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FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

Extortion.

NO. II.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUBJECT.

That respectable professors of religion are guilty of extortion, is a sign that there must be difficulties in the subject; not difficulties great enough necessarily to excuse the crime, but great enough to conceal it, great enough to enable the extortioner, tempted by his avarice, to reason plausibly in his own justification; and while they do not prevent the instincts of the people from laying hold of his crime, they do prevent them from showing it in that clear light, and from pressing it with those overwhelming demonstrations that would make it entirely impossible for a good man to persevere in the iniquity.

1. The first of these is, that extortion is enforced by the law of the land. It is hard often to convict of crime, even when it is illegal. A shrewd lawyer may throw doubt on a case, even when it is theft or assassination. But an extortioner charges rates that the law will enforce. He is with the law all through his transaction. And our habits are such necessarily from the respect that is due to law, that when a thing is legal it is difficult to impeach it of iniquity.

2. Second, not only is extortion often legal, but it is by the free consent of the purchaser. Men's consciences are sometimes not nice enough to discover that a thing may be actually fraudulent, even though it may be visited by the strongest solicitations of the victim. And therefore, when the public come eager to be served, and are actually bidding against each other for the commodities they need, all moral natures are not strong enough to see that this, to a greater or less extent, is true of every extortioner. It does not consist in forcing men out of their means, but whether we whatever way parties who wish to suit the culpability pass the term from one act to another, the element of willingness attaches to all of them. Any extortion that is not willing on the part of the sufferer, is robbery, and that, in so unfigurative a sense, as to bring it easily within the reach of another than a mere popular tribunal.

3. Another difficulty attending the impeachment of extortion is, that it is carried on most effectively by them who are merely continuing their old rules of business. A baker in a besieged city, who had a monopoly of flour, might merely go on to sell at the highest bid, whatever that might be, and yet the people would soon bring it about his ears, that whatever might have been the style of his ancient practice, he would have to change it. A vast majority of our citizens have changed their practice, and are not selling for all they could get; that is to say, where the commodity is affected by extremely artificial causes on account of our besieged condition; while the few who are going on to ask the very most, are either the unscrupulous or a few strongly tempted among the respectable, who are going on to ask the most on this plea of old rules, or established practices of business.

4. A still more serious difficulty lies in the promiscuous way in which instances of high price are confusedly thrown together. Some high prices are necessary, and are therefore innocent. In fact the vast majority of high prices are not only entirely necessary, and perfectly justifiable, and springing from occasions that always lead to such things, and that innocently and most inevitably under like circumstances of the case, but are really some of the hardest high prices to bear, and have most of the appearance of extortion, as far as concerns the grinding the occasion of the people. It will be a purpose of these papers to distinguish these from the smaller number of cases, viz: those of actual crime. Meanwhile we see at a glance what a cover they make for the offender, and how being in such large company, and seeming simply to be arraigned on the ground of distressing the people, the culprit wards off by the arguments that belong to these others, and many a charitable reasoner is convinced by seeing that we cannot condemn the whole mass of high priced dealers in a time like this, and by failing to discriminate the large class from the small.

5. That this small class are, a few of them, good people, is a snare in this question. A good man here and there is an immense press in this crime.

In the first place, the professor of religion is entrapped by the plausible difficulties that he finds in the question, and then he becomes a trap to other men.

A singular distance of how high morality may deceive itself in these important matters, was seen in the Pharisees. They were not the culprits we think them. One would not like to say that they were as good as the best of our people. But there was this about them. They were thought to be the best men of their time. Their nation was the only nation that had any religion, and they were thought to be the best men of their nation. Paul's father must have been an excellent sort of citizen. He chose a religious education for his son, and sent him at the age of fourteen on a galilean journey to the feet of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was

thought to be a son of the aged Simeon.—And Paul himself, as the fruit of the labor of his teacher "concerning the righteousness of the law," said that he was "blameless." The Pharisees must have been a most respectable moral class. And when Jesus begins to portray their iniquity, he does it with rough language it is true, but with intimations all through the narrative, that the mass of moral pretension; and indeed even in that Augustan age, of high well sustained moral reputation, was with the sect of that young ruler, for example, in respect to whom it is declared that "Jesus beholding him, loved him."

