian men, ministers of the gospel of Jesus, even,—alas! that this should ever be written,—who, standing in the pulpit, in the name and by the authority of Christ, justified and sanctioned these enormities, and used this most loving and simple-hearted letter of the martyr Paul to justify these unheard-of atrocities!

He who said, “Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?”—he who called the converted slave his own body, the son begotten in his bonds, and who sent him to the brother of his soul with the direction, “Receive him as myself, not now as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved,”—this beautiful letter, this outgush of tenderness and love passing the love of woman, was held up to be pawed over by the polluted hobgoblin-fingers of slave-dealers and slave-whippers as their *lettre de cachet*, signed and sealed in the name of Christ and his apostles, giving full authority to carry back slaves to be tortured and whipped, and sold into perpetual bondage, as were Henry Long and Thomas Sims! Just as well might a mother’s letter, when, with prayers and tears, she commits her first and only child to the cherishing love and sympathy of some trusted friend, be used as an inquisitor’s warrant for inflicting imprisonment and torture upon that child. Had not every fragment of the apostle’s body long since mouldered to dust, his very bones would have moved in their grave, in protest against such slander on the Christian name and faith. And is it come to this. O Jesus Christ! have such things been done in thy name, and art thou silent yet? Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour!

## CHAPTER V.

But why did not the apostles preach against the legal relation of slavery, and seek its overthrow in the state? This question is often argued as if the apostles were in the same condition with the clergy of Southern churches, members of republican institutions, law-makers, and possessed of all republican powers to agitate for the repeal of unjust laws.

Contrary to all this, a little reading of the New Testament will show us that the apostles were almost in the condition of outlaws, under a severe and

despotic government, whose spirit and laws they reprobated as unchristian, and to which they submitted, just as they exhorted the slave to submit, as to a necessary evil.

Hear the apostle Paul thus enumerating the political privileges incident to the ministry of Christ. Some false teachers had risen in the church at Corinth, and controverted his teachings, asserting that they had greater pretensions to authority in the Christian ministry than he. St. Paul, defending his apostolic position, thus speaks: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

What enumeration of the hardships of an American slave can more than equal the hardships of the great apostle to the Gentiles? He had nothing to do with laws except to suffer their penalties. They were made and kept in operation without asking him, and the slave did not suffer any more from them than he did.

It would appear that the clergymen of the South, when they imitate the example of Paul, in letting entirely alone the civil relation of the slave, have left wholly out of their account how different is the position of an American clergyman, in a republican government, where he himself helps make and sustain the laws, from the condition of the apostle, under a heathen despotism, with whose laws he could have nothing to do.

It is very proper for an outlawed slave to address to other outlawed slaves exhortations to submit to a government which neither he nor they have any power to alter.

We read, in sermons which clergymen at the South have addressed to slaves, exhortations to submission, and patience, and humility, in their enslaved condition, which would be exceedingly proper in the mouth of an apostle, where he and the slaves were alike fellow-sufferers under a despotism whose laws they could not alter, but which assume quite another character when addressed to the slave by the very men who make the laws that enslave them.

If a man has been waylaid and robbed of all his property, it would be very becoming and proper for his clergyman to endeavor to reconcile him to his condition, as, in some sense, a dispensation of Providence; but if the man who

robs him should come to him, and address to him the same exhortations, he certainly will think that that is quite another phase of the matter.

A clergyman of high rank in the church, in a sermon to the negroes, thus addresses them:

Almighty God hath been pleased to make you slaves here, and to give you nothing but labor and poverty in this world, which you are obliged to submit to, as it is his will that it should be so. And think within yourselves what a terrible thing it would be, after all your labors and sufferings in this life, to be turned into hell in the next life; and, after wearing out your bodies in service here, to go into a far worse slavery when this is over, and your poor souls be delivered over into the possession of the devil, to become his slaves forever in hell, without any hope of ever getting free from it. If, therefore, you would be God's freemen in heaven, you must strive to be good and serve him here on earth. Your bodies, you know, are not your own; they are at the disposal of those you belong to; but your precious souls are still your own, which nothing can take from you, if it be not your own fault. Consider well, then, that if you lose your souls by leading idle, wicked lives here, you have got nothing by it in this world, and you have lost your all in the next. For your idleness and wickedness is generally found out, and your bodies suffer for it here; and, what is far worse, if you do not repent and amend, your unhappy souls will suffer for it hereafter.

Now, this clergyman was a man of undoubted sincerity. He had read the New Testament, and observed that St. Paul addressed exhortations something like this to slaves in his day.

But he entirely forgot to consider that Paul had not the rights of a republican clergyman; that he was not a maker and sustainer of those laws by which the slaves were reduced to their condition, but only a fellow-sufferer under them. A case may be supposed which would illustrate this principle to the clergyman. Suppose that he were travelling along the highway, with all his worldly property about him, in the shape of bank-bills. An association of highwaymen seize him, bind him to a tree, and take away the whole of his worldly estate. This they would have precisely the same right to do that the clergyman and his brother republicans have to take all the earnings and possessions of their slaves. The property would belong to these highwaymen by exactly the same kind of title,—not because they have earned it, but simply because they have got it and are able to keep it.

The head of this confederation, observing some dissatisfaction upon the face of the clergyman, proceeds to address him a religious exhortation to patience and submission, in much the same terms as he had before addressed to the slaves. "Almighty God has been pleased to take away your entire



property, and to give you nothing but labor and poverty in this world, which you are obliged to submit to, as it is his will that it should be so. Now, think within yourself what a terrible thing it would be, if, having lost all your worldly property, you should, by discontent and want of resignation, lose also your soul; and, having been robbed of all your property here, to have your poor soul delivered over to the possession of the devil, to become his property forever in hell, without any hope of ever getting free from it. Your property now is no longer your own; we have taken possession of it; but your precious soul is still your own, and nothing can take it from you but your own fault. Consider well, then, that if you lose your soul by rebellion and murmuring against this dispensation of Providence, you will get nothing by it in this world, and will lose your all in the next.”

Now, should this clergyman say, as he might very properly, to these robbers,—“There is no necessity for my being poor in this world, if you will only give me back my property which you have taken from me,” he is only saying precisely what the slaves to whom he has been preaching might say to him and his fellow-republicans.

## **CHAPTER VI.**

But it may still be said that the apostles might have commanded Christian masters to perform the act of legal emancipation in all cases. Certainly they might, and it is quite evident that they did not.

The professing primitive Christian regarded and treated his slave as a brother, but in the eye of the law he was still his chattel personal,—a thing, and not a man. Why did not the apostles, then, strike at the legal relation? Why did they not command every Christian convert to sunder that chain at once? In answer, we say that every attempt at reform which comes from God has proceeded uniformly in this manner,—to destroy the spirit of an abuse first, and leave the form of it to drop away, of itself, afterwards,—to girdle the poisonous tree, and leave it to take its own time for dying.

This mode of dealing with abuses has this advantage, that it is compendious and universal, and can apply to that particular abuse in all ages, and under all shades and modifications. If the apostle, in that outward and physical age, had merely attacked the legal relation, and had rested the whole burden of obligation on dissolving that, the corrupt and selfish principle might have run into other forms of oppression equally bad, and sheltered itself under the technicality of avoiding legal slavery. God, therefore, dealt a surer blow at the monster, by singling out the precise spot where his heart beat, and saying

to his apostles, "Strike there!"

Instead of saying to the slave-holder, "manumit your slave," it said to him. "treat him as your brother," and left to the slave-holder's conscience to say how much was implied in this command.

In the directions which Paul gave about slavery, it is evident that he considered the legal relation with the same indifference with which a gardener treats a piece of unsightly bark, which he perceives the growing vigor of a young tree is about to throw off by its own vital force. He looked upon it as a part of an old, effete system of heathenism, belonging to a set of laws and usages which were waxing old and ready to vanish away.

There is an argument which has been much employed on this subject, and which is specious. It is this. That the apostles treated slavery as one of the lawful relations of life, like that of parent and child, husband and wife.

The argument is thus stated: The apostles found all the relations of life much corrupted by various abuses.

They did not attack the relations, but reformed the abuses, and thus restored the relations to a healthy state.

The mistake here lies in assuming that slavery is the lawful relation. Slavery is the corruption of a lawful relation. The lawful relation is servitude, and slavery is the corruption of servitude.

When the apostles came, all the relations of life in the Roman empire were thoroughly permeated with the principle of slavery. The relation of child to parent was slavery. The relation of wife to husband was slavery. The relation of servant to master was slavery.

The power of the father over his son, by Roman law, was very much the same with the power of the master over his slave. He could, at his pleasure, scourge, imprison, or put him to death. The son could possess nothing but what was the property of his father; and this unlimited control extended through the whole lifetime of the father, unless the son were formally liberated by an act of manumission three times repeated, while the slave could be manumitted by performing the act only once. Neither was there any law obliging the father to manumit;—he could retain this power, if he chose, during his whole life.

Very similar was the situation of the Roman wife. In case she were accused of crime, her husband assembled a meeting of her relations, and in their presence sat in judgment upon her, awarding such punishment as he thought proper.

For unfaithfulness to her marriage-vow, or for drinking wine, Romulus

allowed her husband to put her to death. From this slavery, unlike the son, the wife could never be manumitted; no legal forms were provided. It was lasting as her life.

The same spirit of force and slavery pervaded the relation of master and servant, giving rise to that severe code of slave-law, which, with a few features of added cruelty, Christian America, in the nineteenth century, has reenacted.

With regard, now, to all these abuses of proper relations, the gospel pursued one uniform course. It did not command the Christian father to perform the legal act of emancipation to his son; but it infused such a divine spirit into the paternal relation, by assimilating it to the relation of the heavenly Father, that the Christianized Roman would regard any use of his barbarous and oppressive legal powers as entirely inconsistent with his Christian profession. So it ennobled the marriage relation by comparing it to the relation between Christ and his church; commanding the husband to love his wife, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it. It said to him, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church;" "so ought every one to love his wife, even as himself." Not an allusion is made to the barbarous, unjust power which the law gave the husband. It was perfectly understood that a Christian husband could not make use of it in conformity with these directions.

In the same manner Christian masters were exhorted to give to their servants that which is just and equitable; and, so far from coercing their services by force, to forbear even threatenings. The Christian master was directed to receive his Christianized slave, "NOT now as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved;" and, as in all these other cases, nothing was said to him about the barbarous powers which the Roman law gave him, since it was perfectly understood that he could not at the same time treat him as a brother beloved and as a slave in the sense of Roman law.

When, therefore, the question is asked, why did not the apostles seek the abolition of slavery, we answer, they did seek it. They sought it by the safest, shortest, and most direct course which could possibly have been adopted.

## **CHAPTER VII.**

But did Christianity abolish slavery as a matter of fact? We answer, it did.

Let us look at these acknowledged facts. At the time of the coming of Christ, slavery extended over the whole civilized world. Captives in war were uniformly made slaves, and, as wars were of constant occurrence, the ranks of

slavery were continually being reinforced; and, as slavery was hereditary and perpetual, there was every reason to suppose that the number would have gone on increasing indefinitely, had not some influence operated to stop it. This is one fact.

Let us now look at another. At the time of the Reformation, chattel-slavery had entirely ceased throughout all the civilized countries of the world;—by no particular edict, by no special laws of emancipation, but by the steady influence of some gradual, unseen power, this whole vast system had dissolved away, like the snow-banks of winter.

These two facts being conceded, the inquiry arises, What caused this change? If, now, we find that the most powerful organization in the civilized world at that time did pursue a system of measures which had a direct tendency to bring about such a result, we shall very naturally ascribe it to that organization.

The Spanish writer, Balmes, in his work entitled “Protestantism compared with Catholicity,” has one chapter devoted to the anti-slavery course of the church, in which he sets forth the whole system of measures which the church pursued in reference to this subject, and quotes, in their order, all the decrees of councils. The decrees themselves are given in an appendix at length, in the original Latin. We cannot but sympathize deeply in the noble and generous spirit in which these chapters are written, and the enlarged and vigorous ideas which they give of the magnanimous and honorable nature of Christianity. They are evidently conceived by a large and noble soul, capable of understanding such views,—a soul grave, earnest, deeply religious, though evidently penetrated and imbued with the most profound conviction of the truth of his own peculiar faith.

We shall give a short abstract, from M. Balmes, of the early course of the church. In contemplating the course which the church took in this period, certain things are to be borne in mind respecting the character of the times.

The process was carried on during that stormy and convulsed period of society which succeeded the breaking up of the Roman empire. At this time, all the customs of society were rude and barbarous. Though Christianity, as a system, had been nominally very extensively embraced, yet it had not, as in the case of its first converts, penetrated to the heart, and regenerated the whole nature. Force and violence was the order of the day, and the Christianity of the savage northern tribes, who at this time became masters of Europe, was mingled with the barbarities of their ancient heathenism. To root the institution of slavery out of such a state of society, required, of course, a very different process from what would be necessary under the enlightened organization of modern times.

No power but one of the peculiar kind which the Christian church then possessed could have effected anything in this way. The Christian church at this time, far from being in the outcast and outlawed state in which it existed in the time of the apostles, was now an organization of great power, and of a kind of power peculiarly adapted to that rude and uncultured age. It laid hold of all those elements of fear, and mystery, and superstition, which are strongest in barbarous ages, as with barbarous individuals, and it visited the violations of its commands with penalties the more dreaded that they related to some awful future, dimly perceived and imperfectly comprehended.

In dealing with slavery, the church did not commence by a proclamation of universal emancipation, because, such was the barbarous and unsettled nature of the times, so fierce the grasp of violence, and so many the causes of discord, that she avoided adding to the confusion by infusing into it this element;—nay, a certain council of the church forbade, on pain of ecclesiastical censure, those who preached that slaves ought immediately to leave their masters.

The course was commenced first by restricting the power of the master, and granting protection to the slave. The Council of Orleans, in 549, gave to a slave threatened with punishment the privilege of taking sanctuary in a church, and forbade his master to withdraw him thence, without taking a solemn oath that he would do him no harm; and, if he violated the spirit of this oath, he was to be suspended from the church and the sacraments,—a doom which in those days was viewed with such a degree of superstitious awe, that the most barbarous would scarcely dare to incur it. The custom was afterwards introduced of requiring an oath on such occasions, not only that the slave should be free from corporeal infliction, but that he should not be punished by an extra imposition of labor, or by any badge of disgrace. When this was complained of, as being altogether too great a concession on the side of the slave, the utmost that could be extorted from the church, by way of retraction, was this,—that in cases of very heinous offence the master should not be required to make the two latter promises.

There was a certain punishment among the Goths which was more dreaded than death. It was the shaving of the hair. This was considered as inflicting a lasting disgrace. If a Goth once had his hair shaved, it was all over with him. The fifteenth canon of the Council of Merida, in 666, forbade ecclesiastics to inflict this punishment upon their slaves, as also all other kind of violence, and ordained that if a slave committed an offence, he should not be subject to private vengeance, but be delivered up to the secular tribunal, and that the bishops should use their power only to procure a moderation of the sentence. This was substituting public justice for personal vengeance—a most important step. The church further enacted, by two councils, that the master who, of his

own authority, should take the life of his slave, should be cut off for two years from the communion of the church,—a condition, in the view of those times, implying the most awful spiritual risk, separating the man in the eye of society from all that was sacred, and teaching him to regard himself, and others to regard him, as a being loaded with the weight of a most tremendous sin.

Besides the protection given to life and limb, the church threw her shield over the family condition of the slave. By old Roman law, the slave could not contract a legal, inviolable marriage. The church of that age availed itself of the catholic idea of the sacramental nature of marriage to conflict with this heathenish doctrine. Pope Adrian I. said, “According to the words of the apostle, as in Jesus Christ we ought not to deprive either slaves or freemen of the sacraments of the church so it is not allowed in any way to prevent the marriage of slaves; and if their marriages have been contracted in spite of the opposition and repugnance of their masters, nevertheless they ought not to be dissolved.” St. Thomas was of the same opinion, for he openly maintains that, with respect to contracting marriage, “slaves are not obliged to obey their masters.”

It can easily be seen what an effect was produced when the personal safety and family ties of the slaves were thus proclaimed sacred by an authority which no man living dared dispute. It elevated the slave in the eyes of his master, and awoke hope and self-respect in his own bosom, and powerfully tended to fit him for the reception of that liberty to which the church by many avenues was constantly seeking to conduct him.

Another means which the church used to procure emancipation was a jealous care of the freedom of those already free.

Every one knows how in our Southern States the boundaries of slavery are continually increasing, for want of some power there to perform the same kind office. The liberated slave, travelling without his papers, is continually in danger of being taken up, thrown into jail, and sold to pay his jail-fees. He has no bishop to help him out of his troubles. In no church can he take sanctuary. Hundreds and thousands of helpless men and women are every year engulfed in slavery in this manner.

The church, at this time, took all enfranchised slaves under her particular protection. The act of enfranchisement was made a religious service, and was solemnly performed in the church; and then the church received the newly-made freeman to her protecting arms, and guarded his newly-acquired rights by her spiritual power. The first Council of Orange, held in 441, ordained in its seventh canon that the church should check by ecclesiastical censures whoever desired to reduce to any kind of servitude slaves who had been emancipated within the enclosure of the church. A century later, the same prohibition was

repeated in the seventh canon of the fifth Council of Orleans, held in 549. The protection given by the church to freed slaves was so manifest and known to all, that the custom was introduced of especially recommending them to her, either in lifetime or by will. The Council of Agde, in Languedoc, passed a resolution commanding the church, in all cases of necessity, to undertake the defence of those to whom their masters had, in a lawful way, given liberty.

Another anti-slavery measure which the church pursued with distinguished zeal had the same end in view, that is, the prevention of the increase of slavery. It was the ransoming of captives. As at that time it was customary for captives in war to be made slaves of, unless ransomed, and as, owing to the unsettled state of society, wars were frequent, slavery might have been indefinitely prolonged, had not the church made the greatest efforts in this way. The ransoming of slaves in those days held the same place in the affections of pious and devoted members of the church that the enterprise of converting the heathen now does. Many of the most eminent Christians, in their excess of zeal, even sold themselves into captivity that they might redeem distressed families. Chateaubriand describes a Christian priest in France who voluntarily devoted himself to slavery for the ransom of a Christian soldier, and thus restored a husband to his desolate wife, and a father to three unfortunate children. Such were the deeds which secured to men in those days the honor of saintship. Such was the history of St. Zachary, whose story drew tears from many eyes, and excited many hearts to imitate so sublime a charity. In this they did but imitate the spirit of the early Christians; for the apostolic Clement says, "We know how many among ourselves have given up themselves unto bonds, that thereby they might free others from them." (1st letter to the Corinthians, § 55, or ch. XXI. v. 20.) One of the most distinguished of the Frankish bishops was St. Eloy. He was originally a goldsmith of remarkable skill in his art, and by his integrity and trustworthiness won the particular esteem and confidence of King Clotaire I., and stood high in his court. Of him Neander speaks as follows. "The cause of the gospel was to him the dearest interest, to which everything else was made subservient. While working at his art, he always had a Bible open before him. The abundant income of his labors he devoted to religious objects and deeds of charity. Whenever he heard of captives, who in these days were often dragged off in troops as slaves that were to be sold at auction, he hastened to the spot and paid down their price." Alas for our slave-coffles!—there are no such bishops now! "Sometimes, by his means, a hundred at once, men and women, thus obtained their liberty. He then left it to their choice, either to return home, or to remain with him as free Christian brethren, or to become monks. In the first case, he gave them money for their journey; in the last, which pleased him most, he took pains to procure them a handsome reception into some monastery."

So great was the zeal of the church for the ransom of unhappy captives,

that even the ornaments and sacred vessels of the church were sold for their ransom. By the fifth canon of the Council of Macon, held in 585, it appears that the priests devoted church property to this purpose. The Council of Rheims, held in 625, orders the punishment of suspension on the bishop who shall destroy the sacred vessels FOR ANY OTHER MOTIVE THAN THE RANSOM OF CAPTIVES; and in the twelfth canon of the Council of Verneuil, held in 844, we find that the property of the church was still used for this benevolent purpose.

When the church had thus redeemed the captive, she still continued him under her special protection, giving him letters of recommendation which should render his liberty safe in the eyes of all men. The Council of Lyons, held in 583, enacts that bishops shall state, in the letters of recommendation which they give to redeemed slaves, the date and price of their ransom. The zeal for this work was so ardent that some of the clergy even went so far as to induce captives to run away. A council called that of St. Patrick, held in Ireland, condemns this practice, and says that the clergyman who desires to ransom captives must do so with his own money, for to induce them to run away was to expose the clergy to be considered as robbers, which was a dishonor to the church. The disinterestedness of the church in this work appears from the fact that, when she had employed her funds for the ransom of captives she never exacted from them any recompense, even when they had it in their power to discharge the debt. In the letters of St. Gregory, he reassures some persons who had been freed by the church, and who feared that they should be called upon to refund the money which had been expended on them. The Pope orders that no one, at any time, shall venture to disturb them or their heirs, because the sacred canons allow the employment of the goods of the church for the ransom of captives. (L. 7, Ep. 14.) Still further to guard against the increase of the number of slaves, the Council of Lyons, in 566, excommunicated those who unjustly retained free persons in slavery.

If there were any such laws in the Southern States, and all were excommunicated who are doing this, there would be quite a sensation, as some recent discoveries show.

In 625, the Council of Rheims decreed excommunication to all those who pursue free persons in order to reduce them to slavery. The twenty-seventh canon of the Council of London, held 1102, forbade the barbarous custom of trading in men, like animals; and the seventh canon of the Council of Coblentz, held 922, declares that he who takes away a Christian to sell him is guilty of homicide. A French council, held in Verneuil in 616, established the law that all persons who had been sold into slavery on account of poverty or debt should receive back their liberty by the restoration of the price which had been paid. It will readily be seen that this opened a wide field for restoration to



liberty in an age where so great a Christian zeal had been awakened for the redeeming of slaves, since it afforded opportunity for Christians to interest themselves in raising the necessary ransom.

At this time the Jews occupied a very peculiar place among the nations. The spirit of trade and commerce was almost entirely confined to them, and the great proportion of the wealth was in their hands, and, of course, many slaves. The regulations which the church passed relative to the slaves of Jews tended still further to strengthen the principles of liberty. They forbade Jews to compel Christian slaves to do things contrary to the religion of Christ. They allowed Christian slaves, who took refuge in the church, to be ransomed, by paying their masters the proper price.

This produced abundant results in favor of liberty, inasmuch as they gave Christian slaves the opportunity of flying to churches, and there imploring the charity of their brethren. They also enacted that a Jew who should pervert a Christian slave should be condemned to lose all his slaves. This was a new sanction to the slave's conscience, and a new opening for liberty. After that, they proceeded to forbid Jews to have Christian slaves, and it was allowed to ransom those in their possession for twelve sous. As the Jews were among the greatest traders of the time, the forbidding them to keep slaves was a very decided step toward general emancipation.

Another means of lessening the ranks of slavery was a decree passed in a council at Rome, in 595, presided over by Pope Gregory the Great. This decree offered liberty to all who desired to embrace the monastic life. This decree, it is said, led to great scandal, as slaves fled from the houses of their masters in great numbers, and took refuge in monasteries.

The church also ordained that any slave who felt a calling to enter the ministry, and appeared qualified therefor, should be allowed to pursue his vocation: and enjoined it upon his master to liberate him, since the church could not permit her minister to wear the yoke of slavery. It is to be presumed that the phenomenon, on page 176, of a preacher with both toes cut off and branded on the breast, advertised as a runaway in the public papers, was not one which could have occurred consistently with the Christianity of that period.

Under the influence of all these regulations, it is not surprising that there are documents cited by M. Balmes which go to show the following things. First, that the number of slaves thus liberated was very great, as there was universal complaint upon this head.

Second, that the bishops were complained of as being always in favor of the slaves, as carrying their protection to very great lengths, laboring in all ways to realize the doctrine of man's equality; and it is affirmed in the

documents that complaint is made that there is hardly a bishop who cannot be charged with reprehensible compliances in favor of slaves, and that slaves were aware of this spirit of protection, and were ready to throw off their chains, and cast themselves into the church.

It is not necessary longer to extend this history. It is as perfectly plain whither such a course tends, as it is whither the course pursued by the American clergy at the South tends. We are not surprised that under such a course, on the one hand, the number of slaves decreased, till there were none in modern Europe. We are not surprised by such a course, on the other hand, that they have increased until there are three millions in America.

Alas for the poor slave! What church befriends him? In what house of prayer can he take sanctuary? What holy men stand forward to rebuke the wicked law that denies him legal marriages? What pious bishops visit slave-coffles to redeem men, women and children, to liberty? What holy exhortations in churches to buy the freedom of wretched captives? When have church velvets been sold, and communion-cups melted down, to liberate the slave? Where are the pastors, inflamed with the love of Jesus, who have sold themselves into slavery to restore separated families? Where are those honorable complaints of the world that the church is always on the side of the oppressed?—that the slaves feel the beatings of her generous heart, and long to throw themselves into her arms? Love of brethren, holy charities, love of Jesus,—where are ye?—Are ye fled forever?

## CHAPTER VIII.

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.”

From what has been said in the last chapter, it is presumed that it will appear that the Christian church of America by no means occupies that position, with regard to slavery, that the apostles did, or that the church of the earlier ages did.

However they may choose to interpret the language of the apostles, the fact still remains undeniable, that the church organization which grew up immediately after these instructions did intend and did effect the abolition of slavery.

But we wish to give still further consideration to one idea which is often put forward by those who defend American slavery. It is this. That the institution is not of itself a sinful one, and that the only sin consists in the neglect of its relative duties. All that is necessary, they say, is to regulate the

institution by the precepts of the gospel. They admit that no slavery is defensible which is not so regulated.

If, therefore, it shall appear that American slave-law cannot be regulated by the precepts of the gospel, without such alterations as will entirely do away the whole system, then it will appear that it is an unchristian institution, against which every Christian is bound to remonstrate, and from which he should entirely withdraw.

The Roman slave-code was a code made by heathen,—by a race, too, proverbially stern and unfeeling. It was made in the darkest ages of the world, before the light of the gospel had dawned. Christianity gradually but certainly abolished it. Some centuries later, a company of men, from Christian nations, go to the continent of Africa; there they kindle wars, sow strifes, set tribes against tribes with demoniac violence, burn villages, and in the midst of these diabolical scenes kidnap and carry off, from time to time, hundreds and thousands of miserable captives. Such of those as do not die of terror, grief, suffocation, ship-fever, and other horrors, are, from time to time, landed on the shores of America. Here they are. And now a set of Christian legislators meet together to construct a system and laws of servitude, with regard to these unfortunates, which is hereafter to be considered as a Christian institution.

Of course, in order to have any valid title to such a name, the institution must be regulated by the principles which Christ and his apostles have laid down for the government of those who assume the relation of masters. The New Testament sums up these principles in a single sentence: “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.”

But, forasmuch as there is always some confusion of mind in regard to what is just and equal in our neighbor’s affairs, our Lord has given this direction, by which we may arrive at infallible certainty. “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

It is, therefore, evident that if Christian legislators are about to form a Christian system of servitude, they must base it on these two laws, one of which is a particular specification under the other.

Let us now examine some of the particulars of the code which they have formed, and see if it bear this character.

First, they commence by declaring that their brother shall no longer be considered as a person, but deemed, sold, taken, and reputed, as a chattel personal.—This is “just and equal!”

This being the fundamental principle of the system, the following are specified as its consequences:

1. That he shall have no right to hold property of any kind, under any circumstances.—Just and equal!

2. That he shall have no power to contract a legal marriage, or claim any woman in particular for his wife.—Just and equal!

3. That he shall have no right to his children, either to protect, restrain, guide or educate.—Just and equal!

4. That the power of his master over him shall be ABSOLUTE, without any possibility of appeal or redress in consequence of any injury whatever.

To secure this, they enact that he shall not be able to enter suit in any court for any cause.—Just and equal!

That he shall not be allowed to bear testimony in any court where any white person is concerned.—Just and equal!

That the owner of a servant, for “malicious, cruel, and excessive beating of his slave, cannot be indicted.”—Just and equal!

It is further decided, that by no indirect mode of suit, through a guardian, shall a slave obtain redress for ill-treatment. (*Dorothea v. Coquillon et al*, 9 Martin La. Rep. 350.)—Just and equal!

5. It is decided that the slave shall not only have no legal redress for injuries inflicted by his master, but shall have no redress for those inflicted by any other person, unless the injury impair his property value.—Just and equal!

Under this head it is distinctly asserted as follows:

“There can be no offence against the peace of the state, by the mere beating of a slave, unaccompanied by any circumstances of cruelty, or an intent to kill and murder. The peace of the state is not thereby broken.” (*State v. Maner*, 2 Hill’s Rep. S. C.)—Just and equal!

If a slave strike a white, he is to be condemned to death; but if a master kill his slave by torture, no white witnesses being present, he may clear himself by his own oath. (Louisiana.)—Just and equal!

The law decrees fine and imprisonment to the person who shall release the servant of another from the torture of the iron collar. (Louisiana.)—Just and equal!

It decrees a much smaller fine, without imprisonment, to the man who shall torture him with red-hot irons, cut out his tongue, put out his eyes, and scald or maim him. (*Ibid.*)—Just and equal!

It decrees the same punishment to him who teaches him to write as to him who puts out his eyes.—Just and equal!

As it might be expected that only very ignorant and brutal people could be kept in a condition like this, especially in a country where every book and every newspaper are full of dissertations on the rights of man, they therefore enact laws that neither he nor his children, to all generations, shall learn to read and write.—Just and equal!

And as, if allowed to meet for religious worship, they might concert some plan of escape or redress, they enact that “no congregation of negroes, under pretence of divine worship, shall assemble themselves; and that every slave found at such meetings shall be immediately corrected, without trial, by receiving on the bare back twenty-five stripes with a whip, switch or cowskin.” (Law of Georgia. Prince’s Digest, p. 447.)—Just and equal!

Though the servant is thus kept in ignorance, nevertheless in his ignorance he is punished more severely for the same crimes than freemen.—Just and equal!

By way of protecting him from over-work, they enact that he shall not labor more than five hours longer than convicts at hard labor in a penitentiary!

They also enact that the master or overseer, not the slave, shall decide when he is too sick to work.—Just and equal!

If any master, compassionating this condition of the slave, desires to better it, the law takes it out of his power, by the following decisions:

1. That all his earnings shall belong to his master, notwithstanding his master’s promise to the contrary; thus making them liable for his master’s debts.—Just and equal!

2. That if his master allow him to keep cattle for his own use, it shall be lawful for any man to take them away, and enjoy half the profits of the seizure.—Just and equal!

3. If his master sets him free, he shall be taken up and sold again.—Just and equal!

4. If any man or woman runs away from this state of things, and, after proclamation made, does not return, any two justices of the peace may declare them outlawed, and give permission to any person in the community to kill them by any ways or means they think fit.—Just and equal!

Such are the laws of that system of slavery which has been made up by Christian masters late in the Christian era, and is now defended by Christian ministers as an eminently benign institution.

In this manner Christian legislators have expressed their understanding of the text, “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal,” and of the text, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye

even so to them.”

It certainly presents the most extraordinary view of justice and equity, and is the most remarkable exposition of the principle of doing to others as we would others should do to us that it has ever been the good fortune of the civilized world to observe. This being the institution, let any one conjecture what its abuses must be; for we are gravely told, by learned clergymen, that they do not feel called upon to interfere with the system, but only with its abuses. We should like to know what abuse could be specified that is not provided for and expressly protected by slave-law.

And yet, Christian republicans, who, with full power to repeal this law, are daily sustaining it, talk about there being no harm in slavery, if they regulate it according to the apostle’s directions, and give unto their servants that which is just and equal. Do they think that, if the Christianized masters of Rome and Corinth had made such a set of rules as this for the government of their slaves, Paul would have accepted it as a proper exposition of what he meant by just and equal?

But the Presbyteries of South Carolina say, and all the other religious bodies at the South say, that the church of our Lord Jesus Christ has no right to interfere with civil institutions. What is this church of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they speak of? Is it not a collection of republican men, who have constitutional power to alter these laws, and whose duty it is to alter them, and who are disobeying the apostle’s directions every day till they do alter them? Every minister at the South is a voter as much as he is a minister; every church-member is a voter as much as he is a church-member; and ministers and church-members are among the masters who are keeping up this system of atrocity, when they have full republican power to alter it; and yet they talk about giving their servants that which is just and equal! If they are going to give their servants that which is just and equal, let them give them back their manhood; they are law-makers, and can do it. Let them give to the slave the right to hold property, the right to form legal marriage, the right to read the word of God, and to have such education as will fully develop his intellectual and moral nature; the right of free religious opinion and worship; let them give him the right to bring suit and to bear testimony; give him the right to have some vote in the government by which his interests are controlled. This will be something more like giving him that which is “just and equal.”

Mr. Smylie, of Mississippi, says that the planters of Louisiana and Mississippi, when they are giving from twenty to twenty-five dollars a barrel for pork, give their slaves three or four pounds a week; and intimates that, if that will not convince people that they are doing what is just and equal, he does not know what will.

Mr. C. C. Jones, after stating in various places that he has no intention ever to interfere with the civil condition of the slave, teaches the negroes, in his catechism, that the master gives to his servant that which is just and equal, when he provides for them good houses, good clothing, food, nursing, and religious instruction.

This is just like a man who has stolen an estate which belongs to a family of orphans. Out of its munificent revenues, he gives the orphans comfortable food, clothing, &c., while he retains the rest for his own use, declaring that he is thus rendering to them that which is just and equal.

If the laws which regulate slavery were made by a despotic sovereign, over whose movements the masters could have no control, this mode of proceeding might be called just and equal; but, as they are made and kept in operation by these Christian masters, these ministers and church-members, in common with those who are not so, they are every one of them refusing to the slave that which is just and equal, so long as they do not seek the repeal of these laws; and, if they cannot get them repealed, it is their duty to take the slave out from under them, since they are constructed with such fatal ingenuity as utterly to nullify all that the master tries to do for their elevation and permanent benefit.

No man would wish to leave his own family of children as slaves under the care of the kindest master that ever breathed; and what he would not wish to have done to his own children, he ought not to do to other people's children.

But, it will be said that it is not becoming for the Christian church to enter into political matters. Again, we ask, what is the Christian church? Is it not an association of republican citizens, each one of whom has his rights and duties as a legal voter?

Now, suppose a law were passed which depreciated the value of cotton or sugar three cents in the pound, would these men consider the fact that they are church-members as any reason why they should not agitate for the repeal of such law? Certainly not. Such a law would be brittle as the spider's web; it would be swept away before it was well made. Every law to which the majority of the community does not assent is, in this country, immediately torn down.

Why, then, does this monstrous system stand from age to age? Because the community CONSENT TO IT. They reënact these unjust laws every day, by their silent permission of them.

The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is not of this world, say the South Carolina Presbyteries; therefore, the church has no right to interfere with any civil institution; but yet all the clergy of Charleston could attend in a body to give sanction to the proceedings of the great Vigilance Committee. They could

not properly exert the least influence against slavery, because it is a civil institution, but they could give the whole weight of their influence in favor of it.

Is it not making the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ quite as much of this world, to patronize the oppressor, as to patronize the slave?

## **CHAPTER IX.**

### **IS THE SYSTEM OF RELIGION WHICH IS TAUGHT THE SLAVE THE GOSPEL?**

The ladies of England, in their letter to the ladies of America, spoke in particular of the denial of the gospel to the slave. This has been indignantly resented in this country, and it has been claimed that the slaves do have the gospel communicated to them very extensively.

Whoever reads Mr. Charles C. Jones' book on the religious instruction of the negroes will have no doubt of the following facts:

1. That from year to year, since the introduction of the negroes into this country, various pious and benevolent individuals have made efforts for their spiritual welfare.

2. That these efforts have increased, from year to year.

3. That the most extensive and important one came into being about the time that Mr. Jones' book was written, in the year 1842, and extended to some degree through the United States. The fairest development of it was probably in the State of Georgia, the sphere of Mr. Jones' immediate labor, where the most gratifying results were witnessed, and much very amiable and commendable Christian feeling elicited on the part of masters.

4. From time to time, there have been prepared, for the use of the slave, catechisms, hymns, short sermons, &c. &c., designed to be read to them by their masters, or taught them orally.

5. It will appear to any one who reads Mr. Jones' book that, though written by a man who believed the system of slavery sanctioned by God, it manifests a spirit of sincere and earnest benevolence, and of devotedness to the cause he has undertaken, which cannot be too highly appreciated.

It is a very painful and unpleasant task to express any qualification or dissent with regard to efforts which have been undertaken in a good spirit, and which have produced, in many respects, good results; but, in the reading of



Mr. Jones' book, in the study of his catechism, and of various other catechisms and sermons which give an idea of the religious instruction of the slaves, the writer has often been painfully impressed with the idea that, however imbued and mingled with good, it is not the true and pure gospel system which is given to the slave. As far as the writer has been able to trace out what is communicated to him, it amounts in substance to this; that his master's authority over him, and property in him, to the full extent of the enactment of slave-law, is recognized and sustained by the tremendous authority of God himself. He is told that his master is God's overseer; that he owes him a blind, unconditional, unlimited submission; that he must not allow himself to grumble, or fret, or murmur, at anything in his conduct; and, in case he does so, that his murmuring is not against his master, but against God. He is taught that it is God's will that he should have nothing but labor and poverty in this world; and that, if he frets and grumbles at this, he will get nothing by it in this life, and be sent to hell forever in the next. Most vivid descriptions of hell, with its torments, its worms ever feeding and never dying, are held up before him; and he is told that this eternity of torture will be the result of insubordination here. It is no wonder that a slave-holder once said to Dr. Brisbane, of Cincinnati, that religion had been worth more to him, on his plantation, than a wagon-load of cowskins.

Furthermore, the slave is taught that to endeavor to evade his master by running away, or to shelter or harbor a slave who has run away, are sins which will expose him to the wrath of that omniscient Being, whose eyes are in every place.

As the slave is a movable and merchantable being, liable, as Mr. Jones calmly remarks, to "all the vicissitudes of property," this system of instruction, one would think, would be in something of a dilemma, when it comes to inculcate the Christian duties of the family state.

When Mr. Jones takes a survey of the field, previous to commencing his system of operations, he tells us, what we suppose every rational person must have foreseen, that he finds among the negroes an utter demoralization upon this subject; that polygamy is commonly practised, and that the marriage-covenant has become a mere temporary union of interest, profit or pleasure, formed without reflection, and dissolved without the slightest idea of guilt.

That this state of things is the necessary and legitimate result of the system of laws which these Christian men have made and are still keeping up over their slaves, any sensible person will perceive; and any one would think it an indispensable step to any system of religious instruction here, that the negro should be placed in a situation where he can form a legal marriage, and can adhere to it after it is formed.

But Mr. Jones and his coadjutors commenced by declaring that it was not their intention to interfere, in the slightest degree, with the legal position of the slave.

We should have thought, then, that it would not have been possible, if these masters intended to keep their slaves in the condition of chattels personal, liable to a constant disruption of family ties, that they could have the heart to teach them the strict morality of the gospel with regard to the marriage relation.

But so it is, however. If we examine Mr. Jones' catechism, we shall find that the slave is made to repeat orally that one man can be the husband of but one woman, and if, during her lifetime, he marries another, God will punish him forever in hell.

Suppose a conscientious woman, instructed in Mr. Jones' catechism, by the death of her master is thrown into the market for the division of the estate, like many cases we may read of in the Georgia papers every week. She is torn from her husband and children, and sold at the other end of the Union, never to meet them again, and the new master commands her to take another husband;—what, now, is this woman to do? If she take the husband, according to her catechism she commits adultery, and exposes herself to everlasting fire; if she does not take him, she disobeys her master, who, she has been taught, is God's overseer; and she is exposed to everlasting fire on that account, and certainly she is exposed to horrible tortures here.

Now, we ask, if the teaching that has involved this poor soul in such a labyrinth of horrors can be called the gospel?

Is it the gospel,—is it glad tidings in any sense of the words?

In the same manner, this catechism goes on to instruct parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they should guide, counsel, restrain and govern them.

Again, these teachers tell them that they should search the Scriptures most earnestly, diligently and continually, at the same time declaring that it is not their intention to interfere with the laws which forbid their being taught to read. Searching the Scriptures, slaves are told, means coming to people who are willing to read to them. Yes, but if there be no one willing to do this, what then? Any one whom this catechism has thus instructed is sold off to a plantation on Red river, like that where Northrop lived; no Bible goes with him; his Christian instructors, in their care not to interfere with his civil condition, have deprived him of the power of reading; and in this land of darkness his oral instruction is but as a faded dream. Let any of us ask for what sum we would be deprived of all power of ever reading the Bible for

ourselves, and made entirely dependent on the reading of others,—especially if we were liable to fall into such hands as slaves are,—and then let us determine whether a system of religious instruction, which begins by declaring that it has no intention to interfere with this cruel legal deprivation, is the gospel!

The poor slave, darkened, blinded, perplexed on every hand, by the influences which the legal system has spread under his feet, is, furthermore, strictly instructed in a perfect system of morality. He must not even covet anything that is his master's; he must not murmur or be discontented; he must consider his master's interests as his own, and be ready to sacrifice himself to them; and this he must do, as he is told, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. He must forgive all injuries, and do exactly right under all perplexities; thus is the obligation on his part expounded to him, while his master's reciprocal obligations mean only to give him good houses, clothes, food, &c. &c., leaving every master to determine for himself what is good in relation to these matters.

No wonder, when such a system of utter injustice is justified to the negro by all the awful sanctions of religion, that now and then a strong soul rises up against it. We have known under a black skin shrewd minds, unconquerable spirits, whose indignant sense of justice no such representations could blind.

That Mr. Jones has met such is evident; for, speaking of the trials of a missionary among them, he says (p. 127):

He discovers Deism, Scepticism, Universalism. As already stated, the various perversions of the gospel, and all the strong objections against the truth of God,—objections which he may, perhaps, have considered peculiar only to the cultivated minds, the ripe scholarship and profound intelligence, of critics and philosophers!—extremes here meet on the natural and common ground of a darkened understanding and a hardened heart.

Again, in the Tenth Annual Report of the “Association for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in Liberty County Georgia,” he says:

Allow me to relate a fact which occurred in the spring of this year, illustrative of the character and knowledge of the negroes at this time. I was preaching to a large congregation on the Epistle to Philemon; and when I insisted upon fidelity and obedience as Christian virtues in servants, and, upon the authority of Paul, condemned the practice of running away, one-half of my audience deliberately walked off with themselves, and those that remained looked anything but satisfied, either with the preacher or his doctrine. After dismissal, there was no small stir among them: some solemnly declared that there was no such epistle in the Bible; others, “that it was not the gospel;” others, “that I preached to please masters;” others, “that they did not care if

they ever heard me preach again.”—pp. 24, 25.

Lundy Lane, an intelligent fugitive who has published his memoirs, says that on one occasion they (the slaves) were greatly delighted with a certain preacher, until he told them that God had ordained and created them expressly to make slaves of. He says that after that they all left him, and went away, because they thought, with the Jews, “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”

In these remarks on the perversion of the gospel as presented to the slave, we do not mean to imply that much that is excellent and valuable is not taught him. We mean simply to assert that, in so far as the system taught justifies the slave-system, so far necessarily it vitiates the fundamental ideas of justice and morality; and, so far as the obligations of the gospel are inculcated on the slave in their purity, they bring him necessarily in conflict with the authority of the system. As we have said before, it is an attempt to harmonize light with darkness, and Christ with Belial. Nor is such an attempt to be justified and tolerated, because undertaken in the most amiable spirit by amiable men. Our admiration of some of the laborers who have conducted this system is very great; so also is our admiration of many of the Jesuit missionaries who have spread the Roman Catholic religion among our aboriginal tribes. Devotion and disinterestedness could be carried no further than some of both these classes of men have carried them.

But, while our respect for these good men must not seduce us as Protestants into an admiration of the system which they taught, so our esteem for our Southern brethren must not lead us to admit that a system which fully justifies the worst kind of spiritual and temporal despotism can properly represent the gospel of him who came to preach deliverance to the captives.

To prove that we have not misrepresented the style of instruction, we will give some extracts from various sermons and discourses.

In the first place, to show how explicitly religious teachers disclaim any intention of interfering in the legal relation (see Mr. Jones’ work, p. 157):

By law or custom, they are excluded from the advantages of education; and, by consequence, from the reading of the word of God; and this immense mass of immortal beings is thrown, for religious instruction, upon oral communications entirely. And upon whom? Upon their owners. And their owners, especially of late years, claim to be the exclusive guardians of their religious instruction, and the almoners of divine mercy towards them, thus assuming the responsibility of their entire Christianization!

All approaches to them from abroad are rigidly guarded against, and no ministers are allowed to break to them the bread of life, except such as have commended themselves to the affection and confidence of their owners. I do

not condemn this course of self-preservation on the part of our citizens; I merely mention it to show their entire dependence upon ourselves.

In answering objections of masters to allowing the religious instruction of the negroes, he supposes the following objection, and gives the following answer:

If we suffer our negroes to be instructed, the tendency will be to change the civil relations of society as now constituted.

To which let it be replied, that we separate entirely their religious and their civil condition, and contend that the one may be attended to without interfering with the other. Our principle is that laid down by the holy and just One: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." And Christ and his apostles are our example. Did they deem it proper and consistent with the good order of society to preach the gospel to the servants? They did. In discharge of this duty, did they interfere with their civil condition? They did not.

With regard to the description of heaven and the torments of hell, the following is from Mr. Jones' catechism, pp. 83, 91, 92:

Q. Are there two places only spoken of in the Bible to which the souls of men go after death?—A. Only two.

Q. Which are they?—A. Heaven and hell.

Q. After the Judgment is over, into what place do the righteous go?—A. Into heaven.

Q. What kind of a place is heaven?—A. A most glorious and happy place.

Q. Shall the righteous in heaven have any more hunger, or thirst, or nakedness, or heat, or cold? Shall they have any more sin, or sorrow, or crying, or pain, or death?—A. No.

Q. Repeat "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—A. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Q. Will heaven be their everlasting home?—A. Yes.

Q. And shall the righteous grow in knowledge and holiness and happiness for ever and ever?—A. Yes.

Q. To what place should we wish and strive to go, more than to all other places?—A. Heaven.

Q. Into what place are the wicked to be cast?—A. Into hell.

Q. Repeat “The wicked shall be turned.”—A. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

Q. What kind of a place is hell?—A. A place of dreadful torments.

Q. What does it burn with?—A. Everlasting fire.

Q. Who are cast into hell besides wicked men?—A. The devil and his angels.

Q. What will the torments of hell make the wicked do?—A. Weep and wail and gnash their teeth.

Q. What did the rich man beg for when he was tormented in the flame?—A. A drop of cold water to cool his tongue.

Q. Will the wicked have any good thing in hell? the least comfort? the least relief from torment?—A. No.

Q. Will they ever come out of hell?—A. No, never.

Q. Can any go from heaven to hell, or from hell to heaven?—A. No.

Q. What is fixed between heaven and hell?—A. A great gulf.

Q. What is the punishment of the wicked in hell called?—A. Everlasting punishment.

Q. Will this punishment make them better?—A. No.

Q. Repeat “It is a fearful thing.”—A. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Q. What is God said to be to the wicked?—A. A consuming fire.

Q. What place should we strive to escape from above all others?—A. Hell.

The Rev. Alex. Glennie, rector of Allsaints parish, Waccamaw, South Carolina, has for several years been in the habit of preaching with express reference to slaves. In 1844 he published in Charleston a selection of these sermons, under the title of “Sermons preached on Plantations to Congregations of Negroes.” This book contains twenty-six sermons, and in twenty-two of them there is either a more or less extended account, or a reference to eternal misery in hell as a motive to duty. He thus describes the day of judgment (Sermon 15, p. 90):

When all people shall be gathered before him, “he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left.” That, my brethren, will be an awful time, when this separation shall be going on; when the holy angels, at the command of the great Judge, shall be gathering together all the

obedient followers of Christ, and be setting them on the right hand of the Judgment-seat, and shall place all the remainder on the left. Remember that each of you must be present; remember that the Great Judge can make no mistake; and that you shall be placed on one side or on the other, according as in this world you have believed in and obeyed him or not. How full of joy and thanksgiving will you be, if you shall find yourself placed on the right hand! but how full of misery and despair, if the left shall be appointed as your portion! \* \* \* \*

But what shall he say to the wicked on the left hand? To them he shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." He will tell them to depart; they did not, while here, seek him by repentance and faith; they did not obey him, and now he will drive them from him. He will call them cursed.

(Sermon 1, p. 42.) The death which is the wages of sin is this everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. It is a fire which shall last forever; and the devil and his angels, and all people who will not love and serve God, shall there be punished forever. The Bible says, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." The fire is not quenched, it never goes out, "their worm dieth not;" their punishment is spoken of as a worm always feeding upon but never consuming them; it never can stop.

Concerning the absolute authority of the master, take the following extract from Bishop Mead's sermon. (Brooke's Slavery, pp. 30, 31, 32.)

Having thus shown you the chief duties you owe to your great Master in heaven, I now come to lay before you the duties you owe to your masters and mistresses here upon earth; and for this you have one general rule that you ought always to carry in your minds, and that is, to do all service for them as if you did it for God himself. Poor creatures! you little consider, when you are idle and neglectful of your masters' business, when you steal and waste and hurt any of their substance, when you are saucy and impudent, when you are telling them lies and deceiving them; or when you prove stubborn and sullen, and will not do the work you are set about without stripes and vexation; you do not consider, I say, that what faults you are guilty of towards your masters and mistresses are faults done against God himself, who hath set your masters and mistresses over you in his own stead, and expects that you will do for them just as you would do for Him. And, pray, do not think that I want to deceive you when I tell you that your masters and mistresses are God's overseers; and that, if you are faulty towards them, God himself will punish you severely for it in the next world, unless you repent of it, and strive to make amends by your faithfulness and diligence for the time to come; for God himself hath declared the same.

Now, from this general rule,—namely, that you are to do all service for your masters and mistresses as if you did it for God himself,—there arise several other rules of duty towards your masters and mistresses, which I shall endeavor to lay out in order before you.

And, in the first place, you are to be obedient and subject to your masters in all things.... And Christian ministers are commanded to “exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering them again, or gainsaying.” You see how strictly God requires this of you, that whatever your masters and mistresses order you to do, you must set about it immediately, and faithfully perform it, without any disputing or grumbling, and take care to please them well in all things. And for your encouragement he tells you that he will reward you for it in heaven; because, while you are honestly and faithfully doing your master’s business here, you are serving your Lord and Master in heaven. You see also that you are not to take any exceptions to the behavior of your masters and mistresses; and that you are to be subject and obedient, not only to such as are good, and gentle, and mild, towards you, but also to such as may be froward, peevish, and hard. For you are not at liberty to choose your own masters; but into whatever hands God hath been pleased to put you, you must do your duty, and God will reward you for it.

You are to be faithful and honest to your masters and mistresses, not purloining or wasting their goods or substance, but showing all good fidelity in all things.... Do not your masters, under God, provide for you? And how shall they be able to do this, to feed and to clothe you, unless you take honest care of everything that belongs to them? Remember that God requires this of you; and, if you are not afraid of suffering for it here, you cannot escape the vengeance of Almighty God, who will judge between you and your masters, and make you pay severely in the next world for all the injustice you do them here. And though you could manage so cunningly as to escape the eyes and hands of man, yet think what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, who is able to cast both soul and body into hell!

You are to serve your masters with cheerfulness, reverence, and humility. You are to do your masters’ service with good will, doing it as the will of God from the heart, without any sauciness or answering again. How many of you do things quite otherwise, and, instead of going about your work with a good will and a good heart, dispute and grumble, give saucy answers, and behave in a surly manner! There is something so becoming and engaging in a modest, cheerful, good-natured behavior, that a little work done in that manner seems better done, and gives far more satisfaction, than a great deal more, that must be done with fretting, vexation, and the lash always held over you. It also gains the good will and love of those you belong to, and makes your own life



pass with more ease and pleasure. Besides, you are to consider that this grumbling and ill-will do not affect your masters and mistresses only. They have ways and means in their hands of forcing you to do your work, whether you are willing or not. But your murmuring and grumbling is against God, who hath placed you in that service, who will punish you severely in the next world for despising his commands.

A very awful query here occurs to the mind. If the poor, ignorant slave, who wastes his master's temporal goods to answer some of his own present purposes, be exposed to this heavy retribution, what will become of those educated men, who, for their temporal convenience, make and hold in force laws which rob generation after generation of men, not only of their daily earnings, but of all their rights and privileges as immortal beings?

The Rev. Mr. Glennie, in one of his sermons, as quoted by Mr. Bowditch, p. 137, assures his hearers that none of them will be able to say, in the day of judgment, "I had no way of hearing about my God and Saviour."

Bishop Meade, as quoted by Brooke, pp. 34, 35, thus expatiates to slaves on the advantages of their condition. One would really think, from reading this account, that every one ought to make haste and get himself sold into slavery, as the nearest road to heaven.

Take care that you do not fret or murmur, grumble or repine at your condition; for this will not only make your life uneasy, but will greatly offend Almighty God. Consider that it is not yourselves, it is not the people that you belong to, it is not the men that have brought you to it, but it is the will of God, who hath by his providence made you servants, because, no doubt, he knew that condition would be best for you in this world, and help you the better towards heaven, if you would but do your duty in it. So that any discontent at your not being free, or rich, or great, as you see some others, is quarrelling with your heavenly Master, and finding fault with God himself, who hath made you what you are, and hath promised you as large a share in the kingdom of heaven as the greatest man alive, if you will but behave yourself aright, and do the business he hath set you about in this world honestly and cheerfully. Riches and power have proved the ruin of many an unhappy soul, by drawing away the heart and affections from God, and fixing them on mean and sinful enjoyments; so that, when God, who knows our hearts better than we know them ourselves, sees that they would be hurtful to us, and therefore keeps them from us, it is the greatest mercy and kindness he could show us.

You may perhaps fancy that, if you had riches and freedom, you could do your duty to God and man with greater pleasure than you can now. But, pray, consider that, if you can but save your souls, through the mercy of God, you will have spent your time to the best of purposes in this world; and he that at

last can get to heaven has performed a noble journey, let the road be ever so rugged and difficult. Besides, you really have a great advantage over most white people, who have not only the care of their daily labor upon their hands, but the care of looking forward and providing necessities for to-morrow and next day, and of clothing and bringing up their children, and of getting food and raiment for as many of you as belong to their families, which often puts them to great difficulties, and distracts their minds so as to break their rest, and take off their thoughts from the affairs of another world. Whereas, you are quite eased from all these cares, and have nothing but your daily labor to look after and, when that is done, take your needful rest Neither is it necessary for you to think of laying up anything against old age, as white people are obliged to do; for the laws of the country have provided that you shall not be turned off when you are past labor, but shall be maintained, while you live, by those you belong to, whether you are able to work or not.

Bishop Meade further consoles slaves thus for certain incidents of their lot, for which they may think they have more reason to find fault than for most others. The reader must admit that he takes a very philosophical view of the subject.

There is only one circumstance which may appear grievous, that I shall now take notice of, and that is correction.

Now, when correction is given you, you either deserve it, or you do not deserve it. But, whether you really deserve it or not, it is your duty, and Almighty God requires, that you bear it patiently You may perhaps think that this is hard doctrine; but if you consider it right, you must needs think otherwise of it. Suppose, then, that you deserve correction; you cannot but say that it is just and right you should meet with it. Suppose you do not, or at least you do not deserve so much, or so severe a correction, for the fault you have committed; you perhaps have escaped a great many more, and at last paid for all. Or, suppose you are quite innocent of what is laid to your charge, and suffer wrongfully in that particular thing; is it not possible you may have done some other bad thing which was never discovered, and that Almighty God, who saw you doing it, would not let you escape without punishment, one time or another? And ought you not, in such a case, to give glory to him, and be thankful that he would rather punish you in this life for your wickedness, than destroy your souls for it in the next life? But, suppose even this was not the case (a case hardly to be imagined), and that you have by no means, known or unknown, deserved the correction you suffered; there is this great comfort in it, that, if you bear it patiently, and leave your cause in the hands of God, he will reward you for it in heaven, and the punishment you suffer unjustly here shall turn to your exceeding great glory hereafter.

That Bishop Meade has no high opinion of the present comforts of a life of

slavery, may be fairly inferred from the following remarks which he makes to slaves:

Your own poor circumstances in this life ought to put you particularly upon this, and taking care of your souls; for you cannot have the pleasures and enjoyments of this life like rich free people, who have estates and money to lay out as they think fit. If others will run the hazard of their souls, they have a chance of getting wealth and power, of heaping up riches, and enjoying all the ease, luxury and pleasure their hearts should long after. But you can have none of these things; so that, if you sell your souls, for the sake of what poor matters you can get in this world, you have made a very foolish bargain indeed.

This information is certainly very explicit and to the point. He continues:

Almighty God hath been pleased to make you slaves here, and to give you nothing but labor and poverty in this world, which you are obliged to submit to, as it is his will that it should be so. And think within yourselves, what a terrible thing it would be, after all your labors and sufferings in this life, to be turned into hell in the next life, and, after wearing out your bodies in service here, to go into a far worse slavery when this is over, and your poor souls be delivered over into the possession of the devil, to become his slaves forever in hell, without any hope of ever getting free from it! If, therefore, you would be God's freemen in heaven, you must strive to be good, and serve him here on earth. Your bodies, you know, are not your own; they are at the disposal of those you belong to; but your precious souls are still your own, which nothing can take from you, if it be not your own fault. Consider well, then, that if you lose your souls by leading idle, wicked lives here, you have got nothing by it in this world, and you have lost your all in the next. For your idleness and wickedness is generally found out, and your bodies suffer for it here; and, what is far worse, if you do not repent and amend, your unhappy souls will suffer for it hereafter.

Mr. Jones, in that part of the work where he is obviating the objections of masters to the Christian instruction of their slaves, supposes the master to object thus:

You teach them that "God is no respecter of persons;" that "He hath made of one blood, all nations of men;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" what use, let me ask, would they make of these sentences from the gospel?

Mr. Jones says:

Let it be replied, that the effect urged in the objection might result from imperfect and injudicious religious instruction; indeed, religious instruction

may be communicated with the express design, on the part of the instructor, to produce the effect referred to, instances of which have occurred.

But who will say that neglect of duty and insubordination are the legitimate effects of the gospel, purely and sincerely imparted to servants? Has it not in all ages been viewed as the greatest civilizer of the human race?

How Mr. Jones would interpret the golden rule to the slave, so as to justify the slave-system, we cannot possibly tell. We can, however, give a specimen of the manner in which it has been interpreted in Bishop Meade's sermons, p. 116. (Brooke's Slavery, &c., pp. 32, 33.)

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them;" that is, do by all mankind just as you would desire they should do by you, if you were in their place, and they in yours.

Now, to suit this rule to your particular circumstances, suppose you were masters and mistresses, and had servants under you: would you not desire that your servants should do their business faithfully and honestly, as well when your back was turned as while you were looking over them? Would you not expect that they should take notice of what you said to them? that they should behave themselves with respect towards you and yours, and be as careful of everything belonging to you as you would be yourselves? You are servants: do, therefore, as you would wish to be done by, and you will be both good servants to your masters, and good servants to God, who requires this of you, and will reward you well for it, if you do it for the sake of conscience, in obedience to his commands.

The reverend teachers of such expositions of scripture do great injustice to the natural sense of their sable catechumens, if they suppose them incapable of detecting such very shallow sophistry, and of proving conclusively that "it is a poor rule that wont work both ways." Some shrewd old patriarch, of the stamp of those who rose up and went out at the exposition of the Epistle to Philemon, and who show such great acuteness in bringing up objections against the truth of God, such as would be thought peculiar to cultivated minds, might perhaps, if he dared, reply to such an exposition of scripture in this way: "Suppose you were a slave,—could not have a cent of your own earnings during your whole life, could have no legal right to your wife and children, could never send your children to school, and had, as you have told us, nothing but labor and poverty in this life,—how would you like it? Would you not wish your Christian master to set you free from this condition?" We submit it to every one who is no respecter of persons, whether this interpretation of Sambos is not as good as the bishops. And if not, why not?

To us, with our feelings and associations, such discourses as these of Bishop Meade appear hard-hearted and unfeeling to the last degree. We

should, however, do great injustice to the character of the man, if we supposed that they prove him to have been such. They merely go to show how perfectly use may familiarize amiable and estimable men with a system of oppression, till they shall have lost all consciousness of the wrong which it involves.

That Bishop Meades, reasonings did not thoroughly convince himself is evident from the fact that, after all his representations of the superior advantages of slavery as a means of religious improvement, he did, at last, emancipate his own slaves.

But, in addition to what has been said, this whole system of religious instruction is darkened by one hideous shadow,—THE SLAVE-TRADE. What does the Southern church do with her catechumens and communicants? Read the advertisements of Southern newspapers, and see. In every city in the slave-raising states behold the *dépôts*, kept constantly full of assorted negroes from the ages of ten to thirty! In every slave-consuming state see the receiving-houses, whither these poor wrecks and remnants of families are constantly borne! Who preaches the gospel to the slave-coffles? Who preaches the gospel in the slave-prisons? If we consider the tremendous extent of this internal trade,—if we read papers with columns of auction advertisements of human beings, changing hands as freely as if they were dollar-bills instead of human creatures,—we shall then realize how utterly all those influences of religious instruction must be nullified by leaving the subjects of them exposed “to all the vicissitudes of property.”

## CHAPTER X.

### WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The thing to be done, of which I shall chiefly speak, is that the whole American church, of all denominations, should unitedly come up, not in form, but in fact, to the noble purpose avowed by the Presbyterian Assembly of 1818, to seek the entire abolition of slavery throughout America and throughout Christendom.

To this noble course the united voice of Christians in all other countries is urgently calling the American church. Expressions of this feeling have come from Christians of all denominations in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, in France, in Switzerland, in Germany, in Persia, in the Sandwich Islands, and in China. All seem to be animated by one spirit. They have loved and honored this American church. They have rejoiced in the brightness of her rising. Her prosperity and success have been to them as their own, and they have had

hopes that God meant to confer inestimable blessings through her upon all nations. The American church has been to them like the rising of a glorious sun, shedding healing from his wings, dispersing mists and fogs, and bringing songs of birds and voices of cheerful industry, and sounds of gladness, contentment and peace. But, lo! in this beautiful orb is seen a disastrous spot of dim eclipse, whose gradually widening shadow threatens a total darkness. Can we wonder that the voice of remonstrance comes to us from those who have so much at stake in our prosperity and success? We have sent out our missionaries to all quarters of the globe; but how shall they tell their heathen converts the things that are done in Christianized America? How shall our missionaries in Mahometan countries hold up their heads, and proclaim the superiority of our religion, when we tolerate barbarities which they have repudiated!

A missionary among the Karens, in Asia, writes back that his course is much embarrassed by a suspicion that is afloat among the Karens that the Americans intend to steal and sell them. He says:

I dread the time when these Karens will be able to read our books, and get a full knowledge of all that is going on in our country. Many of them are very inquisitive now, and often ask me questions that I find it very difficult to answer.

No, there is no resource. The church of the United States is shut up, in the providence of God, to one work. She can never fulfil her mission till this is done. So long as she neglects this, it will lie in the way of everything else which she attempts to do

She must undertake it for another reason,—because she alone can perform the work peaceably. If this fearful problem is left to take its course as a mere political question, to be ground out between the upper and nether millstones of political parties, then what will avert agitation, angry collisions, and the desperate rending the Union? No, there is no safety but in making it a religious enterprise, and pursuing it in a Christian spirit, and by religious means.

If it now be asked what means shall the church employ, we answer, this evil must be abolished by the same means which the apostles first used for the spread of Christianity, and the extermination of all the social evils which then filled a world lying in wickedness. Hear the apostle enumerate them: “By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.”

We will briefly consider each of these means.

First, “by Pureness.” Christians in the Northern free states must endeavor to purify themselves and the country from various malignant results of the

system of slavery; and, in particular, they must endeavor to abolish that which is the most sinful,—the unchristian prejudice of caste.

In Hindostan there is a class called the Pariahs, with which no other class will associate, eat or drink. Our missionaries tell the converted Hindoo that this prejudice is unchristian; for God hath made of one blood all who dwell on the face of the earth, and all mankind are brethren in Christ. With what face shall they tell this to the Hindoo, if he is able to reply, “In your own Christian country there is a class of Pariahs who are treated no better than we treat ours. You do not yourselves believe the things you teach us.”

Let us look at the treatment of the free negro at the North. In the States of Indiana and Illinois the most oppressive and unrighteous laws have been passed with regard to him. No law of any slave state could be more cruel in its spirit than that recently passed in Illinois, by which every free negro coming into the state is taken up and sold for a certain time, and then, if he do not leave the state, is sold again.

With what face can we exhort our Southern brethren to emancipate their slaves, if we do not set the whole moral power of the church at the North against such abuses as this? Is this course justified by saying that the negro is vicious and idle? This is adding insult to injury.

What is it these Christian states do? To a great extent they exclude the colored population from their schools; they discourage them from attending their churches by invidious distinctions; as a general fact, they exclude them from their shops, where they might learn useful arts and trades; they crowd them out of the better callings where they might earn an honorable livelihood; and, having thus discouraged every elevated aspiration, and reduced them to almost inevitable ignorance, idleness and vice, they fill up the measure of iniquity by making cruel laws to expel them from their states, thus heaping up wrath against the day of wrath.

If we say that every Christian at the South who does not use his utmost influence against their iniquitous slave-laws is guilty, as a republican citizen, of sustaining those laws, it is no less true that every Christian at the North who does not do what in him lies to procure the repeal of such laws in the free states is, so far, guilty for their existence. Of late years we have had abundant quotations from the Old Testament to justify all manner of oppression. A Hindoo, who knew nothing of this generous and beautiful book, except from such pamphlets as Mr. Smylie’s, might possibly think it was a treatise on piracy, and a general justification of robbery. But let us quote from it the directions which God gives for the treatment of the stranger: “If a stranger sojourn with you in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth among you shall be as one born among you: thou shall love him as

thyselves." How much more does this apply when the stranger has been brought into our land by the injustice and cruelty of our fathers!

We are happy to say, however, that the number of states in which such oppressive legislation exists is small. It is also matter of encouragement and hope that the unphilosophical and unchristian prejudice of caste is materially giving way, in many parts of our country, before a kinder and more Christian spirit.

Many of our schools and colleges are willing to receive the colored applicant on equal terms with the white. Some of the Northern free states accord to the colored free man full political equality and privileges. Some of the colored people, under this encouragement, have, in many parts of our country, become rich and intelligent. A very fair proportion of educated men is rising among them. There are among them respectable editors, eloquent orators, and laborious and well-instructed clergymen. It gives us pleasure to say that among intelligent and Christian people these men are treated with the consideration they deserve; and, if they meet with insult and ill-treatment, it is commonly from the less-educated class, who, being less enlightened, are always longer under the influence of prejudice. At a recent ordination at one of the largest and most respectable churches in New York, the moderator of the presbytery was a black man, who began life as a slave; and it was undoubtedly a source of gratification to all his Christian brethren to see him presiding in this capacity. He put the questions to the candidate in the German language, the church being in part composed of Germans. Our Christian friends in Europe may, at least, infer from this that, if we have had our faults in times past, we have, some of us, seen and are endeavoring to correct them.

To bring this head at once to a practical conclusion, the writer will say to every individual Christian, who wishes to do something for the abolition of slavery, begin by doing what lies in your power for the colored people in your vicinity. Are there children excluded from schools by unchristian prejudice? Seek to combat that prejudice by fair arguments, presented in a right spirit. If you cannot succeed, then endeavor to provide for the education of these children in some other manner. As far as in you lies, endeavor to secure for them, in every walk of life, the ordinary privileges of American citizens. If they are excluded from the omnibus and railroad-car in the place where you reside, endeavor to persuade those who have the control of these matters to pursue a more just and reasonable course. Those Christians who are heads of mechanical establishments can do much for the cause by receiving colored apprentices. Many masters excuse themselves for excluding the colored apprentice by saying that if they receive him all their other hands will desert them. To this it is replied, that if they do the thing in a Christian temper and for a Christian purpose, the probability is that, if their hands desert at first,



they will return to them at last—all of them, at least, whom they would care to retain.

A respectable dressmaker in one of our towns has, as a matter of principle, taken colored girls for apprentices, thus furnishing them with a respectable means of livelihood. Christian mechanics, in all the walks of life, are earnestly requested to consider this subject, and see if, by offering their hand to raise this poor people to respectability and knowledge and competence, they may not be performing a service which the Lord will accept as done unto himself.

Another thing which is earnestly commended to Christians is the raising and comforting of those poor churches of colored people, who have been discouraged, dismembered and disheartened, by the operation of the fugitive slave law.

In the city of Boston is a church, which, even now, is struggling with debt and embarrassment, caused by being obliged to buy its own deacons, to shield them from the terrors of that law.

Lastly, Christians at the North, we need not say, should abstain from all trading in slaves, whether direct or indirect, whether by partnership with Southern houses or by receiving immortal beings as security for debt. It is not necessary to expand this point. It speaks for itself.

By all these means the Christian church at the North must secure for itself purity from all complicity with the sin of slavery, and from the unchristian customs and prejudices which have resulted from it.

The second means to be used for the abolition of slavery is “Knowledge.”

Every Christian ought thoroughly, carefully and prayerfully, to examine this system of slavery. He should regard it as one upon which he is bound to have right views and right opinions, and to exert a right influence in forming and concentrating a powerful public sentiment, of all others the most efficacious remedy. Many people are deterred from examining the statistics on this subject, because they do not like the men who have collected them. They say they do not like abolitionists, and therefore they will not attend to those facts and figures which they have accumulated. This, certainly, is not wise or reasonable. In all other subjects which deeply affect our interests, we think it best to take information where we can get it, whether we like the persons who give it to us or not.

Every Christian ought seriously to examine the extent to which our national government is pledged and used for the support of slavery. He should thoroughly look into the statistics of slavery in the District of Columbia, and, above all, into the statistics of that awful system of legalized piracy and oppression by which hundreds and thousands are yearly torn from home and

friends, and all that heart holds dear, and carried to be sold like beasts in the markets of the South. The smoke from this bottomless abyss of injustice puts out the light of our Sabbath suns in the eyes of all nations. Its awful groans and wailings drown the voice of our psalms and religious melodies. All nations know these things of us, and shall we not know them of ourselves? Shall we not have courage, shall we not have patience, to investigate thoroughly our own bad case, and gain a perfect knowledge of the length and breadth of the evil we seek to remedy?

The third means for the abolition of slavery is “Long-suffering.”

Of this quality there has been some lack in the attempts that have hitherto been made. The friends of the cause have not had patience with each other, and have not been able to treat each other’s opinions with forbearance. There have been many painful things in the past history of this subject; but is it not time when all the friends of the slave should adopt the motto, “forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before”? Let not the believers of immediate abolition call those who believe in gradual emancipation time-servers and traitors; and let not the upholders of gradual emancipation call the advocates of immediate abolition fanatics and incendiaries. Surely some more brotherly way of convincing good men can be found, than by standing afar off on some Ebal and Gerizim, and cursing each other. The truth spoken in love will always go further than the truth spoken in wrath: and, after all, the great object is to persuade our Southern brethren to admit the idea of any emancipation at all. When we have succeeded in persuading them that anything is necessary to be done, then will be the time for bringing up the question whether the object shall be accomplished by an immediate or a gradual process. Meanwhile, let our motto be, “Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things; and if any man be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto him.” “Let us receive even him that is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations.” Let us not reject the good there is in any, because of some remaining defects.

We come now to the consideration of a power without which all others must fail,—“the Holy Ghost.”

The solemn creed of every Christian church, whether Roman, Greek, Episcopal or Protestant, says, “I believe in the Holy Ghost.” But how often do Christians, in all these denominations, live and act, and even conduct their religious affairs, as if they had “never so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” If we trust to our own reasonings, our own misguided passions, and our own blind self-will, to effect the reform of abuses, we shall utterly fail. There is a power, silent, convincing, irresistible, which moves over the dark and troubled heart of man, as of old it moved over the dark and troubled

waters of Chaos, bringing light out of darkness, and order out of confusion.

Is it not evident to every one who takes enlarged views of human society that a gentle but irresistible influence is pervading the human race, prompting groanings and longings and dim aspirations for some coming era of good? Worldly men read the signs of the times, and call this power the Spirit of the Age,—but should not the church acknowledge it as the spirit of God?

Let it not be forgotten, however, that the gift of his most powerful regenerating influence, at the opening of the Christian dispensation, was conditioned on prayer. The mighty movement that began on the day of Pentecost was preceded by united, fervent persevering prayer. A similar spirit of prayer must precede the coming of the divine Spirit, to effect a revolution so great as that at which we aim. The most powerful instrumentality which God has delegated to man, and around which cluster all his glorious promises, is prayer. All past prejudices and animosities on this subject must be laid aside, and the whole church unite as one man in earnest, fervent prayer. Have we forgotten the promise of the Holy Ghost? Have we forgotten that He was to abide with us forever? Have we forgotten that it is He who is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment? O, divine and Holy Comforter! Thou promise of the Father! Thou only powerful to enlighten, convince and renew! Return, we beseech thee, and visit this vine and this vineyard of thy planting! With thee nothing is impossible; and what we, in our weakness, can scarcely conceive, thou canst accomplish!

Another means for the abolition of slavery is “Love unfeigned.”

In all moral conflicts, that party who can preserve, through every degree of opposition and persecution, a divine, un-provokable spirit of love, must finally conquer. Such are the immutable laws of the moral world. Anger, wrath, selfishness and jealousy, have all a certain degree of vitality. They often produce more show, more noise and temporary results, than love. Still, all these passions have, in themselves, the seeds of weakness. Love, and love only, is immortal; and when all the grosser passions of the soul have spent themselves by their own force, love looks forth like the unchanging star, with a light that never dies.

In undertaking this work, we must love both the slave-holder and the slave. We must never forget that both are our brethren. We must expect to be misrepresented, to be slandered, and to be hated. How can we attack so powerful an interest without it? We must be satisfied simply with the pleasure of being true friends, while we are treated as bitter enemies.

This holy controversy must be one of principle, and not of sectional bitterness. We must not suffer it to degenerate, in our hands, into a violent prejudice against the South; and, to this end, we must keep continually before

our minds the more amiable features and attractive qualities of those with whose principles we are obliged to conflict. If they say all manner of evil against us, we must reflect that we expose them to great temptation to do so when we assail institutions to which they are bound by a thousand ties of interest and early association, and to whose evils habit has made them in a great degree insensible. The apostle gives us this direction in cases where we are called upon to deal with offending brethren, "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We may apply this to our own case, and consider that if we had been exposed to the temptations which surround our friends at the South, and received the same education, we might have felt and thought and acted as they do. But, while we cherish all these considerations, we must also remember that it is no love to the South to countenance and defend a pernicious system; a system which is as injurious to the master as to the slave; a system which turns fruitful fields to deserts; a system ruinous to education, to morals, and to religion and social progress; a system of which many of the most intelligent and valuable men at the South are weary, and from which they desire to escape, and by emigration are yearly escaping. Neither must we concede the rights of the slave; for he is also our brother, and there is a reason why we should speak for him which does not exist in the case of his master. He is poor, uneducated and ignorant, and cannot speak for himself. We must, therefore, with greater jealousy, guard his rights. Whatever else we compromise, we must not compromise the rights of the helpless, nor the eternal principles of rectitude and morality.

We must never concede that it is an honorable thing to deprive working men of their wages, though, like many other abuses, it is customary, reputable, and popular, and though amiable men, under the influence of old prejudices, still continue to do it. Never, not even for a moment, should we admit the thought that an heir of God and a joint heir of Jesus Christ may lawfully be sold upon the auction-block, though it be a common custom. We must repudiate, with determined severity, the blasphemous doctrine of property in human beings.

Some have supposed it an absurd refinement to talk about separating principles and persons, or to admit that he who upholds a bad system can be a good man. All experience proves the contrary. Systems most unjust and despotic have been defended by men personally just and humane. It is a melancholy consideration, but no less true, that there is almost no absurdity and no injustice that has not, at some period of the world's history, had the advantage of some good man's virtues in its support.

It is a part of our trial in this imperfect life;—were evil systems only supported by the evil, our moral discipline would be much less severe than it is, and our course in attacking error far plainer.

On the whole, we cannot but think that there was much Christian wisdom in the remark, which we have before quoted, of a poor old slave-woman, whose whole life had been darkened by this system, that we must “hate the sin, but love the sinner.”

The last means for the abolition of slavery is the “Armor of Righteousness on the right hand and on the left.”

By this we mean an earnest application of all straight-forward, honorable and just measures, for the removal of the system of slavery. Every man, in his place, should remonstrate against it. All its sophistical arguments should be answered, its biblical defences unmasked by correct reasoning and interpretation. Every mother should teach the evil of it to her children. Every clergyman should fully and continually warn his church against any complicity with such a sin. It is said that this would be introducing politics into the pulpit. It is answered, that since people will have to give an account of their political actions in the day of judgment, it seems proper that the minister should instruct them somewhat as to their political responsibilities. In that day Christ will ask no man whether he was of this or that party; but he certainly will ask him whether he gave his vote in the fear of God, and for the advancement of the kingdom of righteousness.

It is often objected that slavery is a distant sin, with which we have nothing to do. If any clergyman wishes to test this fact, let him once plainly and faithfully preach upon it. He will probably then find that the roots of the poison-tree have run under the very hearth-stone of New England families, and that in his very congregation are those in complicity with this sin.

It is no child's play to attack an institution which has absorbed into itself so much of the political power and wealth of this nation, and they who try it will soon find that they wrestle “not with flesh and blood.” No armor will do for this warfare but the “armor of righteousness.”

To our brethren in the South God has pointed out a more arduous conflict. The very heart shrinks to think what the faithful Christian must endure who assails this institution on its own ground; but it must be done. How was it at the North? There was a universal effort to put down the discussion of it here by mob law. Printing-presses were broken, houses torn down, property destroyed. Brave men, however, stood firm; martyr blood was shed for the right of free opinion and speech; and so the right of discussion was established. Nobody tries that sort of argument now,—its day is past. In Kentucky, also, they tried to stop the discussion by similar means. Mob violence destroyed a printing-press, and threatened the lives of individuals. But there were brave men there, who feared not violence or threats of death; and emancipation is now open for discussion in Kentucky. The fact is, the

South must discuss the matter of slavery. She cannot shut it out, unless she lays an embargo on the literature of the whole civilized world. If it be, indeed, divine and God-appointed, why does she so tremble to have it touched? If it be of God, all the free inquiry in the world cannot overthrow it. Discussion must and will come. It only requires courageous men to lead the way.

Brethren in the South, there are many of you who are truly convinced that slavery is a sin, a tremendous wrong: but, if you confess your sentiments, and endeavor to propagate your opinions, you think that persecution, affliction, and even death, await you. How can we ask you, then, to come forward? We do not ask it. Ourselves weak, irresolute and worldly, shall we ask you to do what perhaps we ourselves should not dare? But we will beseech Him to speak to you, who dared and endured more than this for your sake, and who can strengthen you to dare and endure for His. He can raise you above all temporary and worldly considerations. He can inspire you with that love to himself which will make you willing to leave father and mother, and wife and child, yea, to give up life itself, for his sake. And if he ever brings you to that place where you and this world take a final farewell of each other, where you make up your mind solemnly to give all up for his cause, where neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, can move you from this purpose,—then will you know a joy which is above all other joy, a peace constant and unchanging as the eternal God from whom it springs.

Dear brethren, is this system to go on forever in your land? Can you think these slave-laws anything but an abomination to a just God? Can you think this internal slave-trade to be anything but an abomination in his sight?

Look, we beseech you, into those awful slave-prisons which are in your cities. Do the groans and prayers which go up from those dreary mansions promise well for the prosperity of our country?

Look, we beseech you, at the mournful march of the slave-coffles; follow the bloody course of the slave-ships on your coast. What, suppose you, does the Lamb of God think of all these things? He whose heart was so tender that he wept, at the grave of Lazarus, over a sorrow that he was so soon to turn into joy,—what does he think of this constant, heart-breaking, yearly-repeated anguish? What does he think of Christian wives forced from their husbands, and husbands from their wives? What does he think of Christian daughters, whom his church first educates, indoctrinates and baptizes, and then leaves to be sold as merchandise?

Think you such prayers as poor Paul Edmondson's, such death-bed scenes as Emily Russell's, are witnessed without emotion by that generous Saviour, who regards what is done to his meanest servant as done to himself?

Did it never seem to you, O Christian! when you have read the sufferings

of Jesus, that you would gladly have suffered with him? Does it never seem almost ungenerous to accept eternal life as the price of such anguish on his part, while you bear no cross for him? Have you ever wished you could have watched with him in that bitter conflict at Gethsemane, when even his chosen slept? Have you ever wished that you could have stood by him when all forsook him and fled,—that you could have owned when Peter denied,—that you could have honored him when buffeted and spit upon? Would you think it too much honor, could you, like Mary, have followed him to the cross, and stood a patient sharer of that despised, unpitied agony? That you cannot do. That hour is over. Christ, now, is exalted, crowned, glorified,—all men speak well of him; rich churches rise to him, and costly sacrifice goes up to him. What chance have you, among the multitude, to prove your love,—to show that you would stand by him discrowned, dishonored, tempted, betrayed, and suffering? Can you show it in any way but by espousing the cause of his suffering poor? Is there a people among you despised and rejected of men, heavy with oppression, acquainted with grief, with all the power of wealth and fashion, of political and worldly influence, arrayed against their cause,—Christian, you can acknowledge Christ in them!

If you turn away indifferent from this cause,—“if thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that be ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it, and he that keepeth the soul, doth he not know it, shall he not render to every man according to his works?”

In the last judgment will He not say to you, “I have been in the slave-prison,—in the slave-coffle. I have been sold in your markets; I have toiled for naught in your fields; I have been smitten on the mouth in your courts of justice; I have been denied a hearing in my own church,—and ye cared not for it. Ye went, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise.” And if ye shall answer, “When, Lord?” He shall say unto you, “Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

***Freeditorial*** 

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