

SLAVERY

IRRECONCILABLE WITH CHRISTIANITY

AND

SOUND REASON;

OR

An Anti-Slavery Argument.

BY

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“All slavery has its origin against natural right.”—JUDGE McLEAN.

Dred Scott case.

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INTRODUCTION.



To the American Colonization Society, with her numerous state auxiliaries, and to the freemen and philanthropists in these United States, this argument in favor of freedom is very respectfully inscribed.

Fellow citizens, we are emphatically the successors of that noble Band of Patriots who achieved the liberty and independence of these United States. The battles of the Revolution were fought by our fathers, to wrest from the oppressions of arbitrary power, a land to be devoted for ever to the great principles of liberty and equality. The constitution and government of these United States, in their primary organization, were designed to establish and secure these principles, on a specific, inviolate, and perpetual basis, that the people might transmit them to their children and latest posterity, as a magnificent legacy, acquired by valor, by conflict, and by blood. Hence our form of government was at first proclaimed to the world, by her written charter and living sons, as a great model republic for all ages and all climes. Its first announcement was met by shouts of admiration and applause, from the lovers of freedom around the globe. That immortal instrument, while enriched with as much popular liberty, right, and power as was judged reconcilable with requisite energy, subordination, order, and stability combined, was compelled, unhappily by circumstances, to permit one foul

blot to defile the *thirteen stars* which reflected the glory of this redeemed and consecrated Asylum of Freedom. That blot was slavery—admitted, however, only as a temporary stain, to be wiped off with all practicable speed, by patriotic wisdom and policy, as well as religion and philanthropy—thus fully to redeem the nation from the deep *disgrace* and the deeper *crime* and *guilt* of retaining the loathsome stigma.

And now, since the abettors and tools of this debasing, cruel, and criminal institution are combining their energies, not only to rivet this odious feature upon the land of the *free*, but to extend its oppression, deformity, and guilt to untarnished and interdicted territory, both *new* and *old*, it seems important and necessary to discuss the subject of slavery, to exhibit its true character to the public, with a view to weaken its power and limit its prevalence in our great republic.

If this essay shall be conducive to that interesting object, its chief end will have been accomplished.

ISAAC V. BROWN.

TRENTON, October, 1858.

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ANTI-SLAVERY ARGUMENT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

AFTER the programme of Creation was drawn in Eternity, and the preliminary work performed in the beginning of time, God the Father said to his Eternal Fellows, the Second and Third persons of the Trinity, *Come let us make man in our image and after our likeness: and let him have dominion.* Man was made to sustain elevation and power in this lower world, and not to grovel. Therefore, the faculties of reason, of free-will, and a capacity for moral action were implanted within him: and the likeness of the Great Eternal was impressed upon him from the beginning. Slavery never entered into the divine mind, as a constituted or recognised feature of his workmanship. It is a fungus, or spurious growth, of a blighted soil and degenerate clime, nourished and kept alive to this hour by the same element of rottenness which at first gave it existence. Its interference with the civil and religious duties of men, individually, with the peaceful progress of the Church of Christ, with the great question of public morals, and with the political harmony, prosperity, and happiness of nations, renders it, wherever it exists, an interesting and appropriate subject of discussion. And what invests it pre-eminently with this character at the present moment, is the fact, that many opinions and speculations, considered crude and heretical in character respecting it, have recently been issued from the press, in various forms, demanding serious consideration.

In our reasonings on slavery, we assume the fact, that the African people and all dark-skinned tribes are portions of the human race, identical with those of fair complexion, "all nations of men being made of one blood." To shed light upon this subject, or attain to any just and satisfactory conclusions respecting slavery, we must recur to the elementary principles of man's intelligent and moral nature and relations; his capacities and responsibilities under the divine government, as well as under that of civil and political states.

Blackstone, the great legal oracle of England, tells us, that "Natural liberty consists in a power of acting as one thinks fit, without any constraint or control, unless by the laws of nature; being a right inherent in us by birth, as one of the gifts of God to man at his creation, when he endowed him with the faculty of free will." *Locke* defines it in terms substantially the same, "a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they see fit within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man:" and we may add, that true liberty includes a right, at discretion, to use the means of cultivating our intellectual and moral powers under the guidance of reason and sanction of conscience, for our present and future benefit, without let or hinderance from any quarter.

The theory, that to establish true liberty and equality among men, they must be equal in endowment and capacity from God, by nature, or by providence, physically, morally, and mentally, leads to the absurd and mischievous dogma, "that might makes right," which lies at the foundation of the most glaring oppressions and cruelties existing in the world.

It is admitted, that when men enter into society, they part with a portion of their natural rights, or rather transfer them to society, with a view of obtaining a more full security for those that remain. To this step the uncertainties arising from the hostility of others, and consequent fears for the safety of person and property strongly prompt. Burke says, "liberty to individuals is, that they may do

what they please," and Paley, "that to do what we will, is natural liberty."

The word *slave* is of *Russian* or *Slavonic* origin, and is derived from the term *Slave*, the name of a northern people, who, at an early period, were reduced to subjection in the south of Europe. In its import, it is diametrically opposed to liberty. It applies to a person entirely subject to the will of another, having no freedom of choice or action, whose person, powers, and services are under the control of a superior—an owner or a master—for whose benefit or pleasure he is required to labor involuntarily without contract or consent. Many causes contributed to introduce, continue, extend, and confirm, and afterwards aggravate, the institution of slavery. Prisoners taken in war were at an early period held in bondage. The inequalities arising out of the various successes and reverses of life were, in many instances, employed as an argument to vindicate the practice. The *superiority* of power, followed by acts of spoliation and rapacity perpetrated upon weak and barbarous nations or tribes, has been pleaded as an authority for this cruel institution. Hereditary descent, purchase and barter, have been large tributaries to this hateful scourge of the human race.

CHAPTER II.

Analysis of the human organization.

MAN, although in ruins, is a rational being, possessing understanding, will, affections, and conscience, the essential elements or characteristics of humanity. These faculties constitute him an intelligent moral agent, responsible in society and accountable to God. The Creator has thus made him capable of knowing, of serving, and enjoying him.

The first view we take of the human organization leads us to the conclusion of the poet, that *mind makes the man*. The essentials of his existence, of his character and life, of his end and destiny, are found in his breast, mysteriously clustered and associated, blended and yet distinct. A few elementary faculties, or organs, constitute the whole of this delicate, symmetrical, wonderful fabric. This endowment is sacred, temporarily lent to earth, to be improved and employed for lofty purposes and winged for immortality; in the meanwhile, it is held in sure custody and familiar supervision by its creator, to disenthral it from every disability, and to secure its everlasting escape from the bondage of corruption and mortality. Man is such a creature, that without these features of mind or spirit, or with them paralyzed and debased by neglect, vitiated by abuse or perverted by false lights, he sinks to a level with the brutes; but with appropriate and efficient culture and refinement, he mounts upward as on eagles' wings, and vies with angels.

There can be no doubt that the Creator designed and expected to receive richer tributes of praise and glory from the world of mind, intermingling unseen with the material creation, than from all the other stupendous productions of his six days' work. Hence, by endowing mind with features compounded of rationality and moral sensibility, God has linked it to the supreme intelligence of heaven, and entwined its spiritual tendrils around his eternal throne; and nothing but the benumbing and deranging power of depravity, aggravated by unpropitious outward circumstances and relentless arbitrary violence, can frustrate this ennobling system.

In surveying the mind, the power of *perception*, which with memory forms a capacity to admit and accumulate knowledge on all subjects, facts, relations, and duties interesting to man, stands conspicuous in his intellectual structure. This faculty ranges abroad through the wide expanse of the heavens and the earth, gleaning knowledge in its flight, and collecting materials to live and act upon.

In close proximity lies the faculty of reasoning, examin-

ing, comparing, and estimating objects, relations, motives, and obligations, and so forming judgments and conclusions on every known subject, relation, and duty of all characters and grades incident to humanity connected with time and reaching into eternity. In the exercise of this high function, it is the Creator's design that the creature should enjoy all auxiliary means of illumination, have access to all sources and channels of intelligence furnishing or promising aid in arriving at just conclusions and fulfilling the great end of life.

In the mental endowment of his rational offspring, God has placed in juxta-position with other organs the faculty of *will*, which is pronounced to be, intellectually and morally, the instrument by which, or in concert with which, the mind, already stored with knowledge, matured and arranged by reason and reflection, forms and expresses its judgment and purposes, gives vent to its feelings and desires, and develops the whole series of its internal evolutions. In the exercise of this faculty of *willing*, God intended, and has clearly manifested in his word, that whatever other things were bound fast and stereotyped by immutable laws and fixtures, the mind should be free in her volitions to follow the dictates of the intelligent principle and reasoning powers placed within, as sovereign illuminators and directors in this process, in subordination only to his spirit. Anything that interferes with the sovereign free action of the mind, by unauthorized intrusion, by violent irruption or usurpation, destroys the liberty of the mind, impairs its responsibility—in fact either entirely destroys the man or changes his character, his position, his relations, in the universe—simply because he has not been permitted to act freely upon the light and strength of his internal resources according to his rational nature, freely to weigh motives to action on evidence, to form his own intelligent and rational estimate, to yield to what he considers the strongest motive, the most interesting object, the most moving attractions presented, the most appropriate and impressive influence in view of his mind and will. With this restriction existing and acting in every crisis, no man

is free, and no power insidiously or violently arresting or crippling the free agency of the mind and will can escape the anathema which it deserves.

In this analysis, conscience, which has been called the vicegerent of Heaven, stands aloft as "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," overlooking the eventful movements of the *inner man*, to reprove or sanction every successive phase of thought or action. This appropriate name, when resolved into its simple derivatives, *con* and *scio*, the school-boy will perceive assigns to this faculty the highest intellectual and moral rank, subordinate only to the *Divinity* who inspired it and enthroned it in the human breast. Quicker than thought, grasping all the lights of the understanding, the judgments and conclusions of reason, and the accumulated stores of memory, it operates, by their combined aid and by a kind of intuitive penetration, with more than telegraphic despatch in resolving every intellectual doubt, and enforcing not only "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy," but "the mint, anise, and cummin" of every exigence and moral crisis. The hallowed sphere which conscience occupies cannot be entered without rudeness and profanation to interrupt her pure, peaceful, and decisive reign over the empire of mind. Improvable in her nature, she is also liable to deterioration from ignorance, neglect, corrupt example, false instruction, prejudice, and passion. And hence she needs constant protection against the incursions of error, fostering care and increasing light to animate and sustain her in her passage by the rocks and quicksands which line her pathway. Conscience, properly enlightened and trained, in the hands of God is a potent engine to keep the world in order, by rendering human governments and laws more efficient. Society, in all her departments, feels the happy influence of this noble faculty, inspiring social order, domestic peace and comfort. By its cultivation, the savage and the slave are elevated into rationality, made to put on the features of improved humanity, and are, in some measure, happily prepared for the sacred service and divine homage due to God.

The affections of the heart, which constitute the charm, the sweeteners of life and the glory of humanity, flow from the united cultivation and exercise of all the internal powers we have briefly named under the direction and culture of the holy spirit. Christianity is justly called the religion of love. This feature, though last named in this psychological glance, is the brightest in the train, and adds fresh lustre to all the others. Benevolence is the consummate crowning excellence of the divine character (*for God is love*) and the most sacred ornament of the spiritual world. It constitutes the harmonizing element and cement of the universe, and out of it grows a reciprocity, a kind sympathy, an indissoluble bond of union, between created spirits and the Spirit of Eternity. This grand connecting tie between himself and human souls God's overflowing love prompts him to sustain and diffuse without limit, and especially to inspire and propagate, even among the lowest ranks of our degenerate race. Hence, at an early stage in the progressive development of his plan, when the fulness of time had come, he proclaimed his great command, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." This command seems very appropriately to follow his preceding gracious announcement, "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Here love meets love in glorious harmony and triumph, and as a chain let down from heaven, is adapted to draw up subordinate spirits to celestial heights. It reaches to the most dark and depressed intelligences, in common with those of higher grades and more privileged condition. Its sanctions, its attractions, its obligations, its benefits, its hopes and its joys, are the joint provision and bestowment of infinite wisdom and love combined. The poor negro, crushed by bondage and privation, and chained down in fetters of darkness and pain equally with the philosopher and the sage, is within the reach of this law of love, and capable, under christian culture, of feeling its power, of tasting its sweetness, and by it climbing up to glory.

That the African's mind, after all his oppression and degradation, possesses the faculties and capacities which have been exhibited as peculiar to man, is beyond dispute; and that he is thus made capable of the high and holy exercise of love to God, none will call in question, after duly considering the aids which God has granted and promised to render this work both easy and delightful.

CHAPTER III.

The general nature and effects of slavery—the relation of master and slave—the assumption in favor of the former—the injuries resulting to the latter.—Pro-slavery opinions stated.

THE whole system of divine legislation for the human race contemplates every individual as a proper subject of government. Although all men are addressed in the aggregate, each man, separate and distinct from every other, is contemplated as independent on all but God himself. He is considered as possessing intellectual, physical, and moral powers adapted to the relation he sustains to his maker, adequate to self-government and to a life of subjection to God's authority, obedience to his will, and accountableness at his bar. And we enter into this discussion entertaining a decided conviction, that the colored portion of our race constitutes an integral part of it, are possessed of similar mental and moral powers and responsibilities, are subject to the same laws as men in general, entitled to the same privileges, bound by the same obligations, destined to the same immortality, and hence stand upon a perfect equality with all others of the race.

Now slavery invades and mars this beautiful system of humanity by intermixing with it jarring elements, by imposing a very grievous and painful privation upon a large portion of the human family, arbitrarily and effectually cutting them off from the privileges, hopes, and happiness

they have capacities to enjoy and a right to claim. Slavery is founded upon the arbitrary assumption that there is a natural inequality between man and his fellow man; that in consequence of this, one man has a right to control the physical, intellectual, and moral powers and actions of another; that all men exist, by natural constitution and classification, in the distinct order of superior and inferior; that this distinction is properly developed and carried out in domestic slavery, in which all the superior rights and prerogatives of the former class are concentrated and accumulated in the master, and that the relation of master and servant is accommodated to this imaginary primordial constitution of the human race, which ignores the principle of equality and individual independence among men, and recognises such a distinction or modification of powers, rights, and responsibilities as drops the inferior order of men in the scale of being below humanity, and resembles them to the brutes. For this system of violent distortion of original elementary truth there is claimed by its advocates a divine sanction, without exhibiting the least evidence of it.

Hence, of these two classes thus created with dissimilar and unequal rights, the *master's benefit* and happiness are to be always chiefly or exclusively regarded, to the entire sacrifice and extinction of the rights, privileges, and happiness of the inferior class, wherever or whenever there arises any conflict or competition between the interest and happiness of the master and slave. Hence the individuals of the subordinate class are to be considered and treated in everything as tributary to the interest and happiness of the superior. Their liberty, their independence, their various rights and privileges, everything pertaining to them, except the power of breathing, belong to their superiors, or is subjected to their will, and may be possessed, controlled, and used, at their discretion, to the utmost limit, whatever burdens, privations, hardships, and sufferings may fall or be imposed upon the lower order, as the result of this relation. And in this perverted and monstrous process, the masters or superiors are constituted the sove-

reign arbiters and exclusive judges, without appeal, of the manner, the degree, and circumstances in which this order of things is to be enforced. And moreover, by the same supposition, any number of rivals or aspirants may seize and obtain, by purchase, exchange, or power, as many human beings as come within their reach, and can be made available to their benefit or happiness, without the least regard to the will, interest, or well-being of the enslaved party.

Now if this right to possess, to govern and enjoy exclusively the immunities of the inferior class of human beings, has been invested in the superior order, then the right and power to enforce these rights must have been also granted, for God does everything *in order*. Hence this hypothesis implies that the superiors have a right, at pleasure, to destroy the happiness of as many human beings as they may be able to make available or subservient to their own private happiness. As this power is unlimited, except by its own nature, it may be exercised at pleasure in the widest manner possible. This assumption, in its legitimate sequents in favor of the superior order, puts on a character of universal monopoly or absorption in relation to all the immunities of human nature, of arrogance towards the government of Almighty God, of hostility to the progress of the Gospel, of antagonism to the peacefulness and prosperity of all human governments and to the happiness of the whole human race.

Furthermore, that the system of slavery exerts a demoralizing and disastrous influence on both the parties involved, superiors and inferiors, none can be so blind as not to perceive. The masters are inflated with pride, selfishness, passion, very often licentiousness, as well as cruelty. The slaves, kept in ignorance, subject to insults, privations, and moral degradation under the absolute power of others, do not recognise moral distinctions or accountableness to God. Hence, in general, they neither know nor feel any internal check to the indulgence of iniquitous propensities or violent passion. The corruption of nature is left free from every moral restraint, and hence assumes, with shocking

uniformity, a disgusting phase of vice and pollution. The operation of slavery has always been found unfavorable not only to general intelligence and good morals, but to national wealth and prosperity. It removes from the slaves the most efficacious motives to industry and improvement, on the one hand, and to frugality and good order, on the other. And the masters or owners, prompted either to entire indolence and repose, or absolute and exclusive reliance on the labor of their slaves, through pride and extravagance, have generally failed to become enriched by their compulsory slave labor and oppressive policy. Hence the individual states occupied by slaves, and the country in general in full proportion, have become impoverished by the system. Soils naturally very fertile, as in many of these United States, have been gradually exhausted and reduced to sterility, or had their productiveness very greatly diminished by ineffectual cultivation by slaves or by entire neglect. This system necessitates, or with certainty produces, depravation of heart and impurity of life among the slaves. The ordinance of marriage, which is a sacred institution established by God to be strictly and permanently observed between husband and wife, in slave regions scarcely exists, thus leading to universal concubinage or prostitution. Parental and filial obligations are also made light of, and the duties appropriate to those sacred relations are not only disregarded in general, but outraged by violent disruption and separation of husbands and wives, parents and children. These cruel acts, constantly occurring, are disastrous to youth, grievous to parents, corrupting to society, wounding to universal humanity, paralyzing to the interests of religion and to the Church of Christ, obstructing to the cause of humanity and benevolence, and deeply offensive to God.

But the miseries of slavery may be called *legion*, for they are many; and if we should attempt a full detail of them, we would not know where to begin or to end. The victims themselves are immense sufferers from their bondage. The single fact of the existence of slavery, or loss of personal liberty, among rational men proves that every slave is a

machine. "Forbidding instruction," and practically withholding all intellectual benefits, will effectually secure to slaves mental darkness. Under such a system, independence of thought and action, voluntary choice and the rights of conscience, are all abrogated together. The slave's course of life and his phase of character are the result of that absolute dominion which is constantly maintained over him, extending to his outward acts, his physical relations and comforts, and to all his mental, social, and moral affinities. In general, the slaves know no sabbaths, have no churches, no Sunday schools, no seminaries for improvement of any kind. Their minds, in the most favored state, are a perfect blank. In this condition, under the light of gospel day, they are groping their way to eternity, in midnight gloom, out of reach of the available sympathies of humanity. Their owners and taskmasters, assuming the place of their Creator in arranging all that constitutes and concerns the slave, sit in judgment to decide upon the quality, the amount, the time, the sphere of labor to be performed, their sustenance, their treatment, and their condition. All provision for mental and moral culture, except in a very few limited districts, are interdicted by legislative authority.*

Thus, as far as it operates, slavery is a complete prostration of human liberty, human rights, and human happiness. The assumption, that slaves are property, is made an essential and prominent part of the system by specific and positive legislation in most of the slave states. They are goods and chattels on legal record, and in common life victims of power and instruments of drudgery, used like all other capital as the mere "potentiality of growing rich." The slaves being, in the eye of the law, property themselves, they can own no valuable thing, take no part in government, have no interest in society, no influence but to excite alarm, give offence, and provoke wrath. They have no will, no choice, no discretion, no intelligent participa-

* Within a few years many clusters of slaves situated in the Atlantic states have had their privileges much improved, but this does not alter the general character of slavery.

tion in anything connected with their earthly state. And their eternal interests are left to take care of themselves. Their thoughts are chained down to low servility, the spade, the mattock, and the hoe, the rice field, the cotton form, the tobacco plant, the cane plantation, the sugar, molasses, and turpentine factory.

Notwithstanding these lamentable features of slavery, certain writers, mistaking the true nature of the subject, have broached several irrational and unscriptural hypotheses respecting it, *viz*:

I. The first class embraces those who maintain that slavery is not a crime against man, nor a sin against God, is not sinful at all, in whatever shape it may be found existing—no evil—especially no *malum in se*.

II. The second class includes those who hold that slavery, inherently or by nature, has no moral character, but derives its guilt or innocence from contingencies, and is not necessarily in all circumstances sinful.

III. The third class seems to *admit* that slavery is *an evil*, but which may be excused or alleviated so far by circumstances as to be stripped of its sinful character.

Although the points of distinction between these classes seem clear and tangible, we shall not in this discussion labor particularly to observe the dividing lines, since we consider them *all in error*, and because they appear unavoidably to approach and slide into one another.

CHAPTER IV.

Opinions of the Princeton Repertory stated—partial reply—demand for a divine and positive warrant for slavery—the self-conflicting statements of that quarterly, &c.

AMONG the writers above referred to, is one who pronounces slavery *not a malum in se*, that is not sinful in its own nature, but rather a neutrality or contingency, “good

or bad according to circumstances." He states it as his opinion, that slavery, without being sinful, may exhibit not only privation of freedom, but other very rabid features, several of which he enumerates, such as "*forbidding instruction to slaves, insults and oppression from the whites, inadequate remuneration, intellectual ignorance, moral degradation,*" &c. After this appalling catalogue, this writer gravely tells us "that these evils may all exist without admitting that slavery is itself a crime!"*

The writer in the Repertory assumes two grounds in his attempt to vindicate slavery, both of which we shall endeavor to prove untenable.

His first ground is—

I. That slavery is not in itself sinful, because it belongs to a class of things which derive their moral character from circumstances, and may be right or wrong, good or bad.

II. His second ground is, that slavery exists under a divine sanction, which he derives inferentially from the silence of Christ and his apostles in regard to it.

This writer first seems to teach that slavery is not embraced in God's prohibited catalogue; that it is neutral, *neither commanded nor forbidden*, neither good nor bad. But very soon, as may be seen, he changes his mind, and admits, even asserts, that slavery, in its most essential and vital features, is an infraction of the divine law, and included under its condemnation. He admits the old scriptural declaration, that slavery is *manstealing*. He teaches strongly that withholding the price of the laborer is a grievous sin or violation of the law of God. He denounces slavery as a wicked thing, because it interferes with the rights, duties, and happiness of husbands and wives, of parents and children. And now, we ask, with what shadow of propriety can he say that slavery is not a *malum in se*? that it

* The principal document expressing these opinions, which we shall take liberty to refer to, is an article "on slavery," included in an 8vo. volume of extracts from the Princeton Repertory, recently published by Wiley and Putnam, New York and London, from page 282 to 312. Several other cotemporary pamphlets and discussions on the subject of slavery are incidentally involved in this argument without being distinctly designated.

is a neutral thing, neither *commanded* nor *forbidden*, a mere contingency, neither *good* nor *bad*. This writer is not only in conflict with himself, but with the sacred Scriptures, in expressing these views. An apostle tells us, with appropriate precision and force, that sin, in whatever shape it exists, is a *malum in se*. The scripture definition of this *malum* is plain and familiar to all, it is "a transgression of the law of God," or what is equivalent, "it is a want of conformity to the law of God." This writer admits that there is a divine law which condemns slavery in its aggregate form and in several of its constituent features, and yet he pronounces it no sin, no *malum in se*. Then sin is no evil in his view. Resisting the authority and will of God, violating his command, ignoring his wisdom, must be a trifling harmless thing in his estimation. But this point, which is very important, will come up as we progress for more particular and extended examination.

This writer commences his vindication of slavery by an attempt to establish a distinction or separation between it and its injurious consequences or effects, a spurious effort, which pervades and seems to pervert the whole article in question. In regard to this, our remarks at present will be brief, but more extended in the sequel. That slavery in itself is nothing, not liable for the crimes and cruelties committed under it by slaveholders, is an unfortunate delusion, out of which this writer ought to be awakened, and against which all others should be guarded. *Inadequate remuneration*, an expression he employs, is deceptive, because it implies the payment of wages in part, but not in full. There never has been any system devised or practised in our country to secure to slaves payment for their labor. The miserable pittances, in the form of gardens and hovels, in some instances granted to them, is a mere nominal allowance to preserve their lives, to get clear of trouble, to induce some extra service from slaves for the purpose of diminishing the expense of their support, and at most yielding an amount not worth naming. The English capitalists and slaveowners who first introduced slaves upon their southern plantations avowed, as their motive, that under

their previous system of management by white labor they could not make their farms profitable, and hence resorted to the importation of slaves stolen from Africa, whose persons and labor they could procure for nothing but the mere cost of their sustentation. The inadequate remuneration he speaks of is very little different from complete and universal robbery. These and kindred sentiments intended to vindicate slavery, being thus in various forms imprudently forced upon both church and state at this unhappy crisis in the ecclesiastical and political history of our country, we feel constrained to approach their abettors with the conservative question, *Quo warranto?* As slavery in christian lands is extremely offensive to the moral feelings of men in general, it is certainly the duty of those who advocate it to exhibit some rational and satisfactory warrant for it. Never yet has anything been produced in the slightest degree sustaining this character. Bold and reckless assertions and assumptions, opposed by facts under circumstances from their nature incapable of proof, have been the only reliance of pro-slavery men to excuse this institution, and commend it to others.

As God is the greatest, best of all beings, the maker and governor of the universe, whom all men are bound to serve and glorify, his will must necessarily be to them the rule of their action, wherever it can be discovered. The Bible is the expression or transcript of God's will, and thus the rule of man's life. Being infinitely raised above all models, he is *a law unto himself*, and his written law is identified with the essential attributes of his nature. On slight examination it will be found that the existence of slavery is incompatible with the Gospel, whose ruling principles emanate from God and are hostile to slavery; and, when brought fully to bear upon it, will certainly produce its extermination. With the truth of this, the Princeton writer seems to have been duly impressed when he wrote the opinion in regard to domestic slavery, that it "should be left to the operation of those general principles of the Gospel which have peacefully destroyed domestic slavery throughout the greater part of Christendom."—p. 286. In

accomplishing this great work of benevolence, God is a sovereign, and is certainly at liberty to select his own method of procedure in communicating his will to his creatures. He may prohibit and destroy any sinful habits or systems of action among his creatures, in any manner and at any time agreeable to himself, by specific peremptory interdict, by more protracted statutory provision, or by incorporating into his system of legislation and instruction such principles and elementary powers and requirements as will, at his set time, deliver and purify his creatures from flagrantly corrupt and guilty practices. And whether God choose to proceed by direct and immediate, or indirect and more gradual process, the command is as distinctly given, the process as specifically adopted, and the result as certainly secured in the one case as in the other. Certainly the latter mode possesses decided advantages over the former. A positive prohibition for the suppression of slavery might be effectual for its discontinuance in one nation at a given period, but make no provision, exert no influence for its extinction in other lands and at later periods. Now the Gospel contains principles and precepts, integral elements susceptible of universal application, possessing irresistible power, and so designed that, when fully carried out, they must be fatal to human bondage in all countries and for ever.

The Princeton essayist, in contradiction to the spirit and letter of his essay, as manifested elsewhere, here confirms our statement by referring to the experience of past ages. Christianity, he says, has abolished both political and domestic bondage wherever it has had free scope. He afterwards adds, "No one denies that the Bible condemns all injustice, cruelty, oppression, and violence."—p. 280. Hence it most certainly condemns slavery, which is in practice, by universal consent, proclaimed to be a grand congeries of these and kindred crimes. The writer goes on to particularize some features of the Gospel in confirmation of this general principle. "It enjoins a fair compensation for labor; it insists on the moral and intellectual improvement of all classes of men; it condemns all infractions of marital and

parental rights; in short, it requires not only that free scope should be allowed to human improvement, but that all suitable means should be employed for the attainment of that end.”—p. 300. The concessions here made, and the plain incontestable principles laid down, “that the Gospel insists on the moral and intellectual improvement of all classes of men; that it requires not only that free scope should be allowed to human improvement, but that all suitable means should be employed for the attainment of that end, are sufficient of themselves to paralyze all proslavery arguments.—p. 300. How can these sentiments, thus fully admitted, be reconciled with the existence of slavery at all? There is nothing upon earth which more directly and forcibly opposes “the moral and intellectual improvement of all classes of men” than the oppressive and debasing system of slavery, wherever it exists. The same passage proclaims, that the internal spirit and structure of the Gospel are hostile to slavery, and tend directly to eradicate it from among men; that the continuance of it is a perpetual and positive violation of the letter and spirit of christianity—all truths which no rational man can deny. And yet the same writer tells us, in the next breath, that *slaveholding is no crime, no sin, not a malum in se!* But let us hear him again: “If any set of men have servants, *bond or free*, to whom they refuse a proper compensation for their labor, they violate a moral duty and an express command of Scripture.” And yet he says slavery is no sin. Then there is no guilt in violating a moral duty, an express command of Scripture. But once more at present, (p. 281), “We readily admit that if God does condemn all the parts of which slavery consists, he condemns slavery itself.” This is the converse of what he has before said. On careful examination, and from the writer’s confession in great measure, it appears that the word of God is a complete system of prohibition against slavery in the aggregate and in all its component parts. Analyze slavery from beginning to end, and you cannot find a feature in it which is warranted or excused by the letter or spirit of christianity. The single act of taking away the liberty of

a man is in itself an enormity next to murder in the sight of God and man, incurring the blackest guilt and deserving the heaviest punishment. Do not our civil courts continually, at almost every term, pronounce men innocent who with force, and sometimes by fatal power, resist assaults upon their personal liberty and rights? Privation of liberty strikes at the root and glory of humanity, annihilates the brightest feature and ornament of our rational nature: it includes in it every other species of crime and grade of guilt, and it is pre-eminently the sin to which the general principle of the Gospel may be applied, "he that sinneth in one point is guilty of all." And yet this writer tells us that Christ approved of slavery. That the infinitely wise God at first designed to make his rational moral offspring in every sense *free*; that freedom is necessary to make reasonable creatures accountable in the sight of God; that it constitutes the highest characteristic glory of man and the supreme dignity and happiness of God's moral and intelligent creation, are propositions too simple and self-evident to need proof—they rest upon the same evidence as axioms or first truths in moral science, usually called the light or the conviction of conscience. And we might justly say, that the guilt of slavery *per se*, in its own nature, may be resolved and established by referring it to the same first principles of elementary thought and reason. An immortal accountable mind bound in fetters is a shocking spectacle, an anomaly, an absurdity.

CHAPTER V.

God's first great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord,"—inconsistency of slavery with this duty.—The argument stated from "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," from the injunction, "Look not every man on his own things," &c., and from our Saviour's great rule, "Whatsoever ye would," &c.

THE first great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," which God gave to man as a puri-

fying element in his vast system of intelligent creation, will expel slavery and all its spawn of corruption and crime, wherever its genuine power is felt. Love is the supreme perfection of the divine nature. Hence the Apostle's declaration, that "God is love." And this is the crowning grace with which he intends to bless and beautify the moral world. The christian's love to God is traced to Jehovah's love to him, as its producing cause. "We love him, because he first loved us." This reciprocal love must be viewed as the predominating and harmonizing element of the intelligent universe. God cannot fail to approve and love infinite excellence and loveliness. Hence, from a necessity of his own nature, he must require all his moral offspring to love the same object. The mind of man, in endowment and moral elevation, cannot be measured by any earthly meter. Under appropriate culture, it is capable of occupying the highest sphere in the universe next to angels and to God. The exercise of love is, therefore, the noblest, the happiest that any creature in the universe can exercise or aspire after. Love to God constitutes a harmonizing element, for the introduction and prevalence of which all the resources of universal empire are pledged. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." By this one offering the creature is inexpressibly exalted, the Creator is praised and declaratively glorified. No creature can make a more direct, sacred, and enduring contribution to creation than by loving its author and celebrating his matchless perfection. Without the exercise of this noble faculty, man could never reach the end of his being nor secure his highest happiness.

Slaves, violently and cruelly deprived of their universal rights, crushed under ignorance and bondage, confined down by *low living* and *hard labor*, are reduced to the most depressed and deplorable state, stereotyped in their hopeless misery and degradation. What a spectacle! Their intellectual powers, if not entirely extinguished, are rendered torpid and dark. Hence if the Gospel shines, it shines not unto them, for they are not qualified to receive it; they are kept in blindness and indifference as to every moral im-

provement; the attainment of knowledge, the culture and various training of the heart and conscience, which are essentially necessary to a right understanding of duty, *love of God* and *obedience to his laws*, are rendered morally impossible for slaves by *public interdict*. The offer of salvation, if made to them in their debased condition, would serve only to discover and to prove the chilling and stupifying effect of slavery upon minds and faculties in other circumstances capable of rising to fellowship with saints and angels, and offering acceptable homage at the eternal throne.

But, in the midst of these appalling and insurmountable embarrassments, the first great command of God, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," falls upon the poor prostrate manacled slave with infinite authority, power, and impressiveness just as upon others, without appeal or evasion. The slave is deprived of all power to obey, deeply oppressed, intellectually and morally disabled, as to making a movement towards compliance with God's holy will. The crime and the guilt of this moral delinquency most justly fall upon those who have plunged the slaves and hold them in this wretched bondage and incapacity to serve God. Let the captive go free, and enjoy the advantages common to free men, and he may rise to God. Such is the genius of christianity, that the meanest human reptile, with ordinary instruction and culture, may understand, appreciate, and enjoy its invitations, its teachings, its promises, its warnings, its covenants, its atoning blood, and its inspiring hopes. But the poor slave is denied the privilege of washing away his moral filthiness in the fountain opened for him and all mankind in the house of David. Chained down in outer darkness, he lives on *without God and without hope*. It is the *caste* of slavery, riveted upon him by the tyranny and persevering oppression of the slaveholding system, that dooms him to an earthly career and eternal destiny of wretchedness. And yet the deluded advocates of this high-handed cruelty continually repeat the absurdity—*no sin! no crime!* Just and merciful God! where shall we go to find crimes of deepest die and damning guilt, if not here?

To the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord

thy God with all thy heart," our Saviour adds a second, which, he says, "is like unto the first," "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These two primary commands, agreeing as to their authority, their motives, their influences, and their end, show a general resemblance in character, and exhibit a combined and concentrated force for the elevation and happiness of mankind. Hence our Saviour adds, "upon these two hang the law and the prophets." They thus constitute an epitome of the Gospel of Christ, the chief duties of men, and the aggregate requirements which God has laid upon them. It is assumed that the man who loves God, whom he has not seen, will not fail to love his neighbor, whom he has seen. The gospel import of the word *neighbor* may be well ascertained by examining the parable of the *good Samaritan*. There this term is employed to designate man in the most wide and comprehensive sense, every man possessing the faculties of humanity, however remote in situation or inferior in condition, or variegated in form or appearance. All men are here viewed as upon a common level or equality. The doctrine of love is founded in the nature of God, and enforced by his high and holy example as well as authority. It was evidently intended by him to govern all his rational creatures. Hence we find it, in the first law of God ever given to man, pronounced under the highest sanction, "I am the Lord." Lev. xix. 18. Sympathy and benevolence towards all creatures associated with us in the relations of life to a degree equalling our own self-love, honest, sincere, and exemplary, were then announced as the law of God's universal empire, to be immediately and for ever observed. In the second commandment, we see merely the carrying out or continuation of the divine ordinance by Moses. This law of kindness embraces in its scope not only physical but moral benefits in all their variety and extent.

Men may regard themselves in many things, their honor, advantage, and happiness, the prosperity of their souls, of their families and kindred. But this law of Christ commands us to entertain the same just, liberal, and benevolent feelings towards all others as to ourselves; to make the same exertions, self-denials, and sacrifices when necessary

for their good; to labor and contribute for their benefit; to extend to them relief in trouble, supplies in want, protection in danger, deliverance in *oppression*. Now let any judicious candid man ask, is the spirit and substance of this second commandment of Christ in the slightest degree compatible with the principles, the habits, the arbitrary power, the privation and oppression, exhibited in the system of slavery? It is evident there is a shocking contrariety to it in the occurrences of every day in the whole system of slaveholding.

The just and benevolent spirit of the Gospel may also be strongly inferred from the following injunction, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." These injunctions are intended to extinguish selfishness, avarice, covetousness, and the whole catalogue of worldly, carnal, and corrupt passions, which find such ample space for oppressive and injurious exercise in this evil world, and to inspire feelings of justice, liberality, compassion, and kindred virtues in the breasts of all men towards one another, even towards those who are inferior by nature, or are made so by calamity, by misfortune, by their own imprudence or neglect, by the violence of others, by the permission or positive act of Almighty God. A just and equal regard towards dependents, unfortunates, and slaves would remedy at once a very great proportion of the unhappiness and suffering prevalent among men, and entirely banish slavery from the world. From these remarks, it seems evident, beyond a doubt, that slavery exists in every phase of it, except where transiently inflicted as a punishment for crime, by resisting the authority of God, by neglecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by persevering violation of his most just and holy enactments for human happiness, by withholding from slaves those equitable and reasonable benefits and equalities, privileges and enjoyments, which are the common birthright of mortals.

But our Lord himself has furnished a still more pointed and positive precept, entirely subversive of all unequal, arbitrary, and fictitious distinctions, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The nature of man is such that the whole race is

associated and bound together by mutual obligations to benevolence, sympathy, and helpfulness in every emergency requiring aid. But this law is so indefinitely marked in the Gospel that it is difficult of detection and application. It depends upon so many circumstances, facts, and reasonings, always obscure and constantly changing, that the whole system of obligation is easily evaded or stripped of its real character and binding force. Now this rule of our Saviour narrows down to a point, and confines within very definite limits, the whole amount of human obligation to liberality and kindness, and furnishes most happy and efficacious aids for settling every question of conflicting claims of reciprocal justice and benevolence. Selfish desires, covetous, excessive, and vicious demands and tumultuous importunities for aid, are all, in this rule, referred to one simple tangible discriminating point, or touchstone, by recurring to which the will of the great Legislator and the duty of every individual may be as clearly, promptly, and positively ascertained as by a distinct voice from Heaven. Thus, by establishing a general rule, we bring at once a multitude of separate cases to a general standard. By looking at this rule one moment, we hear a voice issuing from it as from the highest heavens, "Thou shalt neither make nor hold a slave;" whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them. If the authority of the law is regarded, there is an end of slavery for ever, because no man would wish to be made a slave himself. Indeed the general order or command, in its present form, possesses many advantages over the specific precept or any other form of process that can be adopted to accomplish the same end. It operates and moves with a wide comprehensive scope, embracing at once all the relations and duties of life; it furnishes an appropriate and luminous directory for all human action, in defining rights, in harmonizing conflicts, in solving profound and critical questions of interest and of honor, of charity and munificence. It applies equally to individual men and to nations at large; it is not easily susceptible of mistake or abuse. Slavery cannot exist where this rule is observed.

And the prohibitory injunction, implied as a counterpart

—*Quod tibi fieri, non vis, alteri ne feceris, i. e.* you may not do to others what you are unwilling they should do to you, possesses equal fitness and force. We find, says *Sir Matthew Hale*, among the ancient Jews and the Heathen *this sentiment* in so great esteem that a Roman emperor selected it for his *motto*, and caused it to be written in several parts of his palace in letters of gold. There is certainly perfect equity and kindness in this divine edict, whether we contemplate its positive or negative aspect. Under both views, it is a perfectly conspicuous and self-evident rule, always shining in full splendor. It cannot easily be mistaken or misinterpreted. It is an honest, simple, and standing appeal to every generous and noble feeling of our nature, especially to the heart and conscience of every man in regard to his treatment of others. When a case occurs involving either branch of this point of duty, the question will arise—Am I willing that a man should do to me what I am about to do to him? And again, on the other hand—With what shadow of justice can I do that to any man which I consider unjust and improper for him to do to me? To enable us to answer these inquiries, we need not consult a critic or casuist. Common sense and an honest mind, governed by justice and kindness, immediately furnish an appropriate response—*Do to others what you would have them do to you, and inversely*. The sanction as well as source of this rule is divine. It is irrevocable in its nature and weighty as eternity. Liberty, equality, justice, and reciprocal obligation cannot be expressed more clearly than here, even in a direct communication from God. Wherever human powers, interests, passions, and caprices come into collision, or even into contact, here is the touchstone without cavil or appeal. Under the infallible guidance of this precept, so clear and irresistible, slavery can never justly be sanctioned upon earth. This rule alone provides for its positive and total exclusion from all human governments and society. And they who profess respect to the authority, will, and pleasure of the Lord Jesus Christ have no alternative left to them but obedience or criminal revolt.

CHAPTER VI.

Argument of pro-slavery men from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its founders considered.—The doctrine of *adiaphorism*, indifference, as an excuse for slavery examined.—More concessions and self-refutations presented.—The just import of *malum in se*, &c.

BUT the advocates of slavery tell us that this institution is not sinful, because as they imagine, according to the Mosaic history, it existed under the Old Testament administration of the Church, under the Jewish ritual in later days, and moreover, they add, is recognised especially by the inspired writers of the New Testament without rebuke or condemnation. But when these alleged facts and the circumstances attending them are carefully examined and explained, the argument in favor of slavery drawn from them dwindles into nothing.

The writer in the Repertory informs us, that as an aggravated form of slavery existed through the Roman empire with the full knowledge of Christ and his apostles, and they raised no direct exclamation against it, uttered no heavy denunciation of slaveholding, nor insisted on immediate emancipation, did not appeal to the passions of men against the evils of slavery, nor adopt any course of opposition to it, which he himself thinks would have produced *universal agitation*, that is, since they were not practically abolitionists in their conduct and public preaching, they must have thought slavery a very harmless, innocent thing; that it had nothing wrong in its nature, nor criminal in its operation: and from this view of the subject he draws the inferential argument, that slaveholding is neither a *sin* nor a *crime*. This writer even adds, that the first teachers of christianity, instead of doing anything to oppose or destroy slavery, rather approved or promoted it. The whole of this, on examination, appears very inconsistent with the writer's opinions and views expressed in other parts of his essay. After in connection asking, with great emphasis in substance, how could the Lord and his apostles shut their eyes against the enormities of this slaveholding system, if

indeed it were a great offence against God and man? "Did they temporize with a heinous evil because it was common and popular? Did they abstain from exhorting masters to emancipate their slaves, though an imperative duty, from fear of consequences?"—p. 277. So far considering this language, and the argument which appears to be raised upon it, every reader would suppose that Christ and his apostles had really *taken no step*, contemplated *no measure* or system of action, calculated to check slavery and to accomplish its extinction in the world.

But the writer soon corrects this unjust insinuation, by entirely changing the tone of his essay. To the question, *how did they treat it?* that is slavery, his language is just what we would select in expressing our anti-slavery views, and in vindicating the blessed author of our holy religion from the slanderous imputation, this writer and others had appeared to throw out against him, of approving, and even indirectly promoting the work of slavery and slaveholding, the most criminal, polluting, and disgusting scourge with which humanity has ever been afflicted. *How did they treat it?* The writer answers—"not by denunciation of slavery, as necessarily and universally sinful; not by declaring that all slaveholders were menstealers and robbers; not by insisting on immediate emancipation from the masters; not by appealing to the passions of men on the evils of slavery, or by the adoption of a system of universal agitation." Thus far we agree perfectly with the course here ascribed to the Saviour, and even more strongly and heartily do we concur in what follows. *No, no*, says the writer, *on the contrary*, "it was by teaching the true *nature, dignity, equality*, and *destiny* of men; by inculcating the principles of *justice and love*, and by leaving these principles to produce their *legitimate* effects in ameliorating the condition of all classes of society;" of course *bond and free*.—p. 275. He afterwards, with the utmost propriety, declares, "We think no one will deny that the *plan* adopted by the Saviour and his immediate followers *must be the correct plan*, and therefore obligatory upon us." This is precisely our view of the subject. And then, in illustration and commendation of

our Lord's system for exterminating slavery completely and for ever by the internal and resistless energy of the principles of justice and equality, truth and love, above recited, the writer assures us of the great and important historical fact, that *christianity* has already proved its adaptation and power by *these internal principles* to accomplish the signal and blessed triumphs which he ascribes to it, when placed in a condition to exert its natural and full moral force. And he very truly states, that "the *natural* and *peaceful* mode of extinction for slavery is the gradual elevation of slaves, in knowledge, virtue, and property, to the point at which it is no longer desirable or possible to keep them in bondage." This mode of reasoning designates the course pursued by colonization and anti-slavery men. It is in this way, our essayist says, "that christianity has *abolished* both political and domestic slavery, wherever it has had full scope, by its very nature and operation on the hearts and lives of men." We, the opposers of slavery, desire to breath Christ's spirit, to walk in his steps, to use his means, to employ his arguments; and we anticipate in due time the certain and complete triumph of his holy, peaceful, and irresistible principles and actions. Indeed christians are bound to adopt his course: and if they pursue any other or opposing system they violate at every step the example of Christ and the order of his Gospel. This example of Christ is open, visible to the whole universe; the argument from *silence* is secret and concealed. Instead of opposing the spirit or letter of the law and example of the Redeemer and his followers, as left on record and exhibited in actual life, we anti-slavery men exemplify and confirm them both."—*p. 300*. In pursuance of this train of reasoning, the writer before us specifies several prominent points at which the Gospel has literally commenced its attack upon the institution of slavery. "It enjoins a fair compensation for labor; it insists on the *moral* and *intellectual* improvement of all classes of men; it condemns all infractions of marital and parental rights, in short it requires not only that free scope should be allowed to human improvement, but that all suitable means should be employed for the attainment of that end." He adds,

"If any set of men have servants, *bond* or *free*, to whom they refuse a proper compensation for their labor, they violate a moral duty and an express command of Scripture."
—p. 303.

After such illustrations and broad admissions as these and the preceding, it is utterly unaccountable that this writer should persist, against his own positive declarations, in asserting that slavery is not sinful—*no sin—no crime!* *Sin*, we are told in the epistle of James, *is the transgression of the law of God, or want of conformity to it*. This writer shows us that slavery, in many points which he designates, is a transgression of the divine law—slavery as it is universally known to exist in these United States, which is here referred to. *It is then* of course *a sin* against God, a guilty thing in his sight, and should be so accounted universally in human view. It appears then, from the writer's representations, that Christ and his apostles, to extinguish slavery, did adopt the most appropriate and powerful means infinite wisdom could suggest to perform the work proposed in a *quiet* unoffending manner, without disturbing or exciting the masses of mankind to overthrow the depraved system of human slavery and introduce universal freedom. They acted in a manner consistent with themselves and with the letter and spirit of that new heaven-born religion which they came to preach and to establish upon earth, and at the same time to set a *sacred example* for the observance of succeeding generations, while slavery continued to infect and pollute the atmosphere of this world.

The Princeton advocate of slavery calls to his aid an ancient distinction in morals, used at Rome long before the Gospel was introduced, which does not appear calculated to strengthen his cause. "Domestic slavery," he says, "belongs in morals to the *adiaphora*, to things indifferent. They may be expedient or inexpedient, right or wrong, according to *circumstances*." Slavery "is not necessarily sinful. It is a question of circumstances, and not a *malum in se*." Another writer, who appears to be a disciple of the former, by adopting his phraseology quite closely, tells us that

slavery "is not a *malum in se*; it is a relation that may be justified by *circumstances*. Slaveholding or slavery is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful." These opinions appear to be so nearly allied and closely resembled that they may be viewed together.

The latter of these writers, in another place, evidently has before his mind some of the confusions and conflicts which slavery produces in human life and civil policy. This may be inferred from such passages as these: "The relation of master and slave may be lawful in Virginia at the present time, but is it lawful in New Jersey or in New England? And will it always be lawful in Virginia? I apprehend not." These secular incidental views we desire to leave for adjustment to statesmen and politicians, and to form our opinions at another stand-point, and to refer them for decision to a higher tribunal. From the beginning we have desired to estimate and exhibit the character of the slaveholding system not so much by its earthly fruits as by its graduation under the divine government. Among men and in human legislation every one sees variegated types of slavery and perpetual changes corresponding with the predominating fancy, passion, or interest of society, all fluctuating in conformity with the fickleness and instability of this world.

In our discussion we would regard only the moral code, the infinite perfection and sovereign authority of God, and make our appeal to him as the great and just umpire in settling this important and interesting question. Slavery has, indeed, physical and political influences of vast extent and calamitous power; but at present, as far as possible, we would waive the consideration of them, believing it far better to pursue a course less exciting and agitating to the public mind, and affording an opportunity to all persons, even to those interested by participation in slavery, to come up calmly, dispassionately, free from the perversions of prejudice, to an honest view of this mighty and momentous question. We therefore desire to leave this subject, except where unavoidably drawn into it, where it is constitutionally established and legalized through the

Union, and to make it our aim to elucidate its moral qualities and responsibilities under the law and government of the great Supreme of all worlds. Without this there appears, in our view, but little prospect that our public sentiment will ever be established on uniform and correct principles, purified from contaminating ingredients, harmonized, amalgamated, and compacted sufficiently to enable the American people to act in concert, with concentrated wisdom, patriotism, and power, peacefully to exterminate the many-headed monster. As directly conflicting with these thoughts, it is deplorable and deeply discouraging, in the view of philanthropists, to see men of talents, piety, and professed devotion to the good of our race, with combined counsel laboring to remove out of sight the broad foundations of God's eternal kingdom of truth and righteousness, and to set up mere *volatile contingent circumstances* as *pivots* on which the infinitely exalted and magnificent physical and moral government of Almighty God shall unceasingly *turn* or *stand* in bondage or obeisance to human passion, selfishness, and caprice.

These writers, along with the new distinctions they apply to slavery for the sake of brevity and clearness, ought to assume a new name for their theory. The two terms in which they appear to agree in designating *slavery* are *indifferentism* and *circumstantialism*. On one essentially important point they are opposed, at right angles, to one another. The Princeton writer says repeatedly, that slavery is *right*, so considered by the Saviour, not a *malum in se*. His disciple and associate asserts that "manstealing is a *malum in se*, and can be justified by no circumstances whatever." He afterwards admits that "slavery originated by the wickedness of manstealing and by a violation of the laws of God." He tells us that neither under the old nor new dispensation was slavery recognised as lawful. Accordingly he teaches "that it is in discredit generally throughout Christendom." After such admissions and declarations, every one would expect to find him a real honest and consistent anti-slavery man; but this he cannot be, if his language does not deceive us. "Slavery, after all," he says, "is a relation that

may be justified by *circumstances*." Then he is a pro-slavery man to the full extent. Not perceiving the difference between circumstances controlling the *continuance* of slavery where it is, and vindicating the *guilt* of slavery, rendered immoveable at present by insurmountable obstacles, he makes the General Assembly of 1818, which was probably as strong an anti-slavery company of men as ever met upon earth, a set of sympathizers and advocates of it. Sympathizing with *involuntary* sufferers from slavery, entailed upon them by uncontrollable causes, such persons as those spoken to or addressed by the assembly of 1818 is as different from sympathy for willing and criminal partakers in its crimes and cruelties as the north is from the southern pole. The sympathy of this assembly is adverse to slavery throughout. Thus our *circumstantialist* has, no doubt very honestly, completely mistaken the meaning of the assembly's record; and then, following out his own error, he has given the assembly a *pro-slavery* character, which is wholly incompatible with her conduct and testimony. It seems scarcely necessary to refer to the astonishingly strong and impressive language in the former part of the same report, *viz*: "We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ," etc., etc.

The entire theory or doctrine of *circumstances*, as the controllers and justifiers of slavery, is utterly inadmissible in our view, and fraught with much mischief. Without attempting to discuss the subject fully here, we cannot but observe, that it is a very daring assumption to take the whole business of slaveholding from under the laws of God and the general principles of his moral government, and commit it to the contingent, unintelligible, indefinite, and entirely lawless direction and disposal of mere circumstances, not capable of being distinctly defined or governed by rule. This system, so far as there is any appearance of form or order about it, erects every man into a little despot, and lifts him to a petty throne, where he may exercise his usurped dominion over freeborn immortal minds at

pleasure—defy, control, stereotype, and perpetuate slavery in any preferred form for ever. This train of thought is fully sanctioned by the Princeton writer, where he says, “Nothing can be more distinct than the right to hold slaves *in certain circumstances* and *the right to render slavery perpetual.*” Such a declaration needs no comment. The reign of circumstances, so much insisted on by both these writers, tends directly to perpetuate slavery; because the circumstances here imagined, and invested with such fearful power, however unstable and fugitive, will never cease to occur while human depravity, selfishness, and passion continue to operate and to exert the sway here assigned to them.

In regard to the term “adiaphora,” we had supposed christians long since to have discarded *heathen* distinctions and authorities in morals and religion. This is an item of Cicero’s moral philosophy, and one of his most dangerous dogmas. It is there “derived and traced out in the ancient classics: “*Adiaphora*, Greek; *ab adiaphoros*, *indifferens*, *unde adiaphora*, *res mediæ naturæ*; *quod per se*, *nec honestæ*, *nec turpes*, things indifferent, neither *commanded* nor *forbidden*, which, whilst *such*, a man is at liberty to *do* or *not to do.*”* The writer, by quoting this class, called *adiaphora*, with approbation, adopts it and makes it his own, and he is responsible for it. This term was somewhat revived in modern Europe, and applied to the *Lutherans* who adhered to *Melancthon*, memorable for his easy principles and virtues, and afterwards given to those who subscribed to the *interim* which Charles V. published at the diet of Augsburg. Melancthon had maintained that obedience was due to the imperial edicts in matters of an *indifferent* nature.†

These references show us the origin and history of the term “adiaphora.” Our learned author, who first produced this authority, deeply impressed, it seems, with veneration for the philosophers and orators, courts and cabinets, of past ages, appears to have given these *dicta* so high a place in his estimation that he perceives no incongruity or unfit-

† Rees’ Cyclopædia, under *adiaphorism*.

* Littleton’s Latin Dictionary.

ness in transferring and applying their lax and arbitrary constructions of law and morals to the infinitely more exalted and infallible decrees and enactments of the King of Kings, thus creating a novel standard before which the letter and spirit of the Gospel must be entirely abashed; and then this new heathen definition, in its original import, fabricated before the Gospel was born, is to be admitted or set up to give character and sanction to our christian ethics and morality. This seems to be the present tendency of morals in the Presbyterian body, judging from the opinions of those who have recently commenced the introduction of these and other new notions on the subject of human slavery.

We cannot but hope that this opinion is not a fair index of theological purity on this point at Princeton; neither do we believe that this classification of slavery, as stated, is in the slightest degree correct. The idea, that the infinitely wise, holy, and sovereign God should enact a law to control the most essential interests of the universe, the intelligent moral action of his rational creatures, upon the observance of which their order, purity, and happiness and his own glory must chiefly depend, and formally submit it to man, under a character of imperfection and contingency to be tested, annulled, or confirmed, obeyed or not, according to the choice, caprice, or fancy of the creatures to be governed by it, as a merely accidental, optional thing, a thing of circumstance or uncertainty: the idea, we say, that God should introduce such a system is dishonoring to his character, as implying acknowledged incompetence or unfaithfulness, and calculated, most obviously, to mar divine legislation on this point, or subvert it altogether, to lead his rational creatures into strong temptation, and inflict upon them very serious injury.

But our admirer of this ancient and discarded opinion seems to be not fully satisfied with it himself, and hence, by a transition, which seems very easy and is not unfrequent with him, he soon utters something not fully in accordance with it—"We are no advocates of *expediency* in morals." And yet he nowhere disavows his devotion to

adiaphorism, which is a system of expedience,—he clings to it and advocates it to the end—thus enveloping himself in a mist, where, it being somewhat difficult to identify him at all, we leave him at present to find his way out at leisure.

There seems to be something in the *scholastic* Latin phrase, *malum in se*, which has proved to many very deceptive. Writers appear to attach to it a very deceptive meaning and exaggerated importance. They suppose that *malum in se* is something different from sin in general in origin, cause, or effect—in tendency, degree, or result, in consequence of which fallacious suppositions, the import of this phrase is rendered dubious and dangerous. Sins which they suppose to be of very minor turpitude in certain cases, being exceedingly conducive to human *convenience*, *comfort*, and *interest*, seem to them to be entirely excluded from the divine category of crime or scale of guilt, while other sins of the same general nature are inflated into something monstrous, and described as *mala in se*.

But is sin divided, or capable of subdivision in its own nature? The Roman apostacy, to answer the purpose we suppose here intended, and to suit their own depraved system of morals, manufactured a *division* of sin into *venial* and *mortal*. Are the theologians, philosophers, and moralists of modern days seriously disposed to resuscitate these old pagan, jesuitical, and atheistical sophisms of by-gone days? Can sin or guilt be so decomposed or disintegrated that one integral element shall be a *malum maximum*, another a *malum minus*, another a *malum minimum*, and another a *carte blanche*? Has God in truth introduced into his mandatory or prohibitory schedule any items so mutable and fluctuating or equivocal, that before they can take effect, or be reduced to specific definite form, their crudity and indefiniteness must be removed by passing through the crucible of human caprice? In graduating the crime of slaveholding on the scale of guilt, has the great Law-giver made a hair-splitting business of it to accommodate its devotees, by subdividing it and rating its demerits by halves and quarters, by vulgar and decimal fractions? or placed it on a descending sliding scale, at the foot of which

is found a cypher, an innocent harmless thing, not a *malum in se*, not a *malum* at all? If the place of this cypher is established as a *deposit* for mongrel, *minimum*, or *guiltless* sins, *men being constituted their judges*, at least nine-tenths of the iniquities of this world will be marked and forwarded to that *depot*, it seems so much easier to get clear of sin and guilt through that fictitious *loophole* of escape than at the bar of God.

The first sin of man nobody will deny was a *malum in se*, a sin of superlative magnitude, and yet it consisted only of Adam's eating the forbidden fruit. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat." But Adam took the fruit, and "did eat." A very simple act—but it was an act of disobedience to God's command. Sin has never changed its nature, it is still a simple violation of God's expressed or manifested *will*; it may vary somewhat in form in the number of its acts, in the heinousness of its nature, but its essence must remain unchanged for ever. The only point at issue between God and man in our state of probation is simply this—*authority* on his part, on ours *submission*. It is God's right in all cases to *command*, and man's duty in all cases to *obey*. God's authority is sovereign, universal, absolute, over all his rational offspring. It allows no exemption, recognises no privileged persons, orders, ages, or *circumstances*.

The necessary, contingent, circumstantial, and we might add, *convenient* and profitable sins, here in question, it is admitted are *sins*, but it is alleged of such a character that they are sins *sui generis*, not sins *in se*, or in *themselves*, and so not guilty at all. If any supposed sins are not sins in their own nature, in themselves, *in se*, how are they, or can they be, or be shown to be, *sins at all*? If *sins* at all, and yet not sins *in se* in their own nature, their sin and guilt must be outside of their essence, reality, or existence, must have been transferred and imputed or attached to some external contingent *circumstances* in the untelligible manner or relation of *effect* and *cause*—the cause being concealed and inexplicable. Such a connection must be shown to exist between the internal sinful essence or vitality and

these external circumstances or contingencies as to produce in the essence and action of sin a vibratory movement between the internal and external element of evil, like the polar motion of the negative and positive electricity; and before the nature and quality of any sin can be decided to be contingent and neutral, it must be determined whether the *malum* of sin is *in itself* or *out of itself*, *in se aut extra se*, quite a difficult work, for who has *optics sharp* enough to perform the task?

Sin consists of an act of transgression or nonconformity to law. And before any sin can be shown to have no moral quality, no guilt, or before any acknowledged violation of the divine law can be proved to be a contingency, sometimes good and sometimes bad, sometimes guilty and sometimes innocent, it must be shown that God's command is sometimes *not a command*, or that disobedience is sometimes *not disobedience*, either or each of which is an inconceivable thing and absurd *in se*. Disobedience to the divine law is always evil in its own nature, and can put on no other character, in any circumstances, than that of criminal resistance, rebellion against God, wherever it exists, in every phase, and in all possible degrees of it. *Slavery*, or taking away the liberty of man, or holding him in bondage, is in substance manstealing, a sin against God; it violates the order he gave to nature, it breaks his law; it is an evil, therefore, in its own nature, *in se*, and so must continue to be in every instance in which it is exhibited among God's intelligent creatures for ever, until God's nature and his law are changed or the nature of sin is changed.

Besides, if one degree of sin, even infinitesimally small, can be remedied and expelled from God's kingdom in any individual case, by any possible means, by state management, by oversight or incapacity in the judge, by sympathy for the transgressor, by granting him peculiar privileges on his offering excuses or promising reformation; if one degree of guilt, the least conceivable, can be expelled from the system in this manner, then another, and another, and a greater can, *ad infinitum*; and so the guilt of the whole world might have been neutralized and expelled without

the influence of the blood of Christ. A guiltless sin of any conceivable phase or degree is a nonentity, an absurdity; hence every violation of the divine *law*, *will*, or *word* is a *malum in se*.

The writer, having very gravely remarked, that he "recognises in this matter no authoritative rule of truth and duty but the word of God," we may safely infer that, notwithstanding his *adiaphorism*, his circumstances and contingencies, he considers the institution of slavery as included under the divine law, and by its constitution and existence, moral or immoral, as approved or conformed to that law. It must, then, be for ever judged and tested by that rule, till it can be shown that God has either entirely abrogated his law, or suspended the operation of its obligations and sanctions in regard to slavery; and its guilt must be graduated according to the same standard. The idea, that a law of God should be so formed and ordained in his kingdom that its essential features and its obligations should be fluctuating, like many human devices, subject to all the vicissitudes of human passion and caprice, is so manifestly absurd, if not impious, that the mere statement of the supposition refutes it. Applying indifference, expedience, circumstance, contingency, or *adiaphorism*, in any conceivable form, to a divine enactment, published to the world with a *thus saith the Lord*, unsettles the whole system of divine legislation in human view, and suspends or devolves the whole fabric of the divine administration upon the will of man; it reduces or lowers the stability and fixedness of the heavenly mind to a level or subordination to the ignorant, wavering, fitful vacillations of fallible men; it makes the laws and enactments of the infinite Lawgiver of heaven dependent upon the selfish passions, caprices, and dictates of blind erring mortals. Maintaining this opinion, therefore, is a practical denial of the wisdom, justice, benevolence, and entire competence of the one only Eternal Legislator wisely and adequately to direct the conduct of his intelligent moral offspring; it represents the Gospel of Christ, at least so far as slavery is involved, like a legal code, made in some dark corner of the universe and sent down to

earth, to have its nature and its merits investigated, its character ascertained, and its acceptance or rejection decided, by a popular vote, among the slave owners, slave traffickers, and slave advocates of this apostate and depraved world.

It is evident that the doctrine of adiaphorism, or leaving the character and morality of slaveholding to be decided by circumstances, of course at the discretion of individuals or communities, whether it relates to particular instances or to its general character, must produce endless confusion and conflict in human councils, interests, and actions. This diversity of opinion and collision of interests, to be produced necessarily by human caprice and passion, will spread from province to province, from kingdom to kingdom, and from generation to generation, generating and multiplying in their progress every conceivable enormity in the work of slavery, and perpetuating this iniquity without end.

Such a construction of our moral code, and application of it to human things, will certainly, in mortal view, remove guilt and odium from crime in great measure, and in proportion invite and encourage participation and progress in the several departments of iniquity connected especially with slaveholding and kindred vices. Uncertainty itself, as to the true character and object of the law, is sufficient to produce this result. Under such a lax construction and equivocal administration, the law itself, amidst the conflicts of human opinion and unceasing agitation which will certainly follow, must be neutralized and sink into contempt, its power being weakened, its dignity lowered, and its moral energy frittered away by the indefiniteness and obscurity resting upon it.

Henceforth, under such a system of popular disunion, there can be no concert in action or device for the extinction of slavery, for the well-being of society in this relation, or stability of government. It is the very relaxation in morals which the slaveholding iniquity demands to perpetuate and aggravate its power and influence, to expand the field of its operation, and to render its continuance and

numerous mischiefs interminable, by making it extensively popular, and by removing the most effectual guards and securities for preventing its increase and aggravation.

This plea of *necessity*, convenience, contingency, and circumstances in general, as an excuse for slaveholding, is an old and strong-scented *heresy*, which harassed and alarmed the Church at an early day. Hence, in the solemn admonition of the Assembly of 1818, we find the following *impressive caution* to the churches on this difficulty, now revived and urged in a manner so dangerous. "We therefore *warn all* who belong to our denomination of christians against unduly extending *this plea of necessity*, (circumstance, convenience, contingency, all understood and included) *against making it a cover for the love and practice of slavery*, or a *pretence* for not using efforts that are lawful and practicable to extinguish the evil." Notwithstanding this pointed and cogent injunction, it is deplorable that some of our respectable ministers, hitherto supposed men of superior discretion, should now unblushingly appear to outrage the authority of the church and jeopardize her harmony and prosperity, by attempting to circulate through the land this *proscribed* heresy.

If such a view of this subject should become extensive, and the efforts now in process to propagate the theory, that slavery may be justified by indefinite circumstances, should become popular and prevalent, it is too plain to be doubted that, under such a relaxed system, every man may plead his own particular feelings and views, his necessities and conveniences, his indolence and luxury, his peculiar *circumstances* and difficulties, fictitious or real, varied and multiplied indefinitely, as an excuse for this crime against God and man, and he may continue this absurd and wicked process till time shall end. But it must be remembered that these *circumstances* and alleged difficulties, which it is proposed to admit as apologies for slavery and excuses for its continuance, are accessories and consequences of the crime itself. And it is a settled principle in morals and in law, that one crime cannot be set up to vindicate and excuse another. This is especially true if the latter be the legiti-

mate adjunct of the former. Therefore these circumstances, which are considered so important and imperious as mitigations of slavery, ought rather to be regarded as aggravations of its guilt and enormity. The only remedy this corrupt and flagitious system admits of is the restoration of freedom, as soon as it can be accomplished in a manner consistent with the benefit and happiness of all parties concerned in it.

CHAPTER VII.

The Princeton writer's attempt to separate between the nature of slavery and its vices—his abstraction artful, but not availing—cause and effect indissoluble—his views narrow—slavery nationally withering.—Toleration of evil a standing feature of God's government—the parable of tares supports our argument.

ANOTHER grand mistake of the Princeton essayist lies in a different way, as we have said, in a fallacious attempt to disjoin what God and nature have united, that is slaveholding and its natural consequences; to separate between *cause* and *effect*; to conceal from popular view the real *root* and practical external evidence of the evils attending the system; in trying to turn the eyes of the people from the poisoned fountain which sends forth the bitter and malignant streams of slaveholding infection, morbidity and death, over all slave fields, to some object adapted to his deluded imagination and perverted judgment. If there is mistake or delusion anywhere, it is to be found strongly marked in that attempt. The *effects* of slavery follow the *cause* with a surprising promptness and universality. It strikes fatally at all enterprise and improvement among men, as with lightning, you can scarcely distinguish between the flash and the stroke.

But the writer before us seems to be blind and insensible to the shocking grievance inflicted by slavery. He assumes to himself perfect knowledge of these matters, and tells

anti-slavery men, that they have no well-defined conception of its nature; that they have a confused idea of ignorance and vice, degradation and misery," and denounces this "complex conception of slavery as the aggregate of all moral and physical evil;" that take these external exhibitions away, and very "little will remain." It is not denied that some opposers of slavery, from the vividness of their perceptions and the strength of their convictions on the subject, may have employed language akin to this, quite as freely as was needful or useful. But it is very difficult for any honest, sensible, and benevolent man to speak too strongly upon a subject so full of disgust, desolation, and horror.

The writer's views appear to be narrow, contracted, and illiberal on this subject; he shows nothing large, expanded, public spirited, and philanthropic in regard to it. *Blindness has happened to him for a time*; coolness and torpor seem to have seized upon his moral and mental sensibilities. He talks of *whips and chains*, of *ignorance and degradation*, of privations and discomforts, as if these were the chief or only evils of slavery. They are, indeed, dreadful fruits of it, wherever found. If not universal, they are very uniformly accompaniments of the system; and the plea of slaveholders is, that they cannot sustain authority without this rigid discipline. But these are small items compared with the many more momentous results necessarily and profusely springing from the system. The whole world is afflicted by it and groans under it, even when and where seen at a distance. The appalling idea, that a large portion of the human race are laid in irredeemable ruins for time and for eternity; hundreds of millions already irrecoverably gone for ever; at least four millions of the population of these United States, one-sixth part of the whole number, now groaning under heavy exactions in thick darkness, constantly dwelt upon with pain and lamentation by anti-slavery men and an incensed public, are unthought of by our slavery advocate, so far as we can see. The paralyzed, impoverished, prostrate, and ruined condition of all slave continents and islands, people and

latitudes, he either does not see or does not regard. This, he says, is very little—all nothing. He tries to look upon slavery as a mere *speck*, a *little thing* floating on the sea of life, a *buoy* to caution sailors against trifling ills, rather than as an inlet to three-fourths of the calamities and woes which afflict mankind. The traveller, in passing from a free to a slave country, finds all things faded and eclipsed; every object presents itself under a corrupted and deteriorated aspect; the soil, the improvements, the business, the inhabitants, the moral features, the religious indications, if there are any, the political exhibitions, are all distorted, dilapidated, withered, and blasted. These fruits appear intimately and indissolubly connected with slavery, as the *effect* is with its *legitimate cause*, and they cannot be disjoined. You can find no fruits like these in any *free* open field among any free and intelligent population in the world.

It is the simple and single enormity of *enslaving* men, holding them in oppressive bondage, depriving them of freedom, independence, self-control, paralyzing their internal energy and various capacities for useful enterprise and action, as individuals, as citizens and as nations, that generates all these deplorable fruits. This it is that we deplore and war against in all its certain consequential evils. Take away the cause; restore freedom to the captives, and their humanity awakes; their elasticity will spring into life; the wilderness, the dark, sad, and solitary place will soon put on a renovated cheerful form. *Necessity* will cease for depicting or excusing the miseries of slavery when it is abolished, and never till then. We do not now *desire*, we do not *ask for*, we do not *expect immediate emancipation*. Under existing circumstances, we would not accept it for a price or as a bounty, the emancipated to remain where they now are. What we desire and labor for is, that the people may understand the nature of *freedom* and of *slavery* as the two great antagonistic principles or systems which are now in direct and violent collision, each contending for the mastery. If the people can be brought to perceive and deeply to realize the real nature, magnitude, and enormity

of slavery, this surpassing scourge of humanity and sin against God, the first important step towards true and lasting liberty will have been secured. A peaceful, honorable, voluntary, and happy deliverance from this greatest of all curses which our country has ever experienced may be rationally and confidently anticipated. The work of preparing enslaved millions for freedom, when once intelligently, honestly, and earnestly undertaken, will progress with mighty speed, and soon be accomplished.

But the chief reliance of the advocates of slavery appears to be upon the alleged *argumentum ex silentio*, the unreprieving acquiescence of Christ and his apostles in the cruel and rapacious system of slavery in practice among the Romans. The argument, when somewhat expanded is, that the mere existence of slavery in various periods and conditions of the ancient or primitive church, and especially under the eye and observation of its great founder and first propagators, without meeting their immediate and positive condemnation, proves the harmless and guiltless character of the *institution*. If, say they, coming at once down to Gospel times, the Saviour and his apostles, in full view of the *worst form* of slavery, did not immediately denounce it, and let loose the thunders of Omnipotence against it, they could not have considered it so heinous an evil as it is represented to be, or even sinful and criminal at all in the sight of God; for in reality, rather than showing symptoms of hostility to slavery, their conduct towards it proves their sympathy for it.—This is one view of the subject given in the Repertory.

If this inference from the toleration of the divine government towards *slavery* be just, then the same inference from the divine conduct towards all other forms and grades of moral evil must be just and valid. Hence this argument, thus applied, as we shall see, will prove infinitely too much, and so prove an entire abortion. The inference, when carried out, stands thus: all acts of moral agents committed under the supervision of Almighty God, and in violation of his authority and law, not immediately denounced and punished or proceeded against with the utmost rigor of law,

are *ipso facto* innocent in themselves, and the fact of their being neither prevented nor condemned under such circumstances, even proves the tacit approbation and sympathy of the divine being for the act of transgression or system of evil. It will be a sufficient reply to this argument to test it by a historical fact, from the New Testament, familiar to all. The inspired record assures us that the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ was committed not only under the perfect recognition of the infinitely wise and holy God, but by his appointment, and notwithstanding that act has ever since been heralded through the world as the most flagitious and criminal deed ever perpetrated upon earth; it is charged as pre-eminently wicked by the apostle Paul, upon the murderous company who performed the act — “*Him being delivered, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, have ye taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*” Thus, although this murderous act was perpetrated by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, when it might have been instantly prevented, as it was an individual act in a limited sphere, by a slight interposition of Almighty God, yet it was permitted under the perfect view of God, and the agents in this bloody tragedy are held in the estimation of heaven and earth to be pre-eminently and enormously guilty and fully accountable for the *deed*. Judas, the man who led the way in this enormous act of perfidy and violence, has in all succeeding ages been held up to view as an unparalleled monster in iniquity and guilt, and yet the deed was perpetrated “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” “Him have ye taken, and by *wicked hands* have crucified and slain.”

Hence the argument drawn from the silence of Christ and his apostles in regard to the crime of slavery, if they had given no indication of hostility to it, proves nothing but the permissive agency of God in regard to it, for purposes satisfactory to himself, although the object may not be fully known to men.

By surveying the character of God and his governmental administration over this apostate world, it becomes evident that mercy maintains a predominating influence on his

throne, producing in his providence decisive demonstrations of toleration and forbearance towards his degenerate creatures and their refractory and sinful actions, proving constantly that he is *waiting to be gracious, slow to anger, ready to forgive, able to save to the uttermost, and that judgment is his strange work*. God is acting in perfect consistence with his divine perfections and the tolerant features of his government, when, in the midst of his merciful delays, he says to bold and hardened transgressors, “Ye are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on you;” when he patiently and kindly waited long on the sinners to whom the Apostle refers in the striking and memorable passage in the Acts, “the times of this wickedness God *winked at*, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Instances of rigor and prompt punishment may be viewed as exceptions to the general rule of lenity, and justifiable on the ground that God is a sovereign, and does his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Or if it is preferred, let the instances of lenity and long-suffering be the exceptions to the divine rule of rigid justice and prompt execution. In either case, lenity constitutes a strong and perpetual feature in the divine government. The principles of the Divine being, the arrangements of his kingdom, and the prescriptions of his law, are made and applied subject to the same rule in regard to the acts and transgressions of individuals and combined associations of apostates and rebels. Such are the principles and features of God’s universal empire, that the period of time intervening between the entrance of sin into the world and the day of judgment is an interim of suspended execution, the reign of toleration, long-suffering, and mercy. Surely, then, no intelligent judicious man, well instructed in the knowledge of God’s kingdom, would pervert and transform his adorable lenity and indulgence towards guilty offenders into evidences of secret, silent, internal sympathy and approbation of those whom, while he tolerates them for purposes wise and satisfactory to himself, he is marshalling all the resources of insulted and incensed majesty completely and for ever to destroy at the set time.

A just and accurate acquaintance with the original and elementary principles of law furnishes a complete answer to the inference in favor of slavery, drawn from the Apostle's silence in regard to it. Suspense or delay in execution, where the offence is clear and the law positive, even in the divine government, is not only allowable but necessary in many cases, as part of a fixed arrangement and constituting an established feature. The writer tells us "that unmixed good or evil in such a world as ours is a very rare thing." Very true—and law is intended chiefly to prevent evil. But the law consists of two integral parts or separate elements. *First*, the mere technical rule or *letter* of law: and *secondly*, the *reason* upon which the law is founded. These two constituents, in their own nature, and very frequently in practical operation, are found in direct conflict with each other. Upon this fact is the legal maxim founded, "*summum jus, summa injuria.*" On account of this fundamental feature of law, human tribunals have been sometimes divided into what are called courts of law and courts of equity, each recognising a distinct sphere or order of facts and doings as the basis of administration. The word of God, the highest and most authoritative rule of duty and law of equity, evidently contemplates and authorizes this distinction.

The *parable* of the tares will illustrate our meaning: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed good seed in his field; but *while men slept*, his enemies came, and sowed tares among the wheat. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field; from whence, then, hath it tares? And he said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou that we go and gather them up? But he said nay; lest while ye gather up the *tares*, ye *root up also the wheat* with them; let both grow together until the *harvest*. And in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt. iii. 24—30.

This parable is intended to illustrate and justify the perfections of God in permitting the corrupt institutions of this world to prosper and the crimes of men to go unpunished for the present, or what is equivalent, suffering his law to lie inoperative. The writer before us puts his judgment in direct opposition to that of divine wisdom, and declares that execution must immediately follow the indictment. A brief consideration of the subject will show the modesty and correctness of this opinion. He holds that "slavery or slaveholding is not necessarily sinful;" and his argument in regard to it is, "If slavery is under all circumstances sinful, it must therefore, under all circumstances and at all hazards, be *immediately* abandoned." "This reasoning," he says, "is *perfectly conclusive*." That reasoning we pronounce perfectly erroneous; and we shall cite *God's authority*, exhibited in the preceding parable, as well as common sense and just intelligence, to prove it. He says, "it requires no argument to show that sin ought to be at once *abandoned*." We admit that it is the duty of all men to do right; but we maintain that God never intended to stop the existence and prevalence of sin at the very instant of its appearance upon earth. If so, there would have been no room, no occasion, for law: the present could not have been a state of probation; freedom of choice must have yielded to superior force; and the wills of men being violently controlled, it would have been unnecessary to make laws to prevent men from doing what their condition, or the system they lived under, would not permit or enable them to do. From this view of the case, it results that the present is for mortals, for society and government, a state of trial, that all moral agents may have time to develop their principles and characters. Besides, in regard to many of the individuals, the institutions and companies here involved, there might be means and prospects of reform and amendment, and this is a sufficient reason for delay of execution; so that, on all these accounts, an immediate infliction of punishment on offence or default, as soon as it occurs, would evidently conflict with the plans of infinite wisdom and with both equity and mercy.

Instead, therefore, of extinguishing all sin and iniquity as soon as it appeared upon earth, or establishing such a system as would entirely prevent its introduction, God constituted this as a world of probation, the dwelling-place of a vast multitude of degenerate guilty human creatures: he provided rules and authorized an administration adapted to such a state, the main feature of which is toleration of evils as long as they can be consistently endured, especially where wide spreading defection and iniquity cannot be arrested and exterminated, without involving in the general catastrophe many innocent parties and valuable interests. Hence our Saviour and his apostles, acting in the name and clothed with the authority of the great God, in introducing the Gospel upon earth, refused to assail the violent and cruel institution of slavery in the Roman empire with war, internal commotion, and universal revolution and desolation.

To show the applicability and force of the parable in support of the course pursued by the Lord and his apostles in relation to Roman slavery, consider for a moment what would have been the consequence of a direct and immediate assault upon that strongly fortified and evil institution. Dr. Wayland's language is strong and appropriate on this point: "If the Gospel had proclaimed the unlawfulness of slavery, and taught slaves to resist the oppression of their masters, it would instantly have arrayed the two parties in deadly hostility throughout the civilized world; its announcement would have been the signal of a servile war, and the very name of the christian religion would have been forgotten amidst the agitations of universal bloodshed." Here are reasons lying at the foundation of this abominable and desolating system of slavery in its universal connection with human society and government, their safety, prosperity, and happiness, sufficient to prove that this was not the time, nor were these the circumstances, to sanction any attempt at total eradication of the evil. The greatness of the evil of slavery, which the Princetonian would urge as the irresistible call for immediate process of wrath and extermination against it, the truly enlightened friends of

humanity and servants of God, with entire conformity to the divine system, in this crisis consider the decisive *reason* for *delay*, providing at the same time through the Gospel, as was done, well adapted and adequate means, in due time, to accomplish the same desirable purpose in a manner most perfectly compatible with God's wisdom, justice, and mercy.

Hence it seems reasonable for Christ to say to his apostles, instead of digging up the *tares*, and with them destroying the young and tender wheat blades, let both stand and grow together. There will be time enough, a more suitable season, yea a set time, to get clear of this abomination and to purge the land: go preach the Gospel, sow the good seed of the word, in due time a crop will spring up to choke the tares and cover the whole field with choicest wheat.

CHAPTER VIII.

The conduct of Christ and his apostles more fully explained—their policy vindicated.

WHEN the ambitious princes and warriors of the earth, grown tired of conflict and tumult, had proclaimed "peace" to the nations, how would it have appeared in the eyes of mankind to see the promised Messiah, "Prince of peace," commencing a daring revolt against the Roman empire, and rousing their corrupt multitudes again to arms and battles? God, in accomplishing his gracious purposes, does not restrict himself as to time, means, or method. He does not always work by artistic fitful propellers, or move on telegraphic wires, to execute his own will, or suit the caprices of men, or proceed to destroy immediately, by almighty power, obstacles which do not instantly yield to moral force. In the fulfilment of his vast designs, he very

often adopts a slow and gradual process, which is perfectly consistent with certainty in its results. Thus he gained possession of the promised land "by little and little," when he could have accomplished it in an hour. He often sends forth his truth, the engine of his power, in an insinuating manner like leaven to *leaven the whole lump*. Hence it was observed, in the infancy of christianity, "his kingdom cometh not with observation." Christ moved not in style and state with armies and banners, though "heir of all things," but most carefully avoided the pomp and splendor of this world. His movements were wisely adapted to circumstances, and rarely conformed to human policy.

When *Solon*, the great Athenian lawgiver, was asked *what kind of laws he had given the people*, he replied "that he had given them the best laws they were capable of receiving."* This principle characterized the divine government in the days of Christ's incarnation, and does so still. In like manner, when certain Pharisees, stumbled by the supposed laxness of the Mosaic law of *divorce*, came to our Lord with perplexing questions on that subject, alleging that Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce and to *put her away*, *Jesus answered and said unto them, for the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept*. So our Saviour did not see fit to assail the Roman system of slavery immediately, or to attempt its sudden overthrow; but he commenced a train of measures in opposition to this corrupt and wicked system by appropriate moral means, which he knew would in due time exterminate the evil altogether.

However widely slavery may have prevailed through the Roman empire, and however odious its features and desolating its power, the advent was a period of general peace, in token of which the temple of Janus was shut. The writer in the *Repertory* asserts, that at that time slavery, *in its worst forms, prevailed over the whole world*. That its ravages were very extensive and appalling, we do not question; but to make out the character ascribed to its "worst forms" the crowning grace and sanction of christianity

* Rollin's Ancient History.

were needed to finish the picture, and this exhibition was reserved for the nineteenth century in these United States.

The apostles were better instructed in all the details of this subject, and acquainted with the genius, temper, ambition, and power of the Romans, than any of our modern wise men can claim to be. In addition to the plenitude of their divine endowment and inauguration for their special work, their hearts teemed with the science of morals, philosophy, government, and policy, and in official duty they were left to pursue the dictates of earthly, sanctified by heavenly wisdom. They felt themselves to be a small, obscure, and feeble company of devoted followers of the crucified and despised Nazarene. Their whole number, at that time, is stated at one hundred and twenty. They were just beginning to develop the most stupendous scheme, or moral revolution, ever conceived in heaven, much less attempted on earth. They might well tremble under their responsibility, and exclaim as Paul, on another occasion, "Who is sufficient for these things?" They clearly saw that slavery, if attacked, would array against them the august majesty of Rome, enthroned in splendor and magnificence, girded with power, jealous of their rights, tenacious of their laws, devoted to their forms, oppressions, and cruelties; indignant, barbarous, and exterminating towards any who should dare to utter a whisper against the depraved and repulsive features of their arbitrary and bloody code. How perfectly futile, how mad would it have been for the apostles to interfere with Roman law and usage, except where it was absolutely necessary to their progress and where no other means would avail. They knew that no conceivable advantage could accrue from such an attempt; that disturbing the prevailing system would produce *universal agitation*, as the Repertory well expresses it, and bring upon their defenceless heads the unmitigated vengeance of the Roman empire, with a view to abolish this new sect, and leave nothing *to be called christian at Antioch*.

The time had not yet come for Omnipotence, by direct and immediate action, to dethrone and to crown monarchs by a word. And the apostles had not come, as Mohammed,

to enforce their new system at the point of the bayonet. They were required to use weapons which were spiritual, not carnal. Truth, the word and the spirit, were their mightiest instruments to pull down the strongholds of iniquity. Patient waiting and calm endurance of evil practices and opposing systems of depravity constituted their most wise and successful policy; and it cannot be doubted that the same Paul, whose learning and eloquence, ardor and devotion in the cause of christianity, had first appreciated the fitness and value of *expedience*, now recommended and adopted it, as a wise and efficient plan of action. "All things," said he, "are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things *edify not*, that is, they will not *build up the Church* nor propagate the Gospel." Slavery is a monstrous evil, a *malum in se*; but even to destroy it, it is not expedient for a few pigmies to attack myriads of giants, the masters of the world. To this principle of *expedience* the Apostle afterwards refers, and it very much controlled his eventful life. Through all its vicissitudes never an instance occurred calling more imperatively for its exercise, than when he was required to reconcile difficulties in the infant Church of Jesus Christ involving the character and influence of slavery, which seemed to be opposed to the Gospel which they preached, while it was strongly established through the Roman empire. Rather than jeopardize their few and feeble churches, and sacrifice their own lives by a daring and provoking assault upon its vices and cruelties, however glaringly apparent, they adopted a prudent conciliatory policy, for the present waiving the agitating subject of slave domination, as belonging to the civil and political polity of the country, rather than to religious and ecclesiastical authority and rule, which were very imperfectly introduced and scarcely recognised in that empire, before they had an opportunity to prove its divine character and authority.

In adopting this course, they uttered no opinion on the main question: they compromised no principle; they assumed an entire neutrality of position in Roman eye. On the other hand, they gave no sanction to the prevalent

Roman corruption ; they left the point undecided, which is still in controversy, whether slavery is a creature of natural justice or of violent assumption and arrogance. Until we can ascertain on just evidence that the course they adopted was in conflict with their inspired instructions, we are not authorized to sit in judgment on their conduct ; and they who attempt this without a divine warrant, and arbitrarily denounce their course, are chargeable with slandering the great Teacher sent from God, with casting a heavy unauthorized imputation upon his apostles, and with an attempt to villify his blessed Gospel. The Saviour and his apostles were not sent, "as politicians,"* to remedy the corruptions of civil government, nor to correct the abuses of political power among the Romans, nor suddenly to purify their social system from its corrupt institutions and habits. Their mission, so far as on record, was definitely fixed : they were appointed to put in efficient and successful motion, on its own internal powers and springs, the truth, the word and the spirit of their master, a moral machinery to run through the whole world, to renew the hearts of men and to remodel their lives and actions, progressively uniting the whole mass of mankind in one homogeneous family ; holy on earth, to be glorious in heaven.

The apostles, seeing the institution of slavery extensively prevalent and popular among the Romans, indeed intimately incorporated with their whole civil and social organization, felt that they had nothing favorable to their mission to anticipate, and everything hostile to fear from the desperate adventure of attacking, few and feeble as they were, the powerfully fortified institution of slavery. Knowing that even slight exasperation would excite Roman power and inveteracy against them, their calm and conciliatory course must be considered profoundly discreet. Their course of action, as the record of it shows, was marked with features of wisdom, which, for their origin, point to Heaven.

* See Repertory.

CHAPTER IX.

The apostles' conduct towards slavery was right—the best practicable consistent with their character, the public peace, prosperity of the Church—a noble example—imitation of God's patient policy.

WHEN the subject of slavery came up for consideration in the first christian churches, the question naturally presented to the apostles was simply this, will it be better for us now, more consistent with our mission, more conducive to the enlargement of the Church and propagation of christianity, to meet slavery directly, in the most disadvantageous circumstances conceivable, in all its force, on the broad ground of positive prohibition and immediate extermination, or to treat this corrupt and debasing ordinance and usage just as we treat other criminal and polluting practices injurious to true religion, to pure morals, to the interests of society, to the progress of the Gospel, and to the welfare of the human race, and to rely upon the precepts, the principles, and internal energy of the Gospel, which are adapted and adequate to the entire suppression and eradication of this gigantic evil, when time shall have been afforded for them to act upon this seducing and corrupting practice? The apostles saw at a glance the tremendous consequences of assuming a position decidedly hostile to this fashionable, lucrative, ancient, and wide spreading custom prevalent through the Roman empire. Their christian company, consisting of about one hundred and twenty souls, how could they possibly offer any effectual resistance to the whole Roman power combined against them? Could they even hope to fortify themselves, and obtain deliverance by attempting to bring down the miraculous power of Omnipotence to fight for them? Under every view they could take of their case, they could not fail to perceive that the infant Church of Jesus Christ must be victimized by their irritating and contending with the Roman power; that if the Gospel were not entirely suppressed, its progress would be suspended to some distant and contingent day. They saw, at

the same time, that they would inevitably have a conflict with the Roman power on another ground, and that was enough.

How much wiser and better, they would naturally conclude, more consistent with God's peaceful mode of action in pursuing his purposes and overthrowing systems of profoundest iniquity, to establish his truth upon earth through all time, to harmonize the infant churches and the few disciples of Jesus, and to terminate the excitement which began to appear, by giving, on the very threshold of the day of Christ, some pacific counsels and directions to allay conflicting passion, to reconcile opposing interests, and to harmonize every discordant feeling in the Church and among surrounding masses. Hence the profoundly wise and salutary advice, "Masters give unto your servants that which is *equal and just*," and, "Servants be obedient unto your masters." *Thus* the Roman empire was left undisturbed, and the imminent dangers threatening the Church found a remedy.

The modest and calm suggestions of the apostles, without controversy or debate, given to masters and servants, the parties interested in this matter, to make them reciprocally more wise, affectionate, and faithful, were well calculated to harmonize every perturbed and conflicting emotion discoverable among them to make the path of prudence and of duty plain for any ecclesiastical judicatories then in action or in prospect, and could not give offence to the proud, selfish, and irritable Roman. At the same time, their course of action removed from the infant churches of Jesus Christ an immense responsibility, and transferred an oppressive weight from their own burdened consciences to God himself, who had undoubtedly suggested their grand expedient in that crisis of peril.

In the advice given in the New Testament to masters and servants, by name, the institution of slavery is only indirectly recognised at all. The duties enjoined in these instructions are not made to derive their authority or sanction from that institution. This is viewed as a mere Roman custom or regulation. But the duties are nevertheless

recommended as arising out of relations and agreements, a suitable observance of which, by christians as well as others, is necessary to the fulfilment of contracts between man and man, master and servant, to exemplify christian character and fidelity in this, as well as in every other relation of life.

Christianity takes the world as it is, under its various laws, institutions, and customs, and instead of inculcating seditious and turbulent innovations, it requires men of every condition and grade, retrospectively as well as prospectively, to be honest, to be true and faithful to contracts already made, provided they were made according to existing law and voluntarily sanctioned and established by long continued usage. Indeed, according to the divine plan and progress, it is evident that God did not intend or expect, by his Gospel, perfectly to regenerate and purify the world at the first touch. He contemplated from the beginning a gradual progressive conflict with the evil principles and habits of depraved men; he furnished the Gospel, the grand *magna charta*, which he put into the hands of his servants, with such elementary magazines of truth and power as he knew would be mighty and effectual, in due time, to *pull down the strongholds of iniquity* in every form. Therefore, to accomplish their object, the apostles were not required, they had no right, were not bound, were not permitted as good citizens, to go back and hunt up reasons for disturbing society and government with schemes and projects of immediate reform and universal revolution, setting aside by violence all the arrangements and compacts, however injurious they might prove, which had been long before enacted and observed. This they could not do, if they had the physical power, without an express order—"Thus saith the Lord!" Their commission was to *preach the Gospel* to every creature.

Hence servants are required to be "obedient to their own masters, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service *as to the Lord, and not to man*, but in singleness of heart as unto Christ." Eph. vi. 5. Here the apostles decline all interference with the institution of

slavery as a political or civil establishment, and recommend to masters and servants, the parties involved, a strict observance of their reciprocal obligations, without expressing any opinion in regard to the moral character of the institution, or giving to it any sanction.

The servants, *douloi*, were regarded as persons, not as things. They had rights, owned property, could legally transact business, collect debts due to them, bear witness in civil courts, plead and be impleaded before civil tribunals. The apostle Paul calls himself a *doulos*, a servant of Jesus Christ.

In the passages quoted, and others similar to them, giving directions, the apostles speak of the relations of servants as they exist, without attempting to inquire, much less to decide, whether it is right to hold them in that condition. They leave the decision of this question to be settled by those who created or sanctioned the relation, and have a legal right to dispose of it. While servants remain in this state by law, whether the law is right or wrong in principle, they must honestly discharge the duties arising out of it, if they desire to secure to themselves the character of true christians. Christianity found Nero exercising the most violent and odious tyranny at Rome. Yet it says to christians living under his despotic and execrable reign, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God." And our Lord and his apostles lived as obedient and orderly citizens under the bloody Nero. Did this prove that the execrable government of Nero was right, no sin against God or man, or that they approved of that corrupt and violent code. The injunctions addressed to masters are no more favorable to slavery than the advice administered to servants.

The intelligent reader will observe that the statement of the Princeton writer goes the whole length of asserting that Christ and his apostles *did not condemn* slavery because they believed it *was not sinful*. This is repeated several times in different forms. They *approved of it*, and therefore left it unmolested. How did the writer ascertain the apostles' mind upon this subject? Their silence uttered no voice

like this. The assertion, however frequently repeated, is an utterly unwarrantable *assumption*, without the slightest foundation from anything expressed on this subject. Every reasonable and just inference, considering the character of the Gospel, is directly and positively opposed to this construction.

The writer makes the public treatment which Christ and his apostles gave to peculiar vices, and the grade incidentally assigned them in their public discourses, a standard by which to graduate the character and criminality of the various vices that afflicted Rome. Hence his conclusion is, that *intemperance, sensual indulgence, fornication, adultery*, all publicly denounced by the propagators of the Gospel, must have been, in their estimation, greater evils than *slavery*. This argument, the reader may perceive, runs over several of his pages. To make this mistaken judgment more palpable, his essay afterwards presents some of the shocking features which then pertained to the institution of slavery, which authorized masters to starve their slaves, to torture them, to beat them, to put them to death, and to throw them into their fish-ponds—language which he adopts from another, and makes his own. These monstrous cruelties and acts of savage barbarity, he intimates, were considered more harmless and innocent than the vices and immoralities named above; because they were not publicly denounced by the apostles under a distinct head and name, while several of the minor vices named above were reprobated. Now we think the silence of the apostles in regard to this monstrous system of slavery can be accounted for without resorting to the violent assumption or inference, that Christ and his apostles approved of it, or designed to indicate by their conduct the slightest sympathy for it. The idea that the Lord and his apostles “considered slavery not sinful,” with such an exhibition of its fiendlike cruelty and barbarity as our writer has produced full in view, is absolutely shocking to humanity, and must be a dreadful slander against the holy and beneficent Saviour and his Gospel. Before the writer pronounced that, he ought to have had the most positive proof of it. “*The*

course they pursued," he adds, "was sufficient evidence that they thought such scenes and such a system not sinful, and approved of it." Most monstrous! What have we come to? *O tempora, O mores!* Is it possible that any sane man can believe so absurd a thing? We very much regret that our friend ever wrote that sentence, for his own sake.

The first preachers of christianity were required to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." This injunction from Heaven gave character to their preaching and general policy. They thought that "sufficient unto the day were the evils thereof," without rousing and arraying against them the whole slaveholding interest, power, and inveteracy of the Roman empire on an alleged church difficulty of a minor and transient nature, which a few words of prudent advice were found sufficient speedily to accommodate. They adopted, therefore, by divine authority, a course of *expediency*, a pacification system, in their half dozen infant churches, and among their five, ten, or twenty discontented members, which proved satisfactory. The same thing has been accomplished by our ecclesiastical predecessors, treading in the steps of Christ and his apostles, several times in the Presbyterian church, since the year 1787.*

CHAPTER X.

The argument considered from the severity of the Gospel against *idolatry*, and its gentleness towards *slavery*.—Slavery in *Abraham's* household in Judea, in Canaan, in Egypt, examined.

BUT the writer, still flattering himself that he may derive from this quarter aid to strengthen his desperate argument from the silence of the apostles on the subject of slavery, institutes, what he calls, an analogy between

* See Presbyterian Digest.

slavery and idolatry; and then asks, with apparent confidence and triumph, in substance—If they, the apostles, viewed slavery with so much indifference, and passed it by without rebuke, why should *they* so openly and repeatedly, under all circumstances, so decidedly denounce *idolatry*? We will tell him why, to the conviction of every rational mind. The intelligent reader will perceive that the writer's mistake lies in considering these two institutions, in their character, ramifications, and many evil features and effects, very much upon a *par* as possessing the same moral character and turpitude, whereas, when closely examined, there were no two physical and moral objects in the universe between which there existed less parallelism or resemblance. His words are—"It will hardly be maintained that *slavery* was at that time more intimately interwoven with the institutions of society than *idolatry* was. It, *i. e.* idolatry, entered into the arrangements of every family, of every city and province, and of the whole Roman empire. Every department of the state, civil and military, was pervaded by it. It was so united with the fabric of the government that it could not be removed without effecting a revolution in all its parts. The apostles knew this. They knew that to denounce *polytheism* was to array against them the whole power of the state. Their Divine Master had distinctly apprized them of the result."

Here, to give the writer the full weight of his argument, we shall quote his words still further: "He told them that it would set the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; and that a man's enemies should be those of his own household." He said, that he came not to bring peace but a sword, and that such would be the opposition to his followers, that whosoever killed them would think "he did God service." And he adds, "yet in the view of these certain consequences, the apostles did denounce *idolatry*, not merely in principle but by name. They adhered to their declaration, that idolatry was a heinous crime—and they were right." Here the writer is evidently pursuing his argument to prove the

comparative sinlessness or innocence of *slavery*, from the fact, that Christ and his apostles reprov'd and condemn'd *idolatry* with vehemence, without pointedly or seriously censuring slavery at all in direct terms, even in its *worst form*. By examining the course of the writer's argument, it will be seen that in the above statement we do him no injustice.

Since these two evils, *slavery* and *idolatry*, were coexistent, and as the writer assumes, of nearly equal extent and influence through the Roman empire, why did the Saviour pass so lightly by, almost entirely overlook slavery, merely prompting his apostles to employ some gentle advisory counsels to harmonize the difficulties on this subject, which troubled some of his first churches, but bring such tremendous force against *idolatry*? Why did he give his apostles admonitions and cautions so solemn and impressive—such vivid and startling foreshadowings and premonitions of the hostility and persecution they were to encounter in attacking the idols and images, the superstitions and altars, of Roman idolatry, depicting to them scenes of violence and blood sufficient to shake the stoutest courage that earth had ever seen or Heaven itself inspired? Now we venture to suggest that the writer's comparative view furnishes no argument at all in favor of slavery. We think nothing can be plainer, in common sense and common candor, than that our Lord Jesus Christ saw this *idolatry* standing, with all its horrible features and triumphant power, immediately in the way of his *heavenly mission*, like an utterly insurmountable Chinese wall, stopping its progress on the threshold. He foresaw that, whenever that wide-spreading and formidable system of apostacy and rebellion against the throne of God should be attacked, all the violent and exterminating hostility of the Roman empire would be promptly called into action for their extermination. Knowing the important import of the proverb, "forewarned, forearmed," to prepare his chosen leaders for the dreadful and unavoidable conflict approaching, he gave the solemn warnings which have been recited.

Although slavery was a debasing and wicked system,

wide in its prevalence and desolating in its operation, it had not a feature of deformity to be compared with the infinite and eternal malignity and guilt of *idolatry*. The one was a temporary calamity and polluting scourge which the Gospel contained elementary principles and energies within itself to remedy, a disease which it possessed power to cure. But the other was an *atheistical obliteration*, an entire expunging of the first idea of a true and eternal God: at one fell swoop, it expelled all religion from the universe, covered the earth with thick darkness, set the message from Heaven and its heralds at defiance, left all men unpitied and helpless, lying *in ruins, dead in trespasses and sins, literally without God and without hope in the world*. Moved by this overwhelming sight of woe, the Divine Legate from the skies, the eternal Son of God, in obedience to the pressing needs of earth and imperative mandate of Heaven, hastens at the set time to bring relief, with the loud response, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" to rebuild thy throne, which dumb *idols* have usurped and attempted to profane and demolish. Surely, in such a crisis, it is to be expected, it is right, that the minor ills of earth should touch lightly his heavenly mind, filled with the vast magnitude of the work before him. *Light or darkness, God or no God!* that was the amazing question which absorbed him.

Before the Gospel could take effect, or advance one step, the true God must be successfully declared and re-enthroned, Satan must be cast out, and his false gods laid low. This was, therefore, the Saviour's starting point. The whole following process was here forced upon the representative of the Eternal God, as his first point of assault upon the kingdom of Satan. Here he commenced his attack upon the empire of darkness. Hence the solemn admonitions which are above recited. Here is the key, which the Princeton essayist failed to find, to unlock the imaginary labyrinth which so bewildered him. This is the natural and just solution of the denunciations so cumulatively poured like peals of thunder upon the system of *idolatry*, the mystery of iniquity which so tyrannized over the Roman empire, and disputed the entrance of the King of Kings.

Our Lord having not the least reference to the subject of slavery in this relation in any of his words or actions, the writer's analogy proves to be a fiction, and his argument, of course, a *failure*.

But, say the advocates of slavery, the sacred Scriptures nowhere condemn that institution. Not only did the Saviour and his apostles pass lightly over it without condemning it, but it existed in the days of Abraham, as he appears to have employed slaves to aid him in executing his important business, for many purposes of defence and emolument and of convenience and pleasure around his residence and upon his extensive possessions.

But considering that this illustrious patriarch lived about four thousand years ago, almost in the infancy of the world, an argument of this kind drawn from his example, when fairly viewed, appears to us like gleaning from a fairy field. Moses wrote nearly three hundred years after Abraham's day. That age, in all its features, was peculiar. Its ordinances, rites, and habits were contingent and in a very dishevelled state, to be put in order and established on correct and stable principles, as society and government advanced towards maturity. The division of property, which principally marks civilization, had been but partially introduced. The improvement of the earth was in its first stage. The account given by Moses of the incessant changes and migrations of families, tribes, and companies, and even of Abraham himself, shows that the condition of society was very simple and unformed. Observe the arrangement which took place between Abraham and Lot, in the selection, division, and distribution of some of the most improved and valuable public lands. The transactions appear as if there had been no other land claimants in that region. Lot took undisputed possession of the plains of Jordan, extensive, well watered, dotted with villages, and very fertile. Abraham, in like manner, took Canaan, as far as his eyes could reach "northward and southward, eastward and westward," to an indefinite amount, probably exceeding many scores of thousands of acres, without competition, price, or violence. The earth was little tilled; grain crops scarcely

known; a few natural delicate fruits or wild grapes appeared sparsely around; grass was the chief, almost the only reliance for sustaining life. Abraham's vast domain was made productive, almost exclusively, by his countless flocks and herds. His life was that of a shepherd. His vast area was one undivided *common*, unsubdued and unfenced. The only middle separation lines were maintained by the presence of the numerous sub-shepherds, who located their moveable shanties on the hills and in the valleys, and derived a precarious subsistence, in common with their great landlord, from the numerous flocks they watched and fed. Their business did not prescribe a life of toil, and their minds were free as the mountain air. Cracked corn, the pail, the churn, and the rude wilderness slaughter stall were the common and almost only reliance of that early age for the chief articles and very few luxuries of life. Abraham's vast glebe was parcelled out by ridges and groves, rivers and valleys; their natural boundaries tenanted, stocked, and superintended by a numerous company of hired men, tenants, and overseers, on conditions and by names not definitely marked in the Mosaic account, because numerous, variable, and fluctuating with circumstances. The original term by which this numerous order of assistants was known in general was that of *servant*, because they served Abraham's interests, were in some undescribed manner tributary to him for the lands they occupied and the privileges they enjoyed. Around and near his dwelling were clustered a group of select men, called *trained servants*, to wait upon his person, to assist in his household, to perform rude services of mechanical skill, according to the simple ideas of that day, to execute missions and trust agencies, to meet incidental calls and purposes of defence, if required, from surrounding foes. To these, that they might be prepared for every emergency in an infant society, and exposed as they were to aggressions from the surrounding Heathen and more than semi-barbarous hosts, Abraham would naturally extend peculiar attention, both in their first selection and subsequent treatment.

The manner in which the patriarch treated his servants is very remarkable and significant. He intrusted them with arms, and appointed them as his personal guards. In preference to relations, they were to be his heirs in case of the failure of lawful inheritors. The oldest servant was a person of great consideration in his family. To him Isaac was subordinate, even at the age of forty. Abraham bound him, by an oath, not to marry his son Isaac to any of the daughters of the land. What a momentous trust! In no particular does it appear that he treated any one of them as a slave. The great error of slavery advocates consists in their not distinguishing between *slaves*, as understood in modern days, and *servants* or *hired men*, as understood at all times, both early and late. A *slave* is not regarded as a person, but as a *thing*; he is a mere *chattel personal*. Men, women, and children are accounted as mere articles of property or merchandise.

If it should be asserted that Abraham bought servants with his money, it is admitted that the language describing this transaction in our translation runs in this form. But the word here rendered "bought," signifies, also, *acquired, got, procured, obtained*. Abraham got his servants sometimes with his *money*, just as we obtain white servants with our money, generally, if not always, by contract with the servant himself. This mode of procuring servants is referred to in Job, where, in regard to the Leviathan, it is asked, "Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?" Something of the same kind seems to be referred to among the Israelites: "If a stranger or sojourner wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and *sell himself* unto the stranger," etc. Abraham, it is also believed, got servants from the Heathen, who had taken them in war, to ameliorate their condition as an act of benevolence, by exchanging his gentle servitude and comfortable residence in his house for wretched bondage. Wives were frequently bought for service rendered. Isaac bought his wife for fourteen years of service to her father. David paid for his by military service. Joseph bought the Israelites to be Pharaoh's servants, to work his

lands, on the condition of their paying a large rent. In Abraham's family, his servants were considered and treated as children, as intimated in the New Testament: "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all." Servants could intermarry in the family. They were not permitted to be separated from their children; they were invited guests in all their family and national festivals; they enjoyed the same privileges of instruction, the same code of civil laws, with their employers; they could be witnesses in civil courts where masters were impleaded. And so far from allowing or encouraging traffic in servants, Moses furnished the most rigid prohibition of it possible: "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."

It often happens that the employee is fully equal in character and standing, if not superior, to the employer. The servants of Abraham appear to have been men of character and rank. The messenger who was sent to bring home a wife for Isaac was treated in his mission with great consideration, and cannot be contemplated now without veneration and respect. This is a tribute due to his address and fidelity. The ability and success of his agency will never cease to be admired. And yet, probably because such exhibitions were not unfrequent, nothing is said of his personal accomplishments to distinguish him from his numerous associates in the cottage and in the field. Yet the writer before us seems to flatter himself that he has found in his visionary conjectures such facts and analogies between Abraham's servants and the degraded and miserable *victims* of slavery existing in this unhappy land, as to vindicate all the abominations of the system, in its *worst forms*, and to recite, as a prolific source of apology for this purpose, the example set in the simplest era of the world by faithful Abraham, when there is no evidence that slavery existed at all.

It is true he had in his employment *hirelings*, men *bought with money*, which terms are often used as convertible in the original tongues. In the same manner, we daily *hire*

or buy and *compensate* freemen. But criticism upon words in an ancient language, incidental terms, technical distinctions in history, and especially in the ancient tongue in which Moses is supposed to have written; so soon after the confusion of Babel, when language was fluctuating and migratory, like the tribes and locations it records, we discard as utterly equivocal, and furnishing no certain ground for an argument in favor of slavery. What language was most used in the days of Abraham and Moses, is still a point undecided in philology. Many able competitors for linguistic priority and pre-eminence between the Chaldean, Hebraic, and Chinese dialects are still in the field presenting tenacious claims. The precise distinction between *slave*, *servant*, *hireling*, *laborer*, *tenant*, *overseer*, or *assistant* of any kind, is very obscurely and equivocally marked in the languages which were in popular use at that early period of the world.* On the whole, it appears very evident that the *argumentum ex silentio* and *ex exemplo* in favor of modern slavery is the product of pertinacious zeal to gain a point or establish a system, much more than to exhibit and confirm the plain honest truth. With regard to Abraham's military excursion and triumph, so much celebrated in this connection, the simple fact, that the art of war was not taught, and that standing armies did not exist, makes it perfectly natural that the good old patriarch in such an emergency as occurred, requiring prompt and vigorous action, should collect all the men he had employed, or could discover around his extensive premises, to repel invasion, to

* To show the indefiniteness with which the term servant was used in ancient eras in the Eastern world, the following instances, out of hundreds, are adduced. In king David's Philistine wars it is recorded, 1 Chronicles xviii. 2—"And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's *servants*, and brought gifts." Were the Moabites in mass made *slaves* of David? Verse 6—"Then David put *garrisons* in Syria; Damascus and the Syrians became David's *servants*," etc. Verse 13—"and he put *garrisons* in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's *servants*," etc. Now the obvious import of the term here is, that these people or tribes were successively reduced to *subjection politically* by the force of king David's arms. The same ambiguity runs through a great part of the New Testament history. We give one sample: Mark i. 20—"And straightway he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the *hired servants*, and went after him."

recover plunder, or assist others who might need his aid, to rescue at least *one captive dear to him*.

The family of Jacob, who went down into Egypt and dwelt there, were placed in such a situation, and continued there so long that their condition is described by Moses as a state of *bondage*, and Egypt itself is sometimes referred to in sacred Scripture as the house of bondage. It may be worth while to consider briefly what that condition really was, as a proper understanding of that point will somewhat enable us to explain the character of the *slavery*, as some would call it, then prevalent there and among the heathen nations, as well as in the Jewish state. There can be no doubt that the family of Jacob, who went down into Egypt as a colony, were *free men*. Notwithstanding the sympathy of the Egyptians for Joseph, they disliked his brethren from the beginning, primarily because they were accustomed to the life of shepherds, which was an abomination to the Egyptians. But still they were located in the land of Goshen, which abounded in grass. In the season of universal want and suffering, produced by famine, *Joseph bought all the land of Egypt*, and the *people with their land*, without discrimination, for Pharaoh, that is, he made an arrangement with them to secure their labor on the soil. One common ratio, or *per centum*, was fixed and observed in dividing the proceeds of the land—*one-fifth* to the crown, and *four-fifths* to the people. It was not long before the envy and the hatred of the native inhabitants prompted the agents of the crown to indulge their dislike by imposing upon the Israelites increased burdens, in the form of more difficult service and higher rents. The whole detail may be found in Genesis XLVII. chapter, and Exodus, chapter I., etc.

The first arrangement was evidently intended to be transient. From the incongeniality of the parties, permanently harmonious and happy intercourse could not have been reasonably anticipated. This impression is sanctioned by the prophetic assurances of Joseph, and also from the decisive avowal of the *new king*. Ex. I. 10—"Come, let us deal wisely," that is artfully, "with them, and so get them up

out of the land." The rapid increase of the Israelitish company in numbers, and success of their pastoral and agricultural enterprise, stimulated the Egyptian encroachments. The complaints and expostulations of *their own officers* did not prevent the oppressions inflicted on them. Many aggravations were artfully contrived, as the servants of Pharoh avowed, "to make the lives of the Israelites bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick and in the field, and to drive them out of the country." Now this reference to Mosaic history is to convince every reader that, although the labor of the Israelites in Goshen is often described as a *bondage*, a *heavy bondage*, so as to make the expression proverbially a type or prefiguration, and as some seem to think, an identification of modern slavery, there is really, when closely examined, in the whole history nothing which sanctions the supposition that slavery, as now understood, was to be found in Egypt or in any of the Chaldean or Canaanitish countries. Hence, if a modified form of slavery had really grown out of the circumstances stated, and existed in the manner alleged by pro-slavery men uncondemned through these districts of the Eastern world, that exhibition would not warrant their inference in favor of modern slavery. But, as we have sufficient evidence to sustain a belief that no such thing was practised among the nations referred to, such inferences and arguments really dwindle into entire insignificance.

Besides what has been already stated, we may add, that the Israelites in Egypt held a large amount of property distinct from the possessions of the Egyptians. They had their own separate families and dwellings; they were encouraged to keep arms, and were always prepared for military conflict; they had their own government, laws, and magistrates: their great oppression consisted in being required to perform too much service for the king, as his tenants, though they were large sharers in the produce. This was their slavery; they were free by nature and by previous habit, and were unwilling to endure the least degree of arbitrary or oppressive control or exaction. It is a notorious fact, that they had leisure, notwithstanding their

excessive toils, to learn and practise several of the fine arts. The only cruelty inflicted upon their families was the destruction of their male children; and this was the enforcement of a great state measure, as the Egyptians thought, for the safety of their kingdom. They lived in abundance in their designated Goshen. Instead of feeding on *a quart, each, a day of corn*, they *sat by the flesh-pots, and did eat bread to the full*. They ate “fish freely, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic.” No restrictions were imposed upon their intellectual improvement or religious privileges. Is it possible that such a people, who had in their hardest condition enjoyed such easy terms, could have been miserable, oppressed, and suffering *slaves*? And then, as a sure and effectual deliverance from such a condition, if any were found in it, as a guard against their returning to it, the divine enactment was proclaimed—“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”

Roman servility, respecting which cotemporary historians speak distinctly, was of a very different character, infinitely more repulsive and disgusting, long before the incarnation of Christ. Here also we observe, that the relation of superior and inferior, of strength, abundance, and independence, on the one hand, and of weakness, poverty, and dependence, on the other, has always, more or less, existed among men, and probably always will in some small degree. But these relations do not constitute slavery.

Slavery was never authorized in the Jewish statutes; never such a thing as chattelism existed in the Hebrew nation. The laws of Moses, instead of authorizing slavery in this inhuman form, were intended to prevent it as a permanent institution. This was his object in his laws and regulations in regard to obtaining servants—making voluntary contracts to procure the labor of free men for a limited time. This was called *buying* them with *money*. To prevent extension, abuse, oppression, or running it out into permanent slavery, the contract was limited to six years. Nothing is more common now than buying men in this manner, hiring free men for one or more years to labor, to serve in

a particular capacity, or to perform a specific piece of work at a stipulated rate, even if it require years to accomplish it. In the Mosaic code, to exclude the possibility of protracted slavery or servitude of any kind, such contracts were so limited that in all cases they could not be continued beyond the next *jubilee*, when every human creature in the land became fully liberated from all similar obligations. At the same time the principle was settled, that *no child should be born a slave*. In this, the Jewish system corresponded with our own enactment in New Jersey, which is considered subversive of all attempts at slavery in this state for ever. The practice of making contracts with the Heathen for labor or service was based upon the principle of *hiring* or *paying wages*, and these are the arrangements which are sometimes described as *paying a price*. But these agreements were entirely temporary, the Mosaic code itself furnishing ample evidence that the Jewish system was intended much more to prevent than to establish slavery. The surrounding and neighboring nations, Babylon and Tyre, Greece and Rome, untouched as yet by the power of revealed truth, encouraged the *slave trade*. But Judea, though fully exposed to the contaminating influence of their evil example, firmly resisted the power of all heathen imposture, its idols and its altars. And in perfect consistency, it never opened a slave mart.

CHAPTER XI.

Particular view of God's toleration—its consistency and beauty, etc.—Fallacy of the argument for slavery from lenity of Jesus Christ farther exhibited.—The permissive feature in divine government.

THE patience and *long suffering* of God towards the corrupt inhuman institution of slavery, affords no evidence and no argument in its vindication, against the charge of in-

vasion and usurpation of human rights. The divine lenity and forbearance in this relation merely exhibit his perfect consistency in his administration towards all sin and unrighteousness. God is full of toleration and is slow to anger. In remedying moral evils of every grade, mercy is his preferred instrumentality. But God early gave notice to the world, in all its complicate and aggravated iniquities, that his suspended judgments should not always slumber—"My spirit shall not always strive with man."* While the Most High proclaimed that justice and judgment were around about his throne, he declared that mercy should forever go before his face. In confirmation of this truth, God has placed on record, for the instruction of every age, striking instances of suspended execution, where judgment seemed to be demanded. To establish this general principle, let us look at a few instances. When God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon earth, and had resolved to destroy all flesh, few excepted, the great truth is unequivocally recorded in the sacred record. 1 Pet. III. 20—"The long suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, one hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing, before the flood came and destroyed the race of man, eight souls only being saved." Similar toleration was exercised towards the wicked cities of the *plain* before God rained upon them fire and brimstone, and destroyed them. This long suffering feature of God's government towards the wicked and their corrupt institutions is manifested in the following threat of wrath and ruin against certain Canaanites, who had made themselves offensive in his sight—"The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Gen. xv. 16. And in regard to a company of Israelites who had grievously sinned, God reiterates more clearly the same menace—"Their foot shall slide in due time, and the things which shall come upon them make haste." Deut. xxxii. 35. It is true that God's long suffering is often abused, and used as a motive to increased and continued transgression, rather than reformation; but still it confirms

* Genesis.

the principle maintained. "Because sentence against an evil work is *not speedily executed*, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecc. viii. 11. "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious." Isaiah xxx. 18. An astonishing instance of his forbearance towards the proud and impious, after their certain and positive overthrow had been determined, is eloquently depicted in the seventy-third Psalm. In such cases the following language will apply: "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes." Psalm l. 21. It was the same toleration which had been exhibited in the divine government, towards all the rebellions and iniquities of the preceding four thousand years, that suffered slavery to exist in Rome, in common with other flagrant private and public immoralities, to pass on without any direct and positive reproof. "Thus God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering towards us." In the same manner God long tolerated heathen *idolatry*, the greatest of all evils, till, in the prosecution of his plans of mercy towards fallen man, its farther endurance, without striking and decisive demonstrations against its tyranny, guilt, and utter desolation, became morally impossible. There was a special and absolute necessity for God's interposition to destroy idolatry in the day of Christ's ministry upon earth. Hence the frequent and solemn denunciations uttered against it, and the public and impressive proclamation against it and all its accompanying and resulting iniquities, which were mainly pointed against the throne of Heaven. "The times of this ignorance *God winked at*, but *now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." Acts xvii. 30-1.

The inferential argument in favor of slavery from the silence of the apostles, if it prove anything, proves too much. Does any sane man believe that God is pleased with wars, famines, pestilence, floods, conflagrations, tem-

pests, murders, massacres, etc., because he does not specifically denounce or positively prevent them? Is slavery to be considered harmless and guiltless because God does not proceed instantly with armed force to suppress it? Has not the sovereign of the world reserved to himself the right to select his own objects of pursuit, to determine his own times and modes of action within his own dominions? Let the cavillers of earth be cautious in attempting, with their feeble probosces, to explore those vast and unknown regions of sovereign wisdom and power where angels gaze, but fear to tread. The truth is, God's course of patient forbearance, manifested in all ages towards moral as well as physical evil, in every form and degree, and by which the world exists and the season of grace is protracted, constitutes the most magnificent and attractive view we can take of his government and providence over rebellious and ruined man. And his blessed Son and chosen co-workers may not be charged with weakness or default by puny purblind reasoners, who, for lack of vision, discover only specks where his most splendid glories shine.

In treating the subject of the divine agency in regard to the introduction and prevalence of slavery so extensively over the earth, the same broad and tangible distinction must be made between a *permissive* providence and a *positive* enactment of God, that is made by all sound orthodox writers and moralists in regard to the entrance of sin into the world and all its consequent woes.

That no event can take place upon earth without God's knowledge and permissive concurrence, we do not doubt; but that God predetermined, and hence positively required, that the colored portion of the human race and many of the whites, wherever located, should be subjected to captivity, held in a state of bondage to their fellow men, made chattels and merchandise, the perpetrators being held guiltless and their acts innocent, we utterly deny, for reasons above suggested, and ever will, until the murderers of the Lord Jesus Christ are proved to be innocent men, because the bloody tragedy of the cross was committed "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The

plea set up by slaveholders and their advocates, that this institution is the appointment of God, in such a manner and extent as to excuse its crimes and cruelties, to vindicate its propagators and advocates, is incompatible with the perfections of Jehovah and with his revealed truth and righteous government.

The self-conflicting contradictory position before the universe, in which the assumption of pro-slavery men on this subject places the supreme Lord of all, ought to impress reflecting candid minds most unfavorably towards their perverted view of it. "God will have all men to be saved, and the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption," are his plain and positive declarations. In accordance with this purpose, He selects, inspires, and commissions a company of men to execute his will: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel *to every creature*; he that believeth shall be saved," etc. Mark xvi. 16. To carry into effect this sublime mission, God instituted a mighty system of grace and love, justice and mercy, to go forth to the nations, accompanied by his Almighty spirit, as a remedy for human corruption, guilt, and misery, to reconcile to himself the apostate and guilty race, and to amalgamate the jarring elements of fallen humanity in one homogeneous holy happy company. The two combined objects of this heavenly mission were presented in bold and striking outlines by the evangelical prophet long before the advent of our Saviour. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, *to proclaim liberty to the captives*, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."

God could not approve of any system of action opposed to his. The idea, that in sending his Son into the world to redeem the fallen race, and establish upon earth a kingdom of righteousness and peace, to instruct, remodel, and fit candidates for a future state of perfect happiness, should at the same time authorize a rebellious portion, a pre-emi-

nently daring and violent host of revoltors against his glorious scheme of deliverance, to seize upon a very large and indefinite mass of his ransomed millions, strip them of all their essential rights and privileges, and hurry them away into a desperate state of privation and bondage, to groan away their miserable existence in anguish and unavailing tears, seems so utterly inconsistent and repugnant to reason and common sense, and so infinitely in conflict with the divine perfection, justice, and goodness, that we cannot conceive how any mind possessing just moral perception and feeling can calmly and satisfactorily tolerate the thought. Wherever the Gospel has travelled it has left trophies of its power, immortal fruits to God's praise and glory; and it is still going forth, with resistless energy, conquering and to conquer. No power has ever appeared upon earth, except idolatry, more directly and obstinately hostile than slavery to the redeeming system of God's mercy wherever it has prevailed, in proportion to the number of subjects it counts, and the extent of soil it covers. It stands with all its repulsive features, its ignorance and hardness, its crimes and cruelties, its debasement and wretchedness, obstructing the march of christianity, insurmountably shutting up, *not preparing*, the way of the Lord. The desolations and horrors which mark the progress and the reign of slavery more than rival the countless and crimsoned cruelties of war, of pestilence, of famine, of earthquakes, floods, and tempests; and yet our Princeton friend, whoever he may be, in terms surprising to us, has summoned resolution enough to pronounce this awful system right, *not sinful, no crime*—pleasant in the sight of God, and from man scarcely deserving a *frown*. Opposition to God's plans and movements of mercy from other quarters, obstructions to the march of his truth and grace, we doubt not he would denounce as wicked and ruinous, but slavery, the gigantic and arch enemy, whose name is Legion, for its victims and its abettors are countless, which occupies a wide field with its successes and desolations, he would clothe with the garb of sinlessness, as undeserving the condemnation of earth or of Heaven.

But how is it possible that God should approve of such a rapacious crusade against his stupendous Gospel enterprise and his own eternal glory? Was he insincere when he laid the foundation of this magnificent scheme? Has he seen cause to change his eternal purpose, to alter his gracious plan, or retard his merciful movement, in regard to vast provinces of his apostate dominions, to encourage the hostile and criminal intruders who should dare to usurp dominion over soil redeemed by the blood of his Son, and consecrated to true Gospel liberty and life? These questions involve paradoxes, which pro-slavery men are bound to explain and to reconcile with the wisdom, holiness, and stability of God in all his gracious announcements and transactions. His measures, in the governing processes of his material kingdom, are rectilinear and uniform, neither transverse nor retrograde. He that directs and controls the superior and inferior globes of inert matter, in all their sempiternal revolutions and conjunctions, with such astonishing precision and exactness in time and place, we would infer with confidence, will certainly pursue a definite and undeviating policy in the more exalted sphere of mind and mercy, which more intimately and profoundly involves the happiness of fallen man and the glories of his own eternal Godhead.

CHAPTER XII.

An inquiry into the correctness of several of the Princetonian's opinions and speculations in regard to slavery, etc.

THE attention of the writer of these pages was particularly attracted, somewhat recently, by a warm *eulogy*, in the New York Observer, upon an article published several years since, in the Princeton Repertory, in vindication of slavery. This periodical, being considered by many as the

organ of the Presbyterian church, and certainly the index of her theological opinions and moral sentiments, seems not only to invite, but to require respectful examination.

We infer, from this article, that the writer's principal object in it was to combat and correct what he regards as the mistaken policy of a class of men whom he designates as *abolitionists*. Had he confined himself to that point, he would have saved us much trouble. But at various points in his discursive and complex treatise, he seems to forget and diverge from the belligerent position assumed towards the abolitionists in the outset, and migrates into an open and avowed defender, and even advocate of slavery, which brings him into conflict not only with all Christendom, but especially with the church, to whose interests, principles, and policy the Repertory is generally considered pledged.

The writer commences with a fair profession—"It is our object not to discuss the subject of slavery upon abstract principles." He afterwards adds, "in pronouncing upon the *moral* character of an *act*, it is obviously necessary to have a clear idea of what it is: yet," he remarks, "how few of those who denounce slavery have any well defined conception of its nature! They have a confused idea of *chains* and *whips*, of degradation and misery, of *ignorance* and *vice*, and to this complex conception they apply the name of slavery, and denounce it as the aggregate of all moral and physical evil."—p. 298. His first declaration in favor of slavery he gives as a *deduction*, "that slaveholding is not necessarily sinful," which is followed by an unfortunate fallacy in his argument, perhaps the key to his whole tissue of errors. "The grand mistake, as we apprehend, of those who maintain that *slaveholding is itself a crime*, is that they do not discriminate between slaveholding, *in itself considered*, and its accessories (consequences) at any particular time or place." The writer charges upon the opposers of slavery, that they do not discriminate between slavery and its evil results. But surely it may be charged upon the advocates of slavery, with much greater propriety, that they attempt against nature, against all experience and *fact*, to separate *cause* and *effect*, to *disjoin* what the whole slave territory

of the world exhibits in close connection, *slavery* and a *huge mass of privations and sufferings* among slaves. They press this allegation so far as to deny the very existence of the monstrous evils uniformly and certainly following slavery, and connected with it in all cases. Hence the writer's obvious meaning is, that to form a just and accurate opinion of slavery, we must discriminate between *slaveholding, in itself considered*, and its *fruits, results, or consequences*, such as are enumerated by him, "maltreatments, severe laws, oppressive measures of any kind." The expression *slaveholding, in itself considered*, from his very frequent use of it, we conclude is a very favorite phrase or idea, carrying in it some charm or power greatly to strengthen his argument. It seems to be used as a hiding place or screen for the deformity and guilt of slavery. He tells us that these deformities, to which he refers in quite a long catalogue—"withholding instruction, interfering with marital and parental rights, insults and oppression from the whites, inadequate remuneration, physical discomfort, moral degradation," etc., are mere possibilities, contingencies, which may or may not appear in practical slaveholding. Now it is very appropriate and important here first to ask, who is to decide when and where these evil results, so appalling, shall appear? Where is the authority deposited or invested which is to control this monstrous power, feature, or result of slaveholding? All grades of infliction, oppression, and cruelty, from the minutest to the most violent and excessive, are embraced in this *power*, a *power* which is undeniably lodged in the breast of the slaveholder alone. Many millions of rational and immortal beings are committed by this system, for time and for eternity, to the arbitrary disposal of *whom*—most certainly exclusively and unlimitedly to the slaveholders themselves, except so far as civil power may sometimes interpose to restrain their selfish, avaricious, and violent passions. But this restriction rarely is exercised in a slave country. We do not wonder that the writer should make a studious and artful effort to get these attendants of the slave system out of sight, as far as possible, by abstraction, though it is the

very thing which in the beginning he had pledged himself to avoid.

This attempt of that writer to establish the sinlessness of slavery, by taking away from it all its natural attributes and universal concomitants, by picturing it to his imagination and to others, if possible, as a very little harmless thing without cause or effect, indeed scarcely existing at all, we think he will find an unavailing artifice. It is hard to persuade men who have some knowledge and sagacity, by putting fire behind a screen partially out of sight, that it will not burn, or to pervert and unsettle the primary conceptions and decisions of men respecting the moral character of any custom or system of action by detaching from it, as far as possible, those injurious and criminal effects, which, in conformity with the laws of nature, of mind, and uniform experience, in every case and in every age, have accompanied or flowed from it. Wherever the nature and moral effects of slavery have been developed, the fruits here ascribed to it have uniformly grown out of it, and followed it in close and immediate connection. Instead of referring us, for an illustration of his *sinless slavery*, to slavery as he imagines it existed in the family of Abraham, about four thousand years ago, be that slavery what it might, certainly infinitely removed from all analogy to the slavery now in question, he ought to point us to an instance, in the history of modern slavery, where it existed without those deplorable fruits, which are now pronounced, on full experience, to be its legitimate offspring. Instead of this, he tells us that the grand mistake of anti-slavery men consists in their not discriminating between slaveholding, in itself considered, and its accessories, that is, consequences and results. This place, *in itself considered*, is a private retreat, where the writer would conceal from view all the enormous features of this hideous system ; but his effort is vain, "*they will out.*"

CHAPTER XIII.

The abstraction of the Repertory examined on *scriptural grounds*, and its fallacy exposed.

To this attempt at abstraction in general we reply, that on opening any legal statute book, we find no room for any such distinction as this writer makes between the name and the thing signified, they being considered synonymous—a unit in the eye and operation of the law. The terms employed are intended exclusively to indicate the practical realities or results implied; as, for example, felony, arson, burglary, robbery, etc., each of which terms comprehends and exhibits, as in perspective, the overt acts which constitute, characterize, and identify the crime specified. In defining the moral character of an act, it is the *principle* chiefly that is regarded, though both the root and branch of crime are embraced in the view and estimate of it. The principle in sin is the same, whether the act consists of taking an apple or a kingdom. There is enough in slavery, considering it as far as possible abstractly *in itself*, as we shall see, to prove it to be a superlative iniquity. Slaveholding is to be especially designated and estimated by its *fruits*, which constitute the test our Saviour appointed for all characters and actions.

It is impossible to conceive of slavery without having before your mind the comprehensive, complex, and disgusting image, or spectacle, of a company of slaves, the idea of painful subjection and bondage, of privation, of hard labor, of dependence upon the will and caprice of another, of ignorance and degradation, with all the accompanying features of suffering, because no man ever saw a slaveholding establishment, a negro stocked farm, in operation unattended with these exhibitions. They therefore compose the material, the essence of slaveholding, *in itself considered*. Hence a late candid writer, favorable to slavery, says—“Slavery cannot be conceived of apart from a master and a slave.” He admits of no abstraction. In thinking upon

the subject, there is a necessary and constant reference to the form in which slavery exists in our own country : hence abstraction is impossible. Slaveholding is the root of a tree, a *upas*, which branches out and ramifies itself in every direction, upon every limb of which the mind perceives clusters of poisonous fruits in various stages of maturity. And it is worse than in vain to say, the fruit being partially concealed under the leaves, or more abstractly in the root or sap, the tree is harmless, it will not poison ; because all this time the venom is essentially in it in full vigor.

But the writer, to give his idea of abstraction as much prominence and force as possible while trying to put these fruits out of sight, endeavors to diminish the enormities of slavery by pursuing his train of thought still farther. After enumerating a catalogue of evils which accompany it or proceed from it, such as "forbidding instruction, insults and oppressions from the whites, inadequate remuneration, intellectual ignorance, moral degradation," etc., he tells us "they may all exist without admitting that slavery is in itself a crime." He tells us "it may exist without any of these concomitants." And then he asks, "if they are removed, how little will remain." But the difficulty is to remove them, or to find slavery without them. There are many inherent and essential evils in the nature of slavery, in its mildest form, which as we shall see, and as the writer afterward in his definition of slavery admits, cannot be separated from it, and which necessarily constitute it an evil of the greatest magnitude. His abstraction is entirely insufficient to detach the things signified from the name which imports them. This is a natural and moral impossibility. A slaveholder is, by participation, an accessory agent in inflicting and continuing bondage upon slaves. He cannot be a slaveholder without this. The slaves must of course exist ; they must exist in the state or condition, in some important particulars, common to slaves ; they are certainly *deprived of freedom* ; they are under the authority of a master of undefined character, liable to *privations, toils, oppressions, sufferings*, such as are common among slaves in all countries and in every condition, from some of which they cannot be

exempt while in slavery. The phases of oppression and suffering arising out of slavery may vary with the avarice, selfishness, and violence of the slaveholder; but whether violence and cruelty appear or not, the chief ingredient, the galling evil and guilty thing, *slavery*, still remains.

As it seems to be the design of this writer to detach the fruits of slavery from the root of it, and refer the whole thing to some internal chamber or recess of the heart, feeling, or principle of the mind, where he would describe it as a little thing, both harmless and innocent, it seems appropriate to take the back view, and follow him in our examination of this fabricated feature of slavery, which is generally considered and found to be so flagrant and tangible a thing. And as he speaks of slavery as "a great moral question, which is to be settled by the word of God," let us test his abstraction by that standard.

The best view of abstraction on divine record is well expressed in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism: "The *sinfulness* of man's *estate* consists in the corruption of his nature," (*in itself considered*) "together with all actual transgressions which accompany or flow from it." The *heart* and *life* are inseparably connected. There is no room here for abstraction, nor in the Bible at all. The depraved principle within and the corrupt results without are in perfect contact. The fountain and the streams certainly and uniformly issuing from it are viewed as a unit; they are identified and amalgamated, for an *evil tree will bring forth evil fruit*. Because out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, thefts, adulteries, murders, etc. Matt. xv. 19. To make this point still more plain, we shall adduce a few passages for illustration. The first is found in Rom. viii. 7—"The carnal mind is enmity against God." This is as abstract a statement of human depravity as could be framed, and yet the corrupt principle is not detached or separated at all from its evil results, nor the contrary. Its exercises, its fruits and consequences, stand so closely connected with its internal elements, and proceed so immediately out of them, that there is no tangible point or line of separation between them. Hence the words closely follow "it," that is, "the carnal mind is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." There is inherently associated and combined with the internal abstract element of enmity to God a feeling or propensity, an effort, a struggle, a manifestation in the divine sight, of resistance to divine authority, of rebellion against God. However calm and pure the internal state may appear, however smooth the outward surface may seem, there is beneath it, concealed by a very slight covering, not only defection from God, but rebellion against him, the first overt act or outbreak of iniquity, the commencement of a train of evils which nothing but Almighty power can check. Hence it is immediately added, that this insubordinate rebellious emotion is beyond the control of the creature; "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" it cannot be reduced to subjection or kept in order by human power. This is the only kind of abstraction to be found in the word of God. In the same manner, slaveholding, in the most abstract form in which we can conceive of it, embodies in itself the elements, the features, the train, the mischiefs, and the guilt, which properly belong to the system, in all its ordinary phases and successive stages of sin and guilt. The liberty of its victim has been stolen away already, and then all conceivable mischiefs follow naturally and certainly.

A passage leading to the same result may be found in the first epistle of James i. 15: "Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin." Lust is the abstract principle in which all the iniquities and crimes of men originate, and none of them can be more directly and positively traced to that source than *slaveholding*. It springs from the lust of money, the lust of power, of ease, of indolence, of pride, of pleasure, of splendor, of luxury. It proposes *ab initio*, and sets out, contrives, labors, resolves, when if ever abstract in the breast, to build up, and if possible, to triumph in the kind of life indicated above, without industry, talent, enterprise, or care, on the ruins of humanity—regardless of the pains, toils, and sorrows that they may create for the slaves. Hence, the Apostle adds, "*lust*, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin." And there is no rea-

son to be surprised at what follows: "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death;" and this is the continuous train and sure result of slavery in ten thousand complicated and aggravated forms.

Another utterance of an apostle, perfectly appropriate and conclusive in this matter, we should do injustice to the subject by failing to recite: "If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the *ungodly* and the *sinner* appear? 1 Peter iv. 18. Both the characters under consideration, the *abstract* sinner and the open practical *flagitious* transgressor, very common characters, are here brought close together, and God's feelings towards them, respectively, are clearly manifested; and the exhibition affords decisive evidence that he regards *both alike*. *Ungodly* is translated from the Greek word *asebæs*. This is derived from *a*, *ncn*, not, *sebo*, *colo*, worship. Here the element of impiety is traced back, as far as possible, to abstraction in the heart. The corruption and guilt of the ungodly man are described negatively. He is ungodly, not reconciled to God, no worshipper, has neither fear nor reverence for the divine majesty, pays him no homage; cherishes a silent, secret, sullen, obstinacy in his indifference and neglect. The term *sinner* comes from the Greek word *amartolos*, which imports a practical, bold, rash, mature transgressor, one far advanced in the artifices, habits, and fearless outbreaks of iniquity. In him the element of sin or depravity has burst over all bounds of timidity and discretion, so that he sits in the seat of the scornful, becomes a pattern and leader in iniquity. The Apostle's eloquent appeal, "where shall the *ungodly* and the *sinner* appear," makes no distinction between these characters. The comparative decency and good order of the one, gives him no shelter, and the audacious wickedness of the other, secures to him no pre-eminence in condemnation: they are both driven away, under every token of wrath, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. Hence we must be permitted to repudiate entirely the wretched business of slaveholding, in every aspect or grade of it, and to pronounce every effort at *abstraction* utterly futile and unavailing. The internal princi-

ple of corruption is always bent towards evil; though covered and partially out of sight, it suffers no repose; and although restraints may prevent its immediate and unbridled action and the full disclosure of its *worst features*, in some instances confine and repress its aspirations and struggles within the breast, yet they cannot form for it complete concealment or satisfactory apology. Indeed depraved and lurking passions, pent up in the mind like damaged goods “unopened to the air,” become more corrupt, mould and send forth a stench and infection noxious as moral death, and ultimately exhibit a more aggravated wickedness and blacker guilt than active life ever presents to view. So the passion for slaveholding, when it has not found means or space to walk abroad in all its living and glaring habiliments of deformity, is like an insidious lion in pursuit of prey, crouching for concealment behind some hedge or hillock, that he may with more certainty make his desperate leap upon his innocent and unsuspecting victim.

CHAPTER XIV.

An examination of the Princeton writer's *definition* of slavery—its *three* comprehensive features—import of the first—natural rights, etc.—Opinions of others stated.

HE tells us that “all the ideas which necessarily enter into the definition of slavery are, *deprivation of personal liberty, obligation of service at the discretion of another, and the transferable character of the authority and claim of service of the master.*”—p. 291. As this must be viewed as a summary surrender of the whole argument and subject, we are pleased to find a substantial repetition of this definition on page 299: “We have already remarked, that slavery, *in itself considered*, is a *state of bondage*, and *nothing more*. It is

the condition of an individual who is deprived of his personal liberty, and is obliged to labor for another, who has the right of transfer of the claim of service at pleasure." The intelligent reader will of course perceive that this grant covers three important points—*liberty despoiled, labor enforced, and sale or transfer of person and service at perfect caprice*. Here the worst forms of chattelism, according to the writer's views, are fully exhibited. Although his admission does not show fully the practical deformity and odiousness of this vicious system in general, it presents *three* of its most decisive and repulsive features, which deserve some careful examination.

And I. *Privation of personal liberty.*

Liberty designates the natural and divinely constituted condition of all human creatures. And heretofore it has been common, when we wished to picture a man as in the most exalted and eligible state, to say he is *free*; therefore he is independent, and hence he is happy; but in describing and vindicating the slave system, this writer presents the *loss* of personal liberty as the slave's peculiar trait or characteristic. He could not do otherwise. Slavery is an essential feature of the system and the prolific parent of all its thousands of mischiefs. The apostle to the Hebrews testifies, that "God made man a little lower than the angels, crowned him with glory and honor," and as the highest mark of his dignity, "set him over the works of his hands." But how fallen! Deprive men of their liberty, their distinguishing and crowning glory, and you degrade them at once to a level with the brutes. His liberty once snatched away, all else that was noble and endearing suffers an eclipse—makes its escape. In common with all others of the human race, the negro derived his dignity and happiness from the possession and consciousness of freedom. This secured to colored men, as well as others, the privilege of improving their faculties, the supremacy and independence of reason and conscience. Their influence in society, their enterprise and success in every vocation, their hopes and happiness, are derived from and based upon their liberty. In this pre-eminently, as con-

nected with reason and kindred faculties, consists man's resemblance to his maker. Here centers the full power of the creator's right to man and to his homage. In its governing influence, liberty reaches both his bodily and his mental powers to improve and elevate. Upon the sacred basis of man's freedom of choice and action stands his accountableness and obligation to God. Indeed *liberty* seems to constitute the *whole of man*. The depression of African intellect in a state of bondage was noticed by Homer in the following couplet:

“For half his senses Jove conveys away
Whom once he dooms to see the servile day.”

Slavery is made light of by some, as the loss of liberty appears, at first view, to possess only a negative influence, but when more closely examined, it is seen to operate with a positive crushing power. Usurpation, infliction, oppression, and multifarious sufferings necessarily compose its essence. And while slavery rudely and violently assails man, and strips him of all that he holds most dear, it directly and offensively invades the most high and sacred province of God's rights and authority over his human offspring. It rudely enters, as a disturbing element, into his well ordered and peaceful kingdom, with all its deranging influences, physical and moral, political and social. And the sum of its aggressions consists of an arbitrary seizure founded on an unrighteous and unprovoked usurpation, placing an iron framework around the souls and bodies of all its miserable subjects, debarring them from the attainment of all proper earthly benefits, converting them into machines of selfish aggrandisement, and practically denying to them the privilege of free access to God through the appointed channels of heavenly mercy; and so, in effect, cutting them off from the enjoyments of this life and from the hope of heaven.

To favor the pro-slavery theory, the Repertory gives us some quite novel ideas respecting the rights of men, in which we think he has adopted a very erroneous view of the subject. He asserts “that the condition of slavery,”

which he delineates, (p. 299) “involves the loss of many of the rights which are commonly called natural, because belonging to men as men.” This he need not to have asserted, as it is obvious that slavery, within its grasp, leaves no right to man. He then intimates that he thinks it “not criminal, under all circumstances, to *deprive* any set of men of a portion of their *natural rights*.” This is a delusive insinuation, intended evidently to sustain his favorite policy of slavemaking and slaveholding, both of which he advocates, and which, indeed, leave their victims no rights, nothing but mere nominal existence, and that in a debased, servile, and forlorn condition.

Our author seems very prolific in sentiments dangerous to human freedom. Of this character is the declaration, “that the right of personal liberty is conditioned by the ability to exercise beneficially that right.” This opinion strips the weaker portion of men, the ordinary classes of society, of their just claim to freedom, and invests the stronger party with all right to tyrannize when they possess the power; that is, as we have said before, “it makes *right* consist in *might*,” which is a perfect inversion and prostration of all sound principle in both philosophy and politics. This sentiment has been the *primum mobile* and triumphant incentive to all the bloody, despotic, and revolutionary violence by which the earth has ever been laid waste. The writer, in his progress laying aside all reserve, gives us the broad sweeping declaration, that “*the very constitution of society supposes the forfeiture of a greater or less amount of these rights, according to its peculiar organization.*” His object, in this, is to create a belief that these natural rights of men have nothing in them equitable, stable, or essential, to fritter them away to nothing, as fictitious perishable things which may be set aside or abolished at pleasure. If this were true, or admitted in argument, the first feature in his definition, *deprivation of liberty*, would be in some measure justified; the spoliation and subjugation of men, by *deprivation* and *bondage*, sale or barter, would, indeed, seem to be divested in great degree of their odiousness and guilt. But the truth is, there is nothing in the moral world, in

mind, or in man by nature, more fixed, immutable, and sacred than *these* very rights. They constitute the man, as distinguished from the brute. It is the prime object of law to protect these rights from the commencement of society, and even in a state of nature they are to be held inviolate. They can be got clear of in only three ways—by *violence*, by *crime* which *creates* forfeiture, or by conventional *agreement*. The *first* is the pro-slavery man's preference, the last the creed of the enlightened politician and moralist. The suggestion of the Princeton writer is quite novel and peculiar, probably, to some new school—"the formation of society supposes the *forfeiture* of a greater or less amount of these rights." This is entirely contrary to fact.

Does this writer mean to assert that organized society is at first a constrained or coerced institution? that government is originally composed of *convicts* and *conscripts*, driven or forced together as a punishment for crime or an escape from prison? The affirmative of these questions seems clearly implied in the term *forfeiture*. Here we must ask again, as by the supposition there exists no government before one is formed, no umpire in a state of nature, no tribunal or judge, no method of testing public sentiment or graduating private character, no authority at all before society is constituted, to whom is this *forfeiture* made? Who have examined into the character and evidence of the crime alleged? By what standard or law was the investigation conducted, the forfeiture graduated, and the sentence pronounced? It is evident that the idea of *forfeiture*, as here applied, is founded in an entire misconception of the whole subject. If the writer had consulted Montesquieu, Vattel, or Ferguson, he might have learned that the first formation of society or government, in the ordinary course of human things, is a perfectly *free* and *voluntary* process. When men in a *state of nature* find difficulties occurring in their necessary business and intercourse, in the exercise of their mutual natural rights and obligations in regard to person and property, feel the want of a rule, a restraining and governing power, they come together in a sovereign, free, and independent manner, and ascertain,

define, and establish, not by forfeiture or as a penalty for crime, but by voluntary agreement, certain principles, modes, and forms, which they generally call a *constitution*, *article*, or *compact*, for their future direction and government. In this voluntary arrangement, they mutually and reciprocally agree and engage to and with each other to surrender, give up, and commit to the newly framed organization at discretion, in common with others, a certain defined portion of their natural rights, to obtain, by charter or constitution, a more definite and complete security for their remaining or reserved rights. Government is therefore, in fact, manifestly and necessarily a free, independent, and voluntary compromise. But surely, in these proceedings, there is no crime, no guilt, no *forfeiture* or penal infliction, but everything of a contrary character—perfect freedom, sovereignty, and independence.

That the intelligent and voluntary consent of the people forms the only legitimate foundation for government and society where there is no violence or anarchy, is a truth so fully understood and established, that no argument is needed now to prove it. It has been recognised under all forms of free government, among tribes comparatively rude, as well as by those more civilized. That the voice of the popular majority should prevail, is a principle long since introduced and observed. But this was the result of a conventional agreement or the consent of the people freely expressed. These facts are fully illustrated in the early as well as later transactions of many of the Grecian states. Their *Archons*, their various civil magistrates, both in Greece and Rome, were elected, and their political powers and forms defined and established, by the free and sovereign act of the people. In these measures there was no *forfeiture*, no crime, no compulsion, no violation or prostration of natural rights and privileges. All civilized government and society are, therefore, a conventional agreement or contract between the compact formed and the people collectively and individually freely framing it, not under coerced and compulsory restriction and privation or power, but in the exercise of voluntary choice and perfect liberty.

The following opinions of some of the great masters of thought and language, expositors of *right* and independence in our own as well as in other countries, are particularly worthy of attention.

Blackstone says—"The primary aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those *absolute rights* which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature. Hence it follows that the first and primary end of human laws is to *maintain* those *absolute rights* of individuals."

Fortescue says—"Those rights which God and nature have established, and which are therefore called natural rights, such as *life and liberty*, need not the aid of human laws to be more effectually invested in every man than they are. Neither do they receive any additional strength when declared by the municipal laws to be inviolable; on the contrary, *no human power* has any *authority* to *abridge* or *destroy* them, unless the owner himself shall commit some act that amounts to a forfeiture."

Again, he adds—"The law, therefore, which supports slavery and opposes liberty must necessarily be condemned as cruel, for every feeling of human nature advocates liberty. *Slavery is introduced by human wickedness*, but God advocates liberty by *the nature which he has given to man*."

Beattie, of Scotland, says—"Slavery is inconsistent with the dearest and most essential rights of man's nature; it is detrimental to virtue and industry; it hardens the heart to those tender sympathies which form the most lovely part of the human character; it involves the innocent in hopeless misery, in order to procure wealth and pleasure for the authors of that misery; it seeks to degrade into brutes beings whom the Lord of heaven and earth endowed with rational souls and created for immortality. In short, it is utterly repugnant to every principle of reason, religion, humanity, and conscience."

Grotius declares—"Those men are stealers who abduct, keep, sell, or buy slaves or freemen. To steal a man is the highest kind of theft."

The great Reformer teaches that "unjust violence is by

no means the ordinance of God, and therefore can bind no one in conscience and right to obey, whether the command comes from pope, emperor, king, or master."

The voice of Patrick Henry: "Is it not a little surprising that the professors of christianity, whose chief excellence consists in softening the human heart, in cherishing and improving its finer feelings, should encourage a practice so totally repugnant to the first impressions of right and wrong? What adds to the wonder is, that this abominable practice has been introduced in the most enlightened ages: times that seem to have pretensions to boast of high improvements in the arts and sciences and refined morality have brought into general use, and guarded by many laws, a species of violence and tyranny which our rude and barbarous, but more honest ancestors detested. Is it not amazing that at a time when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision in a country above all others fond of liberty, that in such an age and in such a country we find men professing a religion the most mild, humane, gentle, and generous, adopting such a principle as is repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible and destructive to liberty? Every thinking honest man rejects it * * * * *."

If these views of the writer's *first feature* of slavery, *i. e. privation of liberty*, be correct, every candid reader must see and admit that it is a great sin against God and man.

CHAPTER XV.

The *second feature* of his definition considered—"the slave's obligation of *service at the discretion* of another," etc.

ON this point, we shall differ *toto cælo* from the writer, where he says, that "slavery is a state of *bondage, and nothing more*. A life of *uncompensated toil* he makes an insig-

nificant trifle. We think it is a monstrous item in the list of evils. He has himself admitted that it is a great sin.

This second *feature*, when fairly viewed, exhibits quite as decided injustice and wrong inflicted upon the slave as can be found anywhere else. It consists in the slave's "obligation of service at the discretion of another." It is afterwards described in terms somewhat different—"being *obliged* to labor for another." The idea that the slave, after being violently robbed of his liberty, is *obligated* to labor *for another, at his discretion*, is an entire fiction, an assumption. The terms imply the absence of all equitable compensation; and what obligation is any slave under to labor in this manner?

Several of the leading philosophical or political principles which should govern the enterprise of this world are laid down in the Gospel. "If a man would not work, neither should he eat." This is intended to teach that industry in some useful occupation is a law of God. In view of this, the Jews have a proverb, "that every man who brings up a child without the knowledge of some useful art or occupation makes him, necessarily, a thief or a robber." Diligence and activity are designed by God to form a governing rule for human life for individual benefit. Another point, in immediate connection, is as clearly settled in the divine statute book—"the laborer is worthy of his hire." Slavery is violently hostile to both. These precepts are maxims of law and political economy established in the code of Christ's kingdom.

The condition of the human family, in its origin and following stages, exhibits various talents, powers, and capacities in different degrees of maturity and productiveness—all, when in appropriate action, conducive to individual and general benefit. These talents, of every species, are entitled to a just *pro rata* share of the aggregate amount of production. The population of the world forms a large and growing business *company* always open. Their stock, or capital, consists of land, lumber, water, mines, precious metals, quarries, goods and chattels, mental skill, mechanical knowledge, bodily powers, etc. These last may be con-

sidered as connected more particularly with the general head of *labor*. The gospel rule is, that the "laborer is worthy of his hire:" labor is justly entitled to equitable compensation. The same divine authority which ordained the law, demands its fulfilment; it pronounces a default here a *crime* and *offence*. "Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by *fraud*, *crieth*: and the cries of them which have *reaped* have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." James v. 4—"behold the judge standeth before the door," verse 9. This organic law of God's kingdom, in the beginning, was given to men as a rule of action. The Creator had previously granted the earth to man, as a wild, rude, and indefinite field of industry, accompanying the gift with an injunction to occupy it, subdue it, make it fruitful and ornamental, subservient to their comfort and to his glory. In connection with the motives and ends presented, God loaned to men the organs and facilities necessary to execute the boundless enterprise. *Labor* here becomes a very distinguished and important endowment or possession, an integral part in the great capital created, the stock invested, and the power to be employed. It is more especially the capital of the poor. It is in reality more productive and more honorable than any other branch of human capital. Its efficiency depends very much upon the cultivation of the mind and combination of its improvements with muscular and bodily power. But, in its simplest and rudest form, it is the bone and sinew of life, the great prolific producer, the instrument of both sustentation and emolument. Hence the great Creator, owner, and lawgiver, has provided, in a positive and special manner, for the laboring man; and a neglect of the laborer's claims is a violation of the whole admirably adjusted system of God—a fact which the Princeton writer seems to know very well. "If any set of men have servants, *bond* or *free*, to whom they refuse a proper compensation for their labor, they violate a moral duty and an express command of Scripture."—p. 303. This passage, alone, is sufficient to show that slavery is a sin against both God and man, in the very face of the writer and of his frequent assertions to the contrary.

These remarks bring the fundamental and essential aspects of slavery fully into view. No truth is more fully proved by indisputable facts and long continued observation, than that *slaveholders* themselves, in their persons and families, repudiate labor. They eat and live, but do not work. They pronounce labor, of any and every kind, not only burdensome and disgusting to themselves individually, as a superior privileged class or order, but vulgar in itself, disgraceful to free white men, and inconsistent with refined society, not entitled to any return or compensation, but mere life. Hence they roll over upon their slaves all the drudgery, the hard labor, the low servility, which they may think necessary. The free men located between the slave plantations are frowned upon, crushed into insignificance, and sometimes driven from their homes, because they neither approve of slavery, nor participate in it, but would rather obey the laws of God, and labor for themselves. The slave power and domination have created a tyrannical and oppressive public sentiment, hostile to free labor and free men. Thus the most laborious and exhausting service of the southern country has been performed through the last century by the slaves. These degraded and down-trodden subjects of arbitrary power have created for their owners, by the sweat of their brow, and millions by the sacrifice of their lives, princely fortunes, large annual incomes, the means of immense prodigality. Their only share in this vast production of their toil is the *minimum* allowance to sustain life and prolong their season of labor, which is for the most part a miserable existence.

But we have no desire to particularize any farther than to make this subject fully apparent. Here, then, has been applied an amazing, an utterly incalculable amount of slave labor, entirely unprofitable to the working man. The writer, in his definition, calls it "service at the discretion of another." Again he admits the slaves work, "being obliged to labor for another." It is, then, *coerced* compulsory labor; there is nothing free or voluntary in it; it is, through its whole progress, the result of force. The slaves were brought into this manacled condition, as will be seen

by tracing the process to its origin, by robbery or stealthful and piratical rapacity; they are held and ground down, from age to age, in this state of compulsory toil, by arbitrary power against right. And they have not only lost their freedom, but the wages due to them. The just earnings of their toil have never been recognised, much less compensated. And after a full survey of all these undisputed facts, this writer repeatedly asserts that slavery is *no crime, no sin!* And yet he tells us, in another place, that withholding compensation is a corrupt and criminal thing—thus condemning this very feature of his *definition* of slavery in strong terms. Now, from actual inquiry and investigation, the last census reports nearly *three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders* of this character in the United States, besides an almost countless number of a smaller grade, and, notwithstanding, our Princeton writer repeats and repeats—there is no sin, no *malum* in slavery!

No matter how these nominal owners obtained their alleged right to these slaves or working men, they are enormous debtors to them for their service by the laws of God. These wages are withheld by fraud. The owners may take refuge and seek excuse under civil law, the right of purchase, or of inheritance. But these are fabricated, forged, and futile grounds on which to base such a claim, when God interposes in behalf of the laborers, and announces his sacred right. All secondary and minor devices, bargains, or contracts, decisions and enactments, on earth are at once vitiated and rendered void in the high chancery of Heaven. What are civil or political states, speculators, politicians, slaveowners, but parties, in this relation, to piracy? They are less than figures on a chess-board, set up to play their transient game, playthings of an hour, in the hands of God. Can they, in all their protracted machinations and combined force, shake the stability of God's law? Whatever spoliations, defaults, or frauds they may commit against God, there is no variation nor *shadow of turning with him*.

The Princeton writer, with great apparent solemnity, asks *what is right?* He invites us from earth's fallible court-rooms to the bar of Heaven.—p. 287. We accept his appeal.

He says—"we recognise no authoritative rule of truth and duty but the word of God." But it seems that he is unwilling to obey that word of God when he finds it, although he admits its authority. In the account of God, from his own record, it appears that the immense unliquidated wages due for slave labor of past ages "*kept back by fraud now crieth*, and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Here every honest and candid inquirer cannot fail to find *crime against man and sin against God*. It seems worse than trifling for any man, in view of these things, obstinately to persist in crying no *sin*, no *crime*, no *malum in se*!

But the writer before us cannot be permitted to say that slavery, which according to him existed in its widest extent and *worst forms* through the Roman empire, was passed by almost unnoticed by Christ and *his apostles*. The epistles of all the apostles bear very nearly the same date. And a heavier denunciation than this, of the apostle James, addressed to Christians and others scattered abroad through the empire, could not have been couched in human language. Had Paul and Peter, James and John, thundered to the utmost against the corruption and guilt of slavery in general, their peals would have fallen unheeded to the ground; but when one of them anathematized the *fraud* and *guilt* of slaveholders, for *keeping back* the *wages due* to their *slaves*, it could not fail to produce a deep sensation; because it touched the *interests*, the most *sensitive* points of most slaveholders, and at the same time manifests God's awful displeasure towards all defaulters for the violation of his sacred laws and resistance of his claims, their indifference and injustice to oppressed and injured slaves.

CHAPTER XVI.

The *third feature* of the Repertory's definition of slavery considered—the transferable character of the master's claim, etc.—its tendency to encourage the slave trade.

THE third feature consists in the "*transferable character of the authority and claim of service of the master.*"

To transfer may be regarded as a business or legal term, and means to sell, set over, convey, by contract, bill, or assignment, any article or thing that is disposable. Anything that exists and possesses adaptation to or connection with human interests and comfort, so as to present the idea of worth or utility in any way, is property in law, in fact, in common sense and usage. In this writer's schedule of rights in the slave system, he here in the third feature enumerates specifically two items: 1, *authority*; 2, *claim of service*—and these he makes articles of merchandise.

1. By authority, must be understood right to own, to possess, and to control. However this right is obtained, it is a very important item in the slaveholding business. As the slaves are not unfrequently indolent, idle, refractory, and even vicious, requiring, as the writer's language implies, "to be *obliged* to labor for another," compelled "to work at the discretion of another," this authority is exercised forcibly, without consulting the will or pleasure of the slaves, at the mere arbitrary suggestion or impulse of the owner.

2. The second item in the catalogue of chattelism is, "the claim of service of the master," with the right of transfer or *sale*. Here appears to be another attempt at abstraction. The whole of slavery is represented as a *claim*. The repulsive life, condition, and toil of the slaves are as gently passed over as possible—left as far as can be out of view. It is only the "*claim of service of the master*" that constitutes slavery. But what is service worth that is not performed? What is a claim worth, if it cannot be realized? What is power or alleged right, if it cannot be enforced?

These slaves who are to be ordered and driven about like mules and cattle, compelled by "authority to work" at the discretion of the master, by any means he may choose to employ, have bodies that must be produced, arms, legs, muscles, sinews, and, perhaps, some old fashioned reason, that must be brought into subjection. The writer attempts, in one place, to make the appearance of intelligence in slaves a reason why they must not be considered *property*. There is something humane in that. But he maintains, in opposition to this, that slaves are *saleable*, subject to attachment or seizure for *debt*, and disposable by *will* as any other property, besides being compelled to work. The truth is, in the slave market and on the plantation, the greater the degree of intelligence manifested by the slave, the greater is his estimated value and the higher his price.

The writer proceeds to inform us that this "claim of service; this right of possession and use; this authority and transfer; this liability for debt," etc., are merely technicalities designed to facilitate certain legal forms. They are of course only abstract ideas, not tangible and valid, but mere *superficialities*, conveniences to carry on the business processes and contingencies of the slaveholding business, at the option of the owner, and under his authority. But surely it is vain to argue against a notorious fact, known to all men, that slaves are *bona fide* property. They constitute, by way of pre-eminence, the special, the almost exclusive property of the slave states. They are worth more, in many instances, than the soil they occupy. The great plantations of the southern states are frequently valued by the number of slaves, of colored faces of work-hands upon them. They are lawful and visible signs of property, convertible at pleasure almost as soon as bank bills, when the price is fair; and while cotton and southern produce in general continued high in the market, they were proclaimed as the greatest producers, the best stock in the country. The expansion of slave soil, or expectation of it, has produced an augmentation in their value from fifty to one hundred *per centum*. The writer's definition, if admitted, would be used as a screen for the slave trade, through all its

bloody career. The features this writer assigns as the privileged and justifying basis of the slaveholding process, and which he pronounces little or nothing, are sufficient to warrant the *piratical slave traffic* on the coast of Africa, in any slave field or slave market in the world. Any man may innocently become a pirate or slave trader, if the specifications or admissions contained in this definition are admitted and acknowledged as harmless and innocent. Here is the definition—let us look at it again: “*All the ideas which necessarily enter into the definition of slavery are, deprivation of personal liberty, obligation of service at the discretion of another, and the transferable character of the authority and claim of service of the master.*”—p. 291. And, it is with this definition in full view, this writer exclaims repeatedly—no *sin*, no *crime*!

A few remarks will show that this definition of slavery, or slaveholding, sanctions the essential features of the whole *slave trade*.

The first necessary feature which he admits as natural, and essential to the type of slavery which he is here vindicating, consists in *deprivation of personal liberty*. The terms are general, and of course any means preferred may be employed to secure the desired object—*capture, purchase, or barter*. The next item in his system of slavery consists in *obliging*, which is compelling the slaves, so *deprived of liberty* or subjected to authority, *to work at the discretion of another*. And the *third feature*, which is the right of *sale* and of purchase, for if one may sell, another may *buy*, completes the deformity and heinousness of this cruel business. After reading these admissions and statements, scarcely any one would suppose that they are from the pen of the same writer, who in another part of his essay asks, after in imagination trying to remove out of sight some of the common abuses and cruelties of slavery, “how little remains?” We think the framework of this colossal fabric of iniquity, here portrayed by himself, rises mountain high, stretching out before heaven and earth most ghastly features! For nothing is more notorious than the fact, that slaves have always been obtained on the African coast, and other regions, in some one or all of the modes here intimated.

The first step of the *slavers*, in making up their cargoes on the *coast*, is to capture *idlers* and vagrants along the shore, or to seize them by violence; to purchase them, nominally for a bauble, where they are held as prisoners of war; to obtain them from their parents or pretended owners; to watch around the villages and dwellings nearest the sea, and catch the unsuspecting by stealth; and, as a last and frequent resort, to invade the settlements and make captives promiscuously of all they meet, often setting their towns and houses on fire to frighten the natives and make them run out to escape the flames, and so, in their wild and rapid flight, become an easy prey to their pursuers. These inhuman manstealers, to deprive their wretched captives of their personal liberty, which the Repertory of course considers a fair business, hurry them away to the *slave ships* in waiting for them, chain them down in their hulls, there to perish in the *middle passage*, or if they survive the agonizing transportation trip, to be sold in the West Indies, in North or South America, or in any other open market in the world. The purchasers from the *slaver* may use these miserable *victims*, thus obtained, and compel them to labor till worn out and of little value, till an opportunity occurs for obtaining a larger or the original price, when they are sold into another, perhaps a more miserable field of service, to linger out their wretched lives in another foreign clime. This definition, if carried out in its details, embraces all that is realized or implied in the *slave trade*, in *slaveholding*, or in *slavery*, as it is now generally existing or in practice in the world. *Deprivation of liberty, compulsory labor, and sale at discretion*—these are the three cardinal features of slavery in its *worst forms*.

But, perhaps, we ought to strike out the last two in order, because the writer says they are *nothing*. On these points, his unfortunate collision with himself cannot escape the reader's observation. He says "slavery is a state of *bondage*, and *nothing more*." Then a life of uncompensated labor is *nothing*. But he has before said—"If any set of men have servants, *bond or free*, to whom they refuse a proper compensation for their labor, they violate a moral duty

and an express command of Scripture.”—p. 281. But by this time such offences, with which the slave countries are filled, have become *nothing*. On a former page he tells us, that the Gospel “condemns all infractions of marital and parental rights.”—p. 300. But now the right claimed, and the practice kept up, of tearing families of slaves violently asunder, separating husbands and wives, parents and children, and selling them in any open market, this writer calls *nothing*!

This definition, fully authorizing the slave trade, brings its author into direct conflict, not only with the Bible, which forbids *manstealing*, but with the declarations and decrees of the noblest nations upon earth, who pronounced the *slave trade* to be *piracy*, and prohibited it solemnly, within their respective realms, under *penalty of death*. Such appears to be the natural and just import of this writer’s language. He pronounces the features which constitute the very essence of slaveholding and of *piracy* matters of very little moment—*no sin, no crime!* even when enslaving and destroying the human race in the full tide of power and success; but *France, Great Britain, and the United States*, with other independent nations, have denounced the same as piracy worthy of death.

CHAPTER XVII.

Extracts from the constitutions of South Carolina and Louisiana, and especially from the Presbyterian church records.—Dr. Breckenridge’s remarks.—The testimony of former Assemblies stated and explained.—Views respecting the abolition system.

THE law of South Carolina defines slavery in the following terms:

“Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, and reputed and adjudged *in law*, to be *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators,

and assigns, to *all intents, constructions, and purposes whatever.*"

The law of Louisiana runs thus :

"A slave is one who is in the power of his master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his industry and his labor: he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to his master."

These extracts exhibit slavery as it exists in the statute books of two slave states, selected at random. A slight examination will show any one that the Princeton writer's definition of slavery corresponds substantially with the southern state records, as far as they go.

The following extract from a speech of Rev. Dr. Robert J. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, will furnish a brief practical view of the system of slavery, as it generally appears and operates through the slave region. We admit that the evils here pointed out have been in some measure mitigated in districts where moral and religious improvements have been permitted to enter and produce some partial effect.

Dr. Breckenridge asks—"What then is slavery? for the question relates to the action of certain principles on it and to its probable and proper results: what is slavery as it exists among us?" We reply, it is that condition enforced by the laws of one half of the states of this confederacy, in which one portion of the community, called masters, is allowed such power over another portion, called slaves—

"1. To *deprive* them of the entire *earnings* of their own labor, except only so much as is necessary to continue labor itself by continuing healthful existence, *thus committing clear robbery.*

"2. To reduce them to the necessity of *universal concubinage*, by denying to them the *civil rights of marriage*, thus breaking up the dearest relations of life and encouraging *universal prostitution.*

"3. To deprive them of the means and opportunities of intellectual and moral culture in many states, making it a high penal offence to teach them to read; thus perpetuating whatever of evil there is that proceeds from *ignorance.*

“4. To set up between parents and their children an authority higher than the impulse of nature and the law of God, which breaks up the authority of the father over his own offspring, and, at pleasure, separates the mother to a returnless distance from her child: thus abrogating the clearest laws of nature; thus outraging all decency and justice, and degrading and oppressing thousands upon thousands of human beings, created, like themselves, in the image of the most high God. This is slavery as it is daily exhibited *in every slave state.*”

This description of the practical nature and operation of slavery is from a distinguished son of Kentucky, a prominent slave field in time past. It furnishes an appropriate and powerful comment upon the Princeton definition, which itself, however, when traced to its elementary principles and results, will appear to be sufficiently shocking without comment.

The Princeton essayist informs us, that many religious bodies have spoken upon this subject, and we may add, in language decidedly opposed to the views which he has presented. Indeed it cannot be too much regretted that he did not examine and ponder seriously the declarations of some of them before he wrote, and particularly those of the *Presbyterian church*, which have been frequently published in the minutes of their General Assembly, from its first establishment, and in 1818, in their Digest, “compiled from their records,” to exhibit their true character and to exert a salutary influence among the members of this large and growing denomination of christians. This point derives great importance from the fact, that the Repertory is extensively considered as the index of the theological and moral sentiments of the Presbyterian church in these United States. And it may be justly submitted, as an interesting question, how far the essay or review, here referred to, correctly expresses the sentiments almost universally prevalent through the Presbyterian body.

As this volume, on its title page, indicates an intention in the publishers to send it abroad to a foreign market, it may be properly inquired, whether this article gives a just

and candid exhibition of the principles entertained by the Presbyterian church on the interesting subject of slavery. We are far from believing that it does. To enable its readers to decide this point, we shall assist the church to speak for herself, by inserting some extracts from her minutes.

An opinion of the General Assembly, given in the way of business, A. D. 1818, is here presented, as a fair exhibition of Presbyterian sentiment on this subject.

“The committee to which was referred the resolution on the subject of *selling a slave*, a member of the church, etc.

“The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, having taken into consideration the subject of *slavery*, think proper to make known *their sentiments* upon it to the churches and people under their care.

“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 upon 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.

“From this view of the consequences resulting from the practice into which christian people have most inconsistently fallen, of enslaving a portion of their brethren of mankind, for ‘God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth,’ 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 their honest, earnest, and 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 if possible, throughout the world.

“We rejoice that the church to which we belong commenced, as early as any other in this country, the good work of endeavoring to put an end to slavery, and that in the same work many of its members have ever since been, and now are among the most active, vigorous, and efficient laborers. *We do, indeed, tenderly sympathize with that portion of our church and our country where the evil of slavery has been entailed upon them*; where a great and the most virtuous part of the community *abhor slavery*, and wish its extermination as sincerely as any others; but where the number of slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally render an immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent alike with the safety and happiness of the master and the slave. With those who are thus *circumstanced*, we repeat that we tenderly sympathize. At the same time we earnestly exhort them to continue, and if possible to increase, their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern than a

regard to the public welfare *truly* and *indispensably* demands.

“As our country has inflicted a most grievous injury on the unhappy Africans, by bringing them into slavery, we cannot, indeed, urge that we should add a second injury to the first, by emancipating them in such manner as that they will be likely to destroy themselves or others. But we do think that our country ought to be governed in this matter by no other consideration than an honest and impartial regard to the happiness of the injured party, uninfluenced by the expense or inconvenience which such a regard may involve. We therefore *warn* all who belong to our denomination of christians *against unduly extending this plea of necessity*, against making it a *cover* for the *love and practice of slavery*, or a *pretence* for not using efforts that are lawful and practicable to extinguish the evil.

“We recommend to all our people to patronise and encourage the society lately formed for colonizing in Africa, the land of their *ancestors*, the free people of color in our country. We hope that much good may result from the plans and efforts of this society; and while we exceedingly rejoice to have witnessed its origin and organization among the *holders of slaves*, as giving an unequivocal pledge of their desire to deliver themselves and their country from the calamity of slavery, we hope that those portions of the American union, whose inhabitants are by a gracious Providence more favorably circumstanced, will cordially and liberally and earnestly co-operate with their brethren in bringing about the great end contemplated.”—*Digest*, p. 339.

In these plain and unequivocal declarations of the General Assembly, it is perfectly manifest that they considered slavery a positive *malum in se* of the very worst character. Let the reader particularly observe the following words in the minutes of 1818: “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*, and as totally *irreconcilable* with the *spirit and principles* of the Gos-

pel of Christ." If these words do not most positively denounce slavery as a *malum in se*, a depraved, mischievous and guilty thing in its own nature, then words cannot be found in the English language so to denounce and condemn it. But the Assembly's declaration goes on to designate and particularize a long catalogue of evils, oppressions, and sufferings unavoidably proceeding from slavery—consequences, they say, not imaginary, but which connect themselves *with its very existence*; and in the supposition they make, "that cases may occur in which, through the influence of humanity and religion, all the evils they have recited do not take place, still the *crime and guilt of slavery remain*; still the slave is deprived of his *natural right*, degraded as a human being, exposed * * * * * to all the *hardships and injuries* which inhumanity and avarice may suggest. Whatever superficial mitigations may appear, *slavery still exists*, God's law is violated, and the precious rights of man are outraged."

Here it seems proper to attempt a correction of the Philadelphia writer, where he appears to have put a wrong construction upon an important part of the Assembly's testimony in 1818, as transcribed above. This is the passage: "We do indeed tenderly sympathize with those portions of our church and of our country where the *evil* of slavery has been *entailed*; where a great and the most virtuous part of the community *abhor slavery*, and wish its extermination as sincerely as any others; but where the number of slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally, render an immediate and universal emancipation *inconsistent* alike with the safety and happiness of the master and slave. With those who are thus *circumstanced*, we repeat, that we tenderly sympathize." In regard to this passage, the writer referred to says: "Here it will be seen the doctrine of our Assembly is, that *circumstances* control the *continuance* of slavery." Here the circumstances referred to are particularly stated: "the number of the slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally, making their immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent alike with the safety and happiness of the master and slave."

These are the real shocking and insurmountable circumstances which then *controlled the continuance of slavery*, and do so still in these United States. But instead of diminishing its guilt and enormity, they constituted then, and do now, the strongest features of its aggravation. But what, the writer adds, does not proceed from what the Assembly has said or derive any support from it. "This relation (slavery) is *justifiable*, or otherwise, according as the happiness of the master and slave and the public welfare are promoted by it." Here a new topic is introduced. The former relates to the *continuance* of slavery, this to its *justification*—two objects as different as are light and darkness. *Some* circumstances, by a kind of compulsory violence, may control the *continuance* of slavery, but they do not detract from its criminality. This they increase rather than diminish by its *continuance*; its depravity and guilt remain the same, or rather are aggravated by the increasing ignorance and vice of the slaves. The language of the Assembly is far from conveying the idea, that continuing an evil, mitigates or lessens its demerit. It is the very *continuance entailed* and forced upon them, in great measure, that excites their *sympathy*.

The Assembly sympathize with those who are thus *compelled to suffer* under this evil, because it is enormous, intolerable; and hence they urge strongly the use of means and increased efforts for its speedy and entire removal from the earth. How would this most incongruous and unexpected interpretation from Philadelphia correspond with the tremendously striking and impressive *manifesto* of the Assembly of 1818, in all the foregoing as well as succeeding parts of this noble and splendid report? Could that writer have read the report in general, or only certain portions of it? He says it harmonizes with the declaration of 1845. Here is his mistake. This last Assembly refused to go the full extent in honestly and faithfully condemning slavery. Their real meaning is not easily discovered from their terms. The Assembly of 1845 say: "We cannot denounce the holding of slaves as *necessarily* a heinous and scandalous sin." Many reasons may have prompted this

form of expression aside from *sympathy* for slavery. This is a kind of negative declaration, which some circumstances in the condition of the church, or in the business before them, may have inclined them to adopt. But this is certain, referring back to the act of the Assembly of 1818, that “sympathy” for a company of transgressors, who are suffering under their crimes and guilt, does not imply any participation in either, or inclination to excuse or justify it.

We cannot allow the sentiments of our Philadelphia friend, on slavery, the character he courts and claims for them—*conservatism*. If nothing in the opinions themselves created a difficulty, his own candid confessions or inadvertent statements, on several points, have made this impossible. He does not, as he seems to suppose, tally at all with the *testimony* of the Assembly of 1818, which has always been regarded as a correct exhibition of the testimonies of all successive assemblies in the Presbyterian church since 1787, and is now considered our only orthodox standard on this subject.

This writer tells us, in all good conscience and correctness, “that *manstealing* is a *malum in se*, which can be justified by no circumstances whatever.” He is certainly right here. He is equally right in another corresponding declaration, which follows: “Slaveholding originated by the wickedness of *manstealing* and by a violation of the laws of God.” The moral character, *i. e.* the turpitude and guilt of slavery, are precisely the same in nature *now* as at the beginning. It was *manstealing*, he tells us, in its *origin*—it has been *manstealing*, substantially, in all its successive stages and phases, in spite of human art; and it will be *manstealing* till entirely extinguished in this world.

Our Philadelphia friend maintains that “slaveholding is included among things which are indifferent in morals—it is a relation that may be justified by circumstances.” These opinions, which differ a good deal in their nature, are so far from being conservative, they are truly heretical and dangerous. Assuming these tenets makes their author a pro-slavery man; because, in following them out to their legitimate result, this is unavoidably their stopping place.

Having said something on the subject of *circumstantial* slavery before, we shall say little here. We ask those who favor this scheme to look at this point. It is necessarily assumed that every individual is to judge of these justifying *circumstances* for himself. They can easily be made numerous and various enough to sanction the whole system of slavery. Men, in general, have not virtue sufficient to resist the temptation here presented. *Selfishness* can induce any man of lax principles and feeble conscience or moral sense to believe and profess, or pretend anything. Interest, indolence, ease, pleasure, old family or personal sympathies and attachments, can create a thousand circumstances and claims utterly irresistible in this relation.

We could easily refer to many instances to confirm these statements—to some even in New Jersey, but we shall recite only a single case, which occurred much farther south, furnished by this writer himself, from his own knowledge and his own magazine, directly to the point and decisive in this case.—“A distinguished slaveholder of the south, who owns several hundred slaves, and who is not a communicant in the church, after hearing an ultra pro-slavery sermon, came out of the house of God, expressing strong disapprobation of such sentiments; and stamping his foot on the ground, declared that he could not endure them. He added, that his only justification before God and the world for holding slaves was in the *necessity* of the case.” Thus, in various modes of operation, indifference, *necessity*, convenience, profit, circumstance, pretence, and pleas of a thousand varied and multiplied characters may be found, to any extent, to justify, not only the continuance of slavery, but in imagination, to remove its sinfulness and guilt. Hence slavery must be perpetuated while men are wicked and the world stands. To this miserable, deceptive, and unavailing process our Philadelphia friend sets no limit, and his Princeton colleague, more erroneous than himself, gives all his sanction in the following astonishing words: “Nothing can be more distinct than the right to hold slaves, in certain *circumstances*, and the *right to render slavery perpetual*.” Of course, nothing could be more monstrous

and absurd than to say, that such opinions and speculations are conservative. Nothing would be more gratifying than to find our respected friends worthy of such a distinction.

As the term *malum in se* is employed so frequently by pro-slavery writers, a few additional explanatory remarks may, perhaps, shed some light upon its true import.

In its origin, this phrase probably had a reference to an ancient division of moral law into two classes, namely, *moral-natural* and *moral-positive*, to which philosophers early attached great importance. But this point, when properly considered, will furnish no aid to the advocates of slavery in sustaining their views.

That class of the divine law which is distinguished as *moral-natural*, refers to those laws of God which are of such a nature, or cover such elementary subjective materials as, by their constitution and nature, proclaim the existence of a moral law binding upon the heart and conscience of men, without any express manifestation of the divine will respecting it. Thus it is indisputably the duty of intelligent rational creatures to venerate and love supreme excellence, to obey and honor God. Had the Supreme Being never legislated upon the subject of human obligation and allegiance to himself, the law of love—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," would have existed, by a necessity of its own nature, as arising out of the infinite perfection and excellence of God, as the Creator and moral governor of the universe. And, in the absence of a specific command to love and glorify God, where sufficient intelligence existed to discover this relation and duty, it would have been a *malum in se*, not so to love and serve God. And it could never be otherwise, without changing the nature of God and the nature and reason of things, between himself and his rational offspring.

The *moral-positive* laws of God derive their authority and force from the specific command of God and the manifestation of his will, without relying for their sanction and support upon the nature and reason of things, though they may receive increased light and energy from incidental influences. The institution of the sabbath is of this class—

“Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.” We believe, however, that there exist in nature, collateral reasons to assist in enforcing this law. So, also, the command or ordinance of marriage; although the constitution and order of nature favor this relation, yet it stands upon a positive command or appointment of God.

The eventful and memorable edict, found in God’s positive prohibition given to the first parents of our race, as to eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, is a striking exhibition of the moral-positive law of God. Now any violation, of any law comprised under either of these classes, is an evil and guilty thing, *a malum in se*, because it is an act of resistance or rebellion against the majesty of Heaven and against the declared will and law of God.

Transgressions, of God’s moral-positive enactments, are often as evil in his sight, and hence bring down as heavy a weight of divine wrath and ruin upon their perpetrators, as any other offences. The fruits of the earth were made to grow for the sustentation and comfort of men. The eating of an apple, in itself, is a very simple and a very harmless thing; yet Adam’s eating that fruit brought sin and guilt, death and woe, into the world, and spread them over the whole human family. Why was this? Simply because God declared, in his sovereign majesty and holiness—“of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.” In itself, Adam’s eating the apple was not evil. The evil consisted in disobeying the *moral-positive* command of God, producing the tremendous consequences which followed.

Slavery is of a mixed nature, and creates numerous violations of both departments of God’s law, that which is *moral-natural* and *moral-positive*. In its first act, it lays violent hands upon the radical principles of liberty, equality, and independence among men, so indispensable to their happiness. In its first inception, it prompts and authorizes one part of the human race to usurp dominion and exercise tyrannical power over another, to the entire suppression and extinguishment of all their *natural rights*. This is a direct and violent invasion of one of the most prominent, important, and most precious laws of God, for the protec-

tion, benefit, and happiness of man, founded in his nature and constitution.

But in its disorganizing influence, it pervades and mars a great part of God's moral kingdom. Thus it rends asunder the relations and ties existing between husband and wife, between parents and their children. It refuses *hire* to the laborers, it withholds light from those in darkness, and deliverance from those in moral death. Thus it paralyzes the influence of the Gospel over the servile mind, and prevents the fulfilment of God's design, by it, to enlighten, elevate, and bless them; thus, in countless instances, it deranges and frustrates the order of God's moral empire and his system of grace, in a long series laying waste the precepts, ordinances, and prohibitions of the Most High; thus, with a mathematical clearness and force, demonstrating that slavery is an evil of the greatest magnitude, a *malum in se* in the mildest case that can occur, the sinfulness and guilt of which cannot be annulled and set aside to suit the capricious *circumstances*, conveniences, interests, and pleasures or necessities of individuals or families. God does not sell himself, his laws and enactments, the stability, order, and peace of his kingdom, at so cheap a rate, or stoop so low to pander to human passion and selfishness.

The following sentiment, pronounced by the writer in the Repertory, appears unfortunate, for several reasons. "If slaveholding is a crime, slaveholders must be excluded from the church." This is a sentiment directly contrary to the practice and precepts of our Lord and his apostles. The writer might certainly have known, that while public opinion on the subject of slavery and the connection of slaveholders with the church continues so unsettled as at present, not only in the southern, but middle latitudes, any attempt to establish such an opinion or rule as he suggests, or system of church policy conformed to it, could not fail to produce almost universal dissatisfaction and painful agitation, without the least necessity or advantage. This opinion, so far as it has any influence, appears to invite the church into an intestinal commotion, from which it would be very difficult for her, after a long and sore conflict, to

escape uninjured. This is a course of action which the General Assembly have wisely and uniformly, through the whole period of her existence, endeavored to avoid, and in one instance, at least, which may be regarded as a fixed precedent, when it was forced upon her attention, she used the following language in disposing of the subject, A. D. 1815. "A serious and conscientious person, a member of a Presbyterian congregation, who views the slavery of the negroes as a moral evil, *highly offensive to God*, and injurious to the interests of the Gospel, lives under the ministry of a person, or amongst a society of people, who concur with him in sentiment on the subject in general principles, yet, for particular reasons, hold slaves, and tolerate the practice in others. Ought the former of these persons, under the impressions and circumstances above described, to hold christian communion with the latter?"

"Whereupon, after due deliberation, it was resolved, that as the same difference of opinion with respect to slavery takes place in sundry other parts of the Presbyterian church, notwithstanding which they live in peace and charity, *according to the doctrine and practice of the apostles*, it is hereby recommended to all conscientious persons, and especially to those whom it immediately respects, *to do the same.*"

Another opinion of the General Assembly—see *Digest*—"Since Christ and his apostles did not make *slaveholding* a bar to communion, we, as a court of Christ, have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate upon the subject."

It is very surprising, and much to be regretted, that a journal acting under the highest responsibility, from its location and connection, should permit any writer to exhibit on its pages such pro-slavery articles as directly assail the declarations of the General Assembly, which are so eloquent and positive in condemning the evil system of slavery, and have so long, in uniform and decisive terms, protested against it.

We have recognised many individuals associated with

those usually denominated abolitionists of high rank in our country for talent and character. In the integrity, patriotism, and philanthropy of their feelings in regard to slaveholding we have entertained great confidence. But it has always appeared to us too clear to be doubted, that universal and immediate emancipation, which is understood to be a governing point in their policy, if it could be accomplished, would be a most ruinous and unhappy measure for the slaves, for their owners, and for the whole country. If those who are deeply interested, would be enlightened by experience, they might refer with advantage to the history of the British effort among their slaves, in their West Indian colonies, during the years 1833 and 1838, to see the true character and ineffectiveness of such an experiment.

The measures of the abolitionists seem to have been as inappropriate as their object was undesirable. Calm discussion might have produced salutary results; but severe strictures and harsh invectives against those who were connected with the slaveholding system entirely failed to aid the cause of freedom. From Elliot's account of the debates and transactions which occurred in 1787, at the adoption of the federal constitution, it appears evident that the feature relating to slavery, in its present form, was a peace measure, *a compromise*, intended to be temporary, but to be strictly observed while in operation. All interference with that constitutional provision, except in an advisory manner, seems to be prohibited, and may justly be regarded by the south as offensive. But it cannot be concealed that there is a limit beyond which toleration of the slaveholding system cannot be endured, in consistence with the peace and happiness of the great body politic, either south or north. Colonization on the coast of Africa, if carried to its full extent, may do much to relieve difficulties already experienced and to remedy threatened evils. Whatever may be the reasonings and views of individuals in regard to several minor points involved above, no rational man, we suppose, can justly conclude, that while the subject is under discussion, and action partially suspended, the guilt of the crime can cease or be diminished.

In regard to the most eligible method of securing liberty to the colored people of the United States, it may, perhaps, not be improper to observe here, that our abolition brethren seem to have made some great mistakes in their discussions, which have, we think, operated deceptively upon their own feelings, and may, perhaps, mislead others.

They certainly represent the general condition of the slaves, and their character, a great deal below their proper standard. They make no allowance for the salutary results of recent measures, in some instances introduced by the owners of the slaves themselves, or with their full concurrence, which have very much improved their condition, particularly in the Atlantic states, augmented their privileges, and brightened their prospects. These educational and moral advantages, accompanied with a divine influence, have led to a great and visible religious reform, a very perceptible enlargement of the church communion, in all denominations, in which we would unfeignedly rejoice.

Abolitionists are quite as much mistaken in supposing, that if, in accordance with their principal idea, immediate and universal emancipation of the slaves, should be accomplished, and they be left to reside among the whites, given up to their own discretion as masters of the land, that they would lead peaceable, orderly, and quiet lives, and suffer their recent owners to enjoy a safe, tranquil, and happy abode in the midst of them. All restraint being removed, and a full scope afforded for the outbreak of resentments hitherto suppressed, and for the indulgence of the passion and violence natural to depraved and vicious men in a state of great ignorance and utter lawlessness, tumult and desolation may justly be expected as things of course, an expectation justified by experience and observation. It is very well known that, notwithstanding the salutary restrictions of law now in force, and all the comparatively happy improvements in education and moral culture now partially in operation, it is a work of some difficulty to maintain among the slaves in the best managed districts such order, industry, and subjection to authority, as are indispensable to uniform peace and general prosperity. Among the best

instructed and disciplined companies of them, there are always found to be ringleaders in iniquity, strongly and habitually disposed to mischief, violence, and cruelty; possessing power, corruption, and artifice sufficient to instigate others to the foulest works of pollution, darkness, and blood. Against these desperate exhibitions, especially in the less pure and civilized districts, there *is*, there *can be*, no security. There is great reason to fear that the white population, in case of universal emancipation, would soon fall victims to irresistible violence, or be reduced, especially the *females*, to a condition more awful and repulsive than death.

Besides, on the supposition that the slaves are to be immediately emancipated, they, of course, cease to be the property of their present owners; their labor is withdrawn from *them* and *from* the field, and the land lies in great measure desolate. From the experiments of the English on their West Indian possessions, in 1833 and 1838, it is ascertained that uneducated and half savage negroes, set free in this manner, cannot be induced, by compensation, authority, or persuasion, to continue their labor, either for their own support or for the benefit of their recent masters. The whole land is reduced, as a certain consequence of immediate emancipation, to a state of desolation, and a large portion of the population to a condition of want and suffering, as the least evils to be expected.

Here, also, the very grave question arises—how are these recent owners to be remunerated for the vast amount of property in that case to be wrested from them? Estimate 3,500,000 of colored people at the low average rate of \$300 per head, and they amount to more than one thousand millions of dollars, the first cost. Making provision for their support at least one year, leaving the contingencies of after years out of view, cannot require less than half that sum. Who are to remunerate these spoliated slave owners, and sustain the poor and wretched victims of this prompt emancipation scheme, by advancing the sum of at least fifteen hundred millions of dollars? Or does this emancipation enterprise embrace, as an ulterior resort, *as a*

right, the monstrous idea of absolute spoliation and robbery without remuneration? * These are a few of the obvious difficulties which oppose the prompt emancipation system, advocated by some of our best northern men.

Now, how much preferable, in every view we can take of it, is the plan of colonization on the western coast or tropical regions of Africa? But upon the benefits and many happy influences and results of colonization, at present, we shall not enlarge. The great advantages of colonization may be stated in few words. By *emancipation*, the slaves gain, *perhaps*, freedom—technical liberty. Everything else is contingent and *desperate*. In *colonization*, the servant is made for ever free from his master, in circumstances very pleasing, independent, and happy; he is a free citizen, in fact in a free country; he may immediately become a *freeholder* of productive and valuable real estate, which several of the auxiliary branches of the American Colonization Society are ready gratuitously to bestow upon their emigrants, wherever found worthy of such bounty. Besides this, every colonist is, immediately after touching Liberian soil, a candidate for wealth and honor, for power and distinction, for the highest offices of trust and dignity, that the Liberian republic can confer.

Whatever difficult and perplexing questions connected with this subject may arise in the minds or experience of inquirers, producing conflict of opinion and torpor in action, they are all the legitimate fruits and appendages of slavery, and instead of diminishing its guilt and enormity in any case, private or public, great or small, in the slightest degree, do really increase and aggravate both.

It cannot be denied that our southern neighbors occupy a very interesting and responsible relation to the slavery system. They are burdened with an interest which is, in its own nature, essentially and immutably *injurious* as well as *wrong*. But under the circumstances of the case, as exhibited by true history, they do not merit the universal and

* This was a prominent feature in Mr. E. Burritt's speech at Trenton, last autumn. He alleged that the land would rise in value enough to pay for the slaves.

acrimonious condemnation which has been profusely lavished upon them by some northern men.

To form a fair estimate of our relation to the institution of slavery in the United States, we must go back in its history about one hundred years, to the period when this great field for slavery may be said to have been first opened and occupied. We shall probably all agree that the first companies of slaves introduced into the colonies were stolen from Africa, and that the population of Africa were by nature as free, and as well entitled to retain their freedom, as any other people upon earth. These first victims of slavery were suddenly and violently seized and deprived of their *personal liberty*, to which they undoubtedly possessed a natural right. Their savage state did not invalidate or at all impair their claim to it. The truth is that, as a great moral principle, *personal liberty* cannot be touched by human authority without crime or forfeiture, not even by civilized legislation. Liberty is a primary, sovereign, and immutable right, founded in the will, and confirmed by the act of God. It is an original and inalienable element in the constitution of human nature, sustained by a feeling of consciousness, clear as an axiom. Pirates, plunderers, purchasers, owners, and traffickers are mere depredators on human rights, violent usurpers of man's most sacred, inherent, indestructible immunities and prerogatives. The whole process of slavery, *ab ovo, ad pomum*, is a violent trespass upon man's dearest rights. But the whole system, however extensive and apparently fixed and permanent, is temporary and *perishing with the using*. For God has intended and announced that his Gospel shall make men free; that the Ethiopians, if compelled to despair of deliverance from human sympathy, justice, and power, shall find redress of their grievances by *stretching forth their hands unto God*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

General views of slavery—its origin, progress, early action of southern people in regard to it.—Petition of Virginians.—Constitutional provisions, difficulties, duties, etc., of the southern people.—Concluding remarks.

IN the commencement of this crusade against man, the number of imported slaves was augmented in proportion to the expansion of the market or increase of the demand for them. And this piratical importation has never entirely ceased until this hour. The stock, then, from which the colored population in our country first sprang was unquestionably *stolen*, and carried away from Africa by violence to the American states. It is a settled principle in law, that *stolen* property is always *stolen* property, till restored to its rightful owner or primitive condition. Let it be sold, bartered, transferred, or change nominal owner and condition, pass through all conceivable vicissitudes but dissolution, and its true character remains unaltered, and must continue so while the immutable principles of truth, justice, and right remain unchanged. And all those descending from the original stock, by natural generation, inherit the same nature, assume the same moral features and rights, and take the same stand in relation to society. This relation of free colored men cannot be obliterated or changed by any business transaction among men, or legislative action, against their will. No sale—no barter—no transfer by *will* or *assignment*—no attempt at hereditary transmission, can invalidate the claims of the colored man to that inviolable freedom which his Creator has conferred upon him in common with others of fair complexion, unless he freely and sovereignly consent.

But while the character and relation of the enslaved remain unchanged, the characters and relations of their avowed owners may undergo important revolutions, which must be well considered in estimating this subject. The first importers of African negroes as slaves were, unquestionably, more grossly criminal in their cruel aggression

upon human rights than others who afterwards gradually became participators in this nefarious system. Receivers of stolen goods cannot escape heavy condemnation. Their easy reception of this plundered property, and ready participation in the fraudulent and oppressive measures which speedily grew out of the trade, going to constitute the shocking system of slavery, hold them morally fast under a solemn and awful responsibility. And their successors, from age to age, occupy the same position.

The government, who have from time to time tried to form and give sanction to this oppressive system of slaveholding, and attempted to furnish a legal directory for its management, are held responsible to God and man for their unrighteous agency, and all the popular acts and devices used for this purpose are void in God's sight. The present owners of slaves, who have in various ways been brought into connection with them, some by inheritance, by marriage relation, or by uncontrollable circumstances, are comparatively innocent of this great transgression upon humanity. The institution, notwithstanding its glaring injuries, having been so long sustained by their predecessors without hinderance or interdict, those now involved in it may justly be considered as having in some degree escaped from its guilt and responsibility. But the nature of slavery, in whatever place or whatever degree it exists, remains identically the same, unchanged in its nature and undiminished in its guilt. You may attempt to subdivide, distribute, and charge its criminality and desolation among the several and successive participants or perpetrators in the iniquity, wherever it exists or migrates, at sovereign pleasure, but it remains, in its own nature, the same evil and guilty thing, and can never be changed without altering the constitution of the universe, changing the integral elements of God's law and government over his intelligent moral and accountable creatures. In accomplishing a great work of violence, cruelty, and blood, there may be hundreds of accomplices, each incurring a greater or less *pro rata* share of guilt than his co-operators; but in the aggregate, the crime and its guilt are the same, however many or few were engaged in its perpetration.

Moreover it must be taken into view, that originally slavery was not courted by the south. Evidence abounds to prove, that long before the American revolution, that institution was pertinaciously resisted by those districts which were most abundantly stocked with slaves, and well adapted means were employed by them to prevent their farther introduction into the colonies. Indeed efforts were made to diminish the number already in possession at an early day. Some conceived the idea of colonizing them on some unoccupied northern territory. Great Britain was unsuccessfully petitioned to receive them into their colony at *Sierra Leone*. Afterwards application was made to the Portuguese government for liberty to colonize them within their dominions in South America. After several abortive efforts to induce the British king and parliament to sanction the colonial enactments, and to favor their subordinate measures to diminish the number of their slaves, and dispossess themselves wholly of this undesirable population, the following petition from the colonial legislature of Virginia was prepared, and forwarded to the British crown and cabinet, to exhibit the provincial feelings and enforce the patriotic desires and aims then prevalent in these colonies. Among the signers of this document, we find recorded the name of the illustrious *Thomas Jefferson*, who has been denominated the apostle of *Freedom*. The petitioners say:

“We are encouraged to look up to the throne and implore your majesty’s paternal assistance in averting a calamity of a most alarming nature.

“The importation of slaves into the colonies from the coast of Africa *hath long been considered as a trade of great inhumanity, and under its present encouragement, we have too much reason to fear will endanger the very existence of your majesty’s American dominions.*

“We are sensible that some of your majesty’s subjects, of Great Britain, may reap emoluments from this sort of traffic; but when we consider that it *greatly retards* the settlement of the colonies with more useful inhabitants, and may in time have the most destructive influence, we presume to hope that the *interests of a few* will be disregarded

when placed in competition with the security and happiness of *such numbers* of your majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects.

"Deeply impressed with these sentiments, we most humbly beseech your majesty to *remove all those restraints* on your majesty's governors of this colony which inhibit their assenting to such laws as might check so very pernicious a commerce."*

This humble request, which fully evinces the feelings prevalent in these colonies at that day, A. D. 1772, was treated with contempt by the king and cabinet; and that indignant rejection operated as one of the numerous, if not principal causes which led to the *war of Independence*. The British continued to force slaves particularly upon the southern districts of this country, notwithstanding their applications for relief, even after the *Revolutionary war*. At the adoption of the federal constitution, the number of slaves in the states was estimated at about 757,000. The greatest difficulty, at that memorable crisis, was experienced in disposing of the slaves. Immediate emancipation was pronounced both ineligible and impracticable. The slaveholders in general would have been glad to dispose of their interest in them, but there was no purchaser. The states, impoverished and in debt by the war, were too poor to buy. The owners, for the same reason, could not make them a gratuity to the country, as their property consisted mainly in this kind of stock. Besides, the slaves were attached to the soil, which would have been made almost entirely valueless by removing them from it, as they were almost the only cultivators and producers in the southern states. An erroneous impression then already existed, that the land in southern latitudes could not be cultivated, nor their peculiar crops raised by any but colored men. On the whole, the slaves were thus left as a species of entailment upon the southern people. This was the general aspect of the case. That there were many selfish and unfeeling monsters at that time mixed up in the mass of southern

* See Appeal of R. Walsh, p. 317, 8vo.

population, who courted slavery and rejoiced in it as a medium of profit and ultimate speculation, is not denied.

That feature of the constitution of the United States, which gives the slaves a *pro rata* share by suffrage in congressional representation, was resisted in the convention of 1787, and admitted finally as a temporary expedient or *compromise* to harmonize many conflicting views supposed to be otherwise irreconcilable, and to be restricted, while left in operation, to the thirteen states constituting the Union, each one acting according to its own discretion and for its own individual benefit. In this transaction, the body of the people of the states assembled by representation in the convention, all substantially concurred.

We humbly conceive, therefore, that the southern people ought to be in very great degree exonerated from the charge of criminality in the first introduction of slaves or the slave system. Their fault lies chiefly in continuing it beyond the period contemplated, and in neglecting to provide for the improvement, the elevation, and happiness of the slaves. It is true that a multitude of individuals may be charged with more than indifference and neglect towards these objects, with positive oppression and cruelty in many forms. How far this evil may extend, we are not prepared to say; but this is certain, that its range and its rigor are both undergoing a very perceptible and happy diminution, particularly in the seaboard states.

The duty of slaveholders, at the present crisis, appears as clear as a beam of light. The general peace and prosperity of the nation—the true interest and happiness of the southern people themselves—and the just interests and claims of the slaves, all combine, with great power, to require of the slaveholding states that all practicable means of improvement in useful knowledge, in business skill and habits, and christian knowledge and virtue, should be extended to the slave population, preparatory to their emancipation.

The noble leaders in this humane and patriotic system of reform, which has already obtained happy entrance and progress in many places, have only to persevere and carry

out, by a wise and prudent course of philanthropy and christian zeal, what they have so auspiciously commenced, and under a beneficent Providence, they may anticipate a most honorable and happy result.

As a motive and auxiliary to the course here humbly suggested, it seems proper to state, that the colonization of the colored people on the coast of Africa, now considerably advanced and in happy progress, presents to the colored race, scattered abroad, a most interesting and alluring invitation to return to their parent land, and enjoy there a peaceful, independent, and happy home, without money and without price, for themselves and their posterity for ever. By assisting to carry out this vast enterprise of mercy, the slave owners and all men of benevolence and kindness will indulge their noblest charity, and secure to themselves endless distinction and honor.

In conclusion we observe, that the following passage in the argument before us, on page 302, strikes us with great surprise: "We have little apprehension that any one can so far mistake our *object* or the *purport* of our remarks, as to suppose that we regard slavery as a desirable institution. The extinction of slavery is as sincerely desired by us as by any of the abolitionists."

The preceding parts of the article, in general, may be understood with tolerable ease. But the *object* and *purport* of these sentences are certainly quite obscure, because entirely irreconcilable with the letter and spirit of this elaborate vindication of slavery. If the writer intended to disavow the opinions he had written, he ought to have done it in clear and unequivocal language. If he really considers slavery not "a desirable institution," why does he argue so pertinaciously in its favor? If sincere in this partial recantation, every one would suppose it must be because he saw something in it which he felt to be wrong. But he frequently and positively asserts the contrary—*no sin, no crime!* If he heartily desires "the *extinction of slavery*," as he here alleges, why did he so elaborately and protractedly, through thirty pages, endeavor to justify and vindicate the institution? Why does he oppose and denounce the dis-

tinguished men of New England, of New York, of Kentucky, who wrote with such peculiar eloquence and power to *accomplish the extinction of slavery*, the very evil to which he here avows so much hostility? Why does he so strongly approve the silence of Christ and his apostles in regard to slavery in its *worst forms*? even tells us, as we understand him, that if Christ had opposed slavery, he would have been *the minister of sin*! He says Christ and his apostles, in their silence, in their approving spirit towards slavery, *did right*. But here it appears he is opposed to their action, and desires, as much as *any abolitionist*, the extinction of the very evil which he tells us they rather promoted than otherwise. He claims Christ and his apostles, and the sacred Scriptures, as entirely favorable to slavery; but here he runs into direct and violent collision with both. These are mysteries which we acknowledge our inability to solve, because we cannot reconcile them with either the letter or the spirit of his essay; nor do we feel more competent to harmonize them with either common sense or common consistency.

Perhaps a new mode of argumentation is about being introduced into our schools of science; that is, if you wish to show a dislike to slavery, even abolition zeal and desire for *its extinction*, you must manufacture the strongest article you can in its vindication, for rectilinear direct reasoning, substitute the *inverse order*.

Whatever may have been the opinions and aims of the writer, this to us seems certain, that he has laid down such principles, assumed such facts, drawn such inferences, and raised such arguments in support of slaveholding, as justly to call forth the remarks here presented.