And yet so easy it is, as we have seen, by the force of certain great natural difficulties, to hood-wink the people in respect to crime, that no sooner had our Saviour brought to bear upon this elevated class the eye of an omniscient investigation, than he unmasks them at once, and charges them as to the very thing that they had found it easy to conceal, with this great crime of extortion among the people. We know not what it is, at that ancient date, that gave facility for the crime in the state of the country. It may have been the something that Paul was providing against, when he took up collections for the "poor saints." But this one thing, is evident, that when our Saviour said to men who loved "greetings in the markets, that they devoured widows' houses" he was not speaking of anything very evident, but of something that a proud Pharisee might do at the very time that he was welcomed in the streets by the smiles of approval among the citizens. One stood in the temple and prayed, "Lord I thank thee that I am not as other men are," and as though to show how completely extortion may be hidden from itself, singing out from all others the very crime with which Christ had charged them, he adds, "Extortioners."

And another feature of the likeness is, that these men try to make up by almsgiving what they extort by unreasonable rates. A favorite argument in some communities has been, let the manufacturers relieve by charity, rather than by the more indiscriminate plan of abandoning his rates. We mean to return to this subject. In other words—Let a man almsgive beneath me in generosity and spirit, humble my family while I am in the wars, by offering them charity (a form of relief which if they are high spirited people they will not take) and let him consider that, as an offset to what they would accept, viz: some little decent attention to the qualities of their case, and to their right while sacrificing for liberty to escape the pang of such enormous remuneration.

Not to reason the point now however, how singular the ancient likeness! The Pharisees "hideth mint, and anise and cummin." And though the Bible said they were "full of extortion and excess," yet they managed to enjoy almost a reputation of morality, and that largely on the help of almsgiving.—They "sounded a trumpet before them," when they distributed their gifts, and were "as a man that giveth alms," in the temple. "Lord we thank thee that we are not as other men are, Extortioners"—and then bring up (with a completeness that almost makes us tremble) over the lapse of centuries this family picture—"We pay tithes of all that we possess."

It is time, however to advance to what the public have a right to demand, viz: distinct definition. If extortion be such an outrageous evil, no doubt, in spite of all the difficulties that one can state, it must be capable of some sort of extended exposition. And to arrive at this, it will be inquired in the next paper what extortion is, and in the fourth what extortion is, and in the fifth it may be possible to reply to objections. People who are the sufferers under these unjustifiable rates are looked down upon by the authors of their trouble, and treated with a sort of philosophic pity, under the idea that they wince naturally under the pressures of the period, but that no sane man can be long in arriving at the fact that the laws of trade must have room for their course, and that precisely in the way of these enormous accumulations.

ALABMY.

Signs of the Times.

Under this heading certain extracts from a letter of an elder of the Presbyterian church in New York were published last week. A few days after another letter from the same gentleman came into our hands. Its date is about a month earlier than the other, but we publish most of it, believing that the contents will be interesting to the reader:

NEW YORK, December, 1862.

My Dear Friend.—The great gulf which fanaticism has dugged between us has prevented the continuance of that kindly intercourse which we once enjoyed.

Of you I occasionally hear through extracts from the Richmond papers, as with Gen. Jackson's army. Of me, you of course have heard nothing, although I was very near getting celebrity, as one of Nero's prisoners in Lafayette. For the last twenty months we have been enjoying a reign of terror. The constitution and laws overrode and trampled upon by those in power; the liberty of the press destroyed; arbitrary arrests without any pretext of law, (except the will of the despot) on every hand; in short the fair fabric, under which we and our fathers dwelt so long, all swept away, gone, gone, gone. And why you ask, have not the masses risen and hurled the usurpers into the abyss? Ah you ask what no man can fully answer.

At the time the batteries were opened on Sumpter, it seemed that the flood gates of delusion were all at once opened wide, a frenzy seized the whole people. Demagogues availed themselves of the delirium, and cried out, "the old flag is insulted, the Union and Constitution in danger." We have seen the fearful results. The great mass of the North had become Abolitionized, although they stoutly repelled the idea, and the events all grouped together gave an occasion for the breaking out or development of the disease, and out it came with a vengeance.

Reason, argument, entreaty, were all drowned in the clamor of the hour. The man who would not join in the wild tumult,

was at once marked and denounced as a traitor and Secessionist, and if nothing worse came upon him, he was warned to keep his mouth shut, or take the consequences.

I have thus been warned, threats have been made that my house should be burned over my head. For months I have felt constrained to keep what weapons I had, ready to defend, as God should enable me, my family and life against the threatened attacks of modern patriots.

But thus far God has held them back.—My youngest son is at home, liable to military duty. Every inducement has been held out to him to join the army, and then threats of Conscription. But with my consent (and with my views he agrees) he can never raise an arm in the present wicked crusade. My brother sent his only son into Canada.—This would not do. If compelled to send him away, it should be to Virginia, where he could be of some use. * * * * *

I see a glimmer of light in this State.—After New Year's day, if Lincoln, Seward or Stanton, undertake arrests without due process of law, the power of the State will interpose. And peradventure State sovereignty, that abhorrent heresy in the eyes of the Black Republicans, may be vindicated, and a conflict arise between the Federal and State governments.

But my dear friend, let us avert our eyes from the potsherd of the earth, and rejoice that "Jehovah reigns." Here is our trust and confidence. As the darkness thickens, I humbly trust my faith grows stronger, and here will I rest. "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him."

And now my friend, where and how is my son, and your protégé? I had a letter from him, dated June 30th, in South-Western Virginia, in Gen. Heth's command. I have followed Heth's march into Kentucky, and now from what I gather he is in East Tennessee. If you can give me any tidings of him, it will solace his mother and myself.—He is in God's hand, and I have never worried; still you can appreciate a parent's longings.

I expect to go to Toronto, Canada, next week to meet Rev. Stuart Robinson, Rev. Mr. Hoy, and others of our banished friends. Remember me most kindly to Dr. Smith, Dr. Hoge, and others, as you have opportunity. And say to my friend whom I have never seen in the flesh, Gen. Jackson, that he has many friends here whose daily prayer to God is that his life may be spared for great usefulness in the Church and State.

He is a wonderful scare crow to the North, and they seem divided in opinion as to whether he is a saint or demon. The most of them of course favor the latter, and credit his ubiquity to that agency.

The despot and his satraps are reckoning hugely on what Banks is to do. Their knees are suiting each other as they hear Louis Napoleon's name mentioned. The bravado about fighting a world in arms is hushed.—Confusion is in their councils, fraud and imbecility mark the footsteps of those in power. But the day of doom is coming, and that attack in the house shall level it.

Where is my friend Mr. Blakey, of Madison C. H.?

The Lord bless you and keep you.
Yours in Christ.

Gleanings.

FROM ADAM'S EXPOSITION OF 2 PETER.

The Liberty of this Service.—Know that God's servant is the greatest freeman. He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman, 1 Cor. vii: 22. The good man is free, though he serves; and the evil is bound though he reigns. Nor is the victim the slave of one man; he has as many masters as vices. Woe-dost thou have thy flesh serve thy soul, let thy soul serve God: thou owest to the King the right of government. Serve therefore willingly, and be free continually.

His Dignity.—There cannot be a greater honor than to serve such a Master as commands heaven, earth, and hell. Do not thank man nor God in serving him; but thank how God honors you, in vouchsafing you to be his servant. David could not study to give himself a greater style than, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant;" and this he spoke, not in the phrase of a human compliment, but in the humble confession of a Christian.

There was an *Apostle* condemned, never a servant. Judas preached to them, not to his own soul; wrought miracles upon others, not upon himself; cast out devils, yet was himself cast out as a devil. "To obey is better than sacrifice."

Prophets have been excluded; many say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?"—to whom it is answered, "Depart from me." But never were *servants* excluded. God by this title commends Job, the greatest man of the East. "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Paul calls James the Lord's brother. "Other of the apostles I none, save James the Lord's brother." James calls himself the *servant* of Christ. "James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ," quite leaving out the remembrance of that other style.—The good Emperor Theodosius held it honorable to be a member of the church, than head of the empire. It is better to be God's servant, than lord of the world.

The Reward; it is immense and glorious. Bread; God gives us our daily bread—we are all at his keeping. Correction; he chastises us because he loves us, Heb. 12: Work; he sends us into his vineyard. Protection; "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Provision; Even the "hired servants of my father's house have bread enough and to spare." Luke xv: 17

But what is all this that to future glory which was from everlastingness prepared for those servants? I know they do not always speed best in this world. Well, though our reward be short on earth, let us look for it with comfort in heaven. If we have done good and faithful service to him, we shall be his servants, "Well done, good and faithful servants; enter into the joy of your Lord." And this joy be to us all!

"High mind."—We often use this phrase in a good sense, the Bible gives it a bad meaning. The "high-minded" men it speaks of have heads like chimneys, which overlook all the house, yet are the foulest part of it.

MANY fear hell, who have never feared sin.

POETRY.

The Changed Cross.

It was a time of sadness, and my heart
Although it knew and felt the better part,
Was wearied with the conflict and the strife,
And all the useful discipline of life.

And while I strove to view them given to me
As wholesome tests of Faith, Love and Grace;
It seemed as if I never could be sure
That faithful to the end, I should endure.

And thus no longer trusting to His might,
Who says we walk by Faith and not by sight;
Doubting and almost yielding to despair,
The thought arose, My "Cross" I cannot bear.

Surely, thought I, my cross must heavier be
Than those of others whom I daily see;
Oh! if I might some other burden choose,
Methinks I should not fear my "Cross" to lose.

A solemn silence reigned on all around,
E'en nature's voices altered not a sound;
The evening shadows seemed of peace to tell,
And sleep upon my wearied spirit fell.

I slept; when suddenly a heavenly light
Burst full upon my wondering, raptur'd sight,
Angels beings throng'd in myriads there,
And angel voices fill'd the harmonious air!

Then ONE more glorious far than all to see,
To whom in reverence others bent the knee,
Came gently near me as I trembling lay,
And whispered: "Follow me! I am the way!"

Instant I rose: He led me far above,
To where beneath a canopy of love,
Crosses of every shape and size were seen,
Smaller and larger than my own had been.

And one there was, most beautiful to behold,
A little cross with jewels set in gold;
"Ah! this" I mused, "I can with comfort wear!
Sure this will be an easy cross to bear!"

Then stooping down, this cross I quickly took,
When, lo! at once my frame beneath it shook.
Light though it seemed, and beautiful to see,
It far too heavy proved, that cross for me.

"Not this, not this!" I cried, then sought again
A cross whose weight would bring me less of pain.
And one by one I passed them slowly by,
Again a lovely one attracts my eye!

Fair flowers around its sculptur'd form entwined,
Beauty and grace appeared in combination;
Wondering I gaz'd, and as I gaz'd the more,
Stranger it seemed that all had pass'd it o'er.

I stooped, when quickly, to my touch revealed,
I knew the sting those beautiful leaves conceal'd;
Sharp thorns lay hid beneath those flowers so fair!
Sorrowing, I said, "this cross I cannot bear."

And thus it was with every cross I tried:
Not one that I would choose could be espied;
Weeping, I and each he vy hurried down,
Then gently whispered He, "No cross, no crown."

At length to Him, I turned my fainting head,
He knew his sorrows, bade his doubts be fled;
"Be not afraid," He said, "but trust to me,
My perfect love shall now be show'd to thee!"

Then with bright new-born faith and willing mind,
I turned again, my earthly cross to find;
With forward steps, and turning not aside,
Left worrying fears and doubts again beside.

Seeking in the prepared appointed way,
Willing to bear and ready to obey,
I say to cross, and quick to catch it move,
I say to cross, and quick to catch it move.

With eager joy I raised it from the rest,
And gratefully acknowledged it the best,
The only one of all the many there,
That I could feel was meant for me to bear.

And while I thus my chosen cross confessed,
Brightness celestial seem'd on it to rest;
And as I bent, my burden to sustain,
It was, I knew, my own old cross again!

But ah! how beautiful was it now to me—
That He who knew me best had I chosen for me,
And so what of His love was good to send,
No unbeliving doubts disturb me now!

The Cross He puts on me, is best I know!
Oh yes! henceforth my one desire shall be,
That He who knows me best had I chosen for me,
And so what of His love was good to send,
I'm sure 'tis best—because He knows the end!

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

How does the Lord Jesus Look.

Did you ever think of that, children? We know something about His looks, when He was here on earth, because we know what He was. We know he was poor, and dressed in plain clothes; he wore sandals, instead of shoes, as we do now. (Ask your teacher what "sandals" are.)

Then, again, we know He was gentle, patient, and kind—oh, how kind! And He was wise, as well as good, and just as brave as He was gentle, and pure from every fault and sin. And we can think can't we? how a man would look—what sort of a face he would have—with such a heart as that.

Once more; we know He was full of sorrows and sadness here, because the Bible tells us so. It calls Him "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." And in those last cruel days, they made a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and drove the thorns into His dear flesh. Why, I can almost see the blood starting under the sharp thorn points, and shining on His sad forehead. Then the wounded hands, and the mangled feet; we can think of them, and fancy how our dear Saviour looked, when He came to die.

Now I suppose the Lord Jesus in Heaven in His glory, appears so as to put all in mind, some way that He died for sinners. You know John says, (Rev. v: 6) that He saw in Heaven "a Lamb, as it had been slain," which was our Redeemer. That is, there was something in His looks, or His dress, to make John remember that "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter," for our sakes.

And it is very sweet to me to think that our Lord wears the marks of His agony as a crown of glory. We can think what a noble face He must have, now that His sorrow is turned into joy, and His glorious love beams out, where there are none to mock, or tempt, or slander Him. And above that face, perhaps, we shall see a starry crown, shaped like the crown of thorns and the drops of blood that stood there when He died, shall flash and glow more splendidly than royal rubies.

Shall we try to get there, dear children, and "see Jesus?"

Oh, happy saints, that dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white!
Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
Where pilgrims meet, to part no more.

SPIRITUAL SLUMBER.—It would have been well if the foolish virgins had been roused from their sleep before midnight, though it had been done by the intrusion of robbers.

SELECTIONS.

Interesting from Belgium.

A correspondent of one of the Northern papers before us gives the following account of an INTERESTING ANNIVERSARY in Belgium. Under date of Brussels, October 4th, 1862, he says:

"The whole country of Belgium has been in a state of high excitement, this being the 33d anniversary of her independence. Banquets, feasts and festivities have occupied the time and attention of all classes for a week at least.

The Belgians have not changed as a people. Their boast is that they do not act as their fore fathers did before them Proud of their privileges, faithful to their duties as subjects, they pay deference to the monarch whom they regard as the guardian of those rights and privileges. They have shown themselves worthy of their independence, worthy of the liberty they enjoy, worthy of such a king as they have.

In the midst of this grand jubilee there has been a celebration of another character—more exalted, more glorious—the Three hundredth anniversary of the Reformed Church of Belgium. Yes, Heaven be praised, Belgium has left to posterity a page written in the sixteenth century which will ever be a memorial in the annals of triumphant faith.

And, while we assist in commemorating this anniversary, we were filled with admiration at the recital of the noble deeds of the martyrs who succeeded in establishing the Evangelical reform on her soil. When, in the year 1523, the Romish clergy commenced to deliver to the flames the writings of Luther, and to heap upon his devoted head the thunder of their anathemas they attacked, at Antwerp, a body of monks, whom they suspected of favoring the doctrines of the great Reformer, and, after murdering most of them, they razed their habitation to the ground. But the spark of sacred fire, struck by contact with the Holy Word of God, could not be extinguished even under the rains of the massive edifice so brutally torn down—for in the same city, forty years after, the learned doctors, and pastors, and the nobles of the land, among whom was Phillip de Marinx, met together to adopt one common Confession of Faith, which was presented to the magistrates of the country as the expression of the faith of more than one hundred thousand of the faithful.

This same Confession, which was born in the midst of so many sacrifices and persecutions, which was embraced in front of the scaffold, was adopted by the present Evangelical churches of Belgium in the year 1849.

Prominent among those who took part in the celebration of this anniversary was Brother Pauchaud, a man eminent both as a Christian and a scholar.

General T. R. R. Cobb.

Rev. Mr. Beatty of the Baptist church gives an interesting memoir of Gen. Cobb in the *Christian Index*. We would like to give the whole, but our limited space forbids:

"In the autumn of 1848, whilst yet in his early manhood, Mr. Cobb's mind was brought under those serious impressions which resulted in his conversion to God.—The work with him was no superficial awakening resulting in some good resolutions by which conscience was pacified and a spurious hope encouraged in the mind. Such was his ardent nature that he was made to feel most deeply his sinfulness, and when he was enabled to accept the great Sacrifice his gratitude was intense and his peace was well defined. Having conversed with him and preached to him when in this interesting state of mind I remember with what trembling concern he presented himself among those who were asking prayer in the Presbyterian church in Athens. He was thoroughly convicted and I doubt not thoroughly regenerated. The best proof of the fact is found in those fruits which were born so richly and so continuously throughout his subsequent life. Shortly after his conversion he had some thoughts of entering upon the work of the ministry.—What induced him to relinquish the idea, I do not know. But though not a minister by profession he was often performing the work of an ambassador of Christ. He did not hesitate to speak wherever an opportunity was offered for the honor of his Divine Master. Having heard the Spirit and the Bride when they said to him, Come, he felt himself authorized whenever in the presence of dying men, to say to them, Come! And he did say it, and that too, with an eloquence and pathos which moved many a heart to fly from the wrath to come. His burning exhortations during seasons of revival in Athens, and his fervent appeals to his soldiers in the field will be remembered by many as the call which God used to bring them to repentance. Only a short time before the battle in which he fell, he found time, I learn, to participate in a prayer-meeting connected with his command. To such a man dismissal from the body was only going home. The ball which smote him on the banks of the Rappahannock, was but the summons which called the "laborer to his hire"—the messenger which raised him from the tumult and carnage of war to the repose of that abode over which the Prince of Peace forever stays his benignant scepter. His mangled body lies in the tomb, buried amid the sobs and tears of those who could appreciate their loss, but his emancipated spirit rests on the bosom of Jesus.

Though Gen. Cobb possessed so many endowments in admirable combination, yet he was so remarkable for one quality that it must have arrested the attention of the most superficial observer—I allude to his enthusiasm. It pervaded his whole life. In his profession it inspired him with a will which would be bleached by no difficulties, and which would accept nothing short of the highest success. In his patriotism it made him ardent and self-sacrificing; in his military career it made him a General; in his domestic relations it made him devoted;—and in religion it made him a minister in fact though not in name. Had he given his attention to authorship his enthusiasm would have won for him eminence. His work on slavery is sufficient evidence of what he

might have done in this department of labor. When in Philadelphia I sent a copy of the work to a distinguished jurist of Pennsylvania (Hon. J. R. Jones), who told me afterwards that it was the most masterly discussion of the subject which he had seen.

Gen. Cobb has reached the "end of earth" for himself; but though dead he will speak.

"His name is freedom's now and fame's,
One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die."

FROM THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN.

The Religious Instruction of the Slaves—A Noble Work for Southern Women.

Mr. Editor: In the *Southern Presbyterian* of August 30, I noticed an article signed Bucer, in which the growing interest felt in the religious instruction of the slaves is mentioned as one of the hopeful signs of the times. But this sentiment is located in Central Georgia. Is it spreading throughout the Southern Confederacy? If not, wherefore? Are we still to neglect an evident duty?

The number who have asked is slavery right? must be small; for this question has been discussed until Southerners have had full time to make a decision upon it, and that they are willing to settle their right of holding slaves at the point of the sword shows more plainly than words what are their convictions on the subject? Small as that number is, there must be a still smaller number who think we have done our duty to our servants in all respects. Nay, it must be admitted that we have neglected their religious instruction in a criminal degree. You can meet slaves belonging even to Christian masters who have no knowledge of the plan of salvation, you may hear them sing hymns that are nothing more than a senseless conglomeration of words, or probably a mixture of the sacred and ridiculous, that is actual profaneness, and yet the story of the Cross is so simple and striking that it may be learned in a few hours, and the same length of time is sufficient to teach them the words and air of some pretty hymn, for they love to sing.

Since our separation from the United States, the Church seems to be awakening to the importance of the work, and it is to be hoped that they will make a rapid progress in it.

But individuals should do their duty in this matter as well as the Church. Sabbath schools should be kept up regularly on each plantation. The negroes should receive home instruction. This is a large field for usefulness, and hitherto much neglected.

Mrs. Hannah More says, "It has been said a lady has no employment. This is not true; a lady's employment is the care of the poor." Then what should be the employment of the ladies here in the South, where our peculiar institution does away with pauperism? It is the religious instruction of the slaves, and it is one that angels will look down upon with approving smiles.

In other countries, woman in her mission of mercy to the poor is often discouraged, especially if her object be the dissemination of religion. She shrinks from the rudeness which she may have to encounter. But here she can go to the cottage of the negro, low indeed, yet restrained by proper discipline, and meet with most profound respect. She will have nothing to contend with but ignorance. And with that she will be very patient, if she will only consider that it is the result of their weak intellects, their present condition and our neglect, and with patience and perseverance relying on the blessing of Heaven, she will find that her labor will not be in vain.

Our feelings must lead us to this work. Our servants are around us from the cradle to the grave, they contribute to our wealth and pleasure, in many instances they are our faithful, humble friends, and in all cases they are dependent upon us for that knowledge which, with God's blessing, shall save them from everlasting woe. Shall we be so ungenerous as to withhold it?

Our duty impels us to it. True, the obligation is first upon the master. But we are not the helpmates of man, and if we can assist him in the discharge of his duty in this way is it not well? He has much trouble with them in supplying their temporal wants, and directing their occupations, and is less fitted to be their instructor than woman, who from the daily practice of simplifying her words and ideas for the benefit of children, is better able to instruct their ignorance.

And, above all, the noble end in view persuades us to it, even the enlightenment and elevation of thousands now sunk in ignorance and sin, and finally their eternal happiness in heaven.

The educated, the refined, the pure in heart can appreciate these motives. Then let them begin the noble work in earnest.

ZARAH.

"O Lord if I forgot thee in the heat of battle, do not forget me!"

Thus prayed a Christian soldier as he entered the battle. God heard and answered his prayer; for while many of his comrades fell around him he came out unharmed.

Soldier, would you come out of the battle safely, then put your trust in the Lord, for he has promised to protect those who put their trust in him. The missiles of death may fly thick around you, a thousand may fall at your right hand, but not one shall harm you. O that men would trust in the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever.

J. M. S., Dalton, Ga.

CHOICE OF FRIENDS.—Antisthenes used to wonder at those who were curious in buying but an earthen dish, to see that it had no cracks nor inconveniences, and yet would be careless in the choice of friends—to take them with the flaws of vice.

USELESS KNOWLEDGE.—As gold which he cannot spend will make no man rich, so knowledge which he cannot apply will make no man wise.

DIVINE PROTECTION.—Let Sodom be all on a flame, not a hair of Lot's head shall be singed.

AN EDITOR'S COMFORT

A pious lady upon sending from her sick chamber a generous donation for benevolent purposes, takes the occasion to say—"You were right to raise the price of subscription, when every thing necessary to sustain life has risen to such exorbitant prices. Yours was a very modest rise compared with the secular papers. I would not give up my "Central" for double the price. Its weekly visits to my sick chamber are ever welcome, and I trust profitable. I thank you, sir, for the sweet comfort you sometimes unwittingly send me through its columns, in poetry and prose. I just now think of a piece that I clipped out and laid in my testament—"Yet a little while"—an extract from "Grapes of Esbool." I had often wished to read that book, and was delighted with the extract. A dear friend who read it said, "it seems as if it were written for you." May God bless you, and make you a blessing to a multitude!"

Will our friend, whom we have never seen, pardon us in the use now made of her kind words? Her letter is one among many others of the same import. "A dear brother, no longer in this world of strife, when counselling us concerning a change from the life of a pastor to that of an editor said, "Depend upon it you will miss the daily sympathy, the many manifestations of confidence, and kindness to which you have been accustomed from your people. There is nothing like it in any other walk of life." To deny that experience often brings up this painful truth, would be to wrong a people never to be remembered but in love. Thrice happy that pastor who can say—as so many can after long years of service—"I dwell among mine own people."

But let no one think the life of an editor is stripped bare of all these kindly sympathies. He has indeed vast responsibility, with no little toil and vexation of spirit.—He will never fail to get upon his hands a full share of those "unreasonable" (as, in the margin, "absurd") men,—from whom the Apostle Paul was so anxious to be delivered. 2 Thess. ii: 2. They are as sure to take offence at finding an editor seated, and claiming a moderate jurisdiction over his own premises, as if they had been "before of old ordained to this condemnation;" "murmers, complainers."

But these are the exceptions. The multitudes who take a religious newspaper are disposed to judge it with a righteous judgment, to establish in their hearts a sort of personal friendship for one who, they are satisfied, is honestly working to supply their households with that which will interest and edify them. Ready to overlook imperfections and errors, if not out of bounds; not asking him to be perfect, but content that he should be a good man, with good sense printed (if possible) in fair type, upon good paper.

We have often expressed the expression of grateful feelings awakened by letters from those whose good will and good opinion no man should wish to gain, lest it should seem like flattery too much that which was personal upon the public eye.—But our purpose is gained, if allowed to say in a word, that it does our heart good to know the Central Presbyterian is a welcome visitor in the many habitations to which it is sent. And to be assured that it often ministers comfort in the chamber of sickness—that it sometimes applies a balm to hearts sorely wounded by the multiplied bereavements afflicting the land—"this is the fruit of our labor," and it is fruit precious and refreshing.

In conclusion, is it not a reasonable request to ask that the religious newspapers of our land should be more remembered in the prayers of God's people? It is a remarkable fact that in public prayers this immense power, either for weal or for woe, is almost entirely forgotten. Why should not the Church, why should not family prayers ask for God's blessing upon the editor, as well as upon the pastor; upon the truth printed, as well as upon the truth preached?

Rev. Dr. Plumer.—We learn from a trustworthy source, that Dr. Plumer is engaged to supply the Arch St. Presbyterian church, Phila., (formerly Dr. Wadsworth's) for six months.

A MISTAKE.

About the first of January a meeting of Abolitionists was held in Philadelphia, to celebrate the emancipation edict of President Lincoln. An Abolition prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Boardman, and the impression prevails extensively that it was the Rev. Henry A. Boardman, D. D., the distinguished pastor of the 10th Presbyterian church (Old School) of that city. We had hardly a doubt at the time that it was another gentleman, a well-known Abolitionist in Western New York, but not of the Presbyterian Church.

The Southern Presbyterian of last week says—"An esteemed brother writes to us that he lately met on the cars a lady directly from Philadelphia, who is acquainted with Dr. B. He asked her if she thought Dr. Boardman could have used such expressions. She said she had seen such a statement in the Northern papers, and one day meeting Mrs. Boardman, she inquired if the report were correct. That lady, a Charleston lady originally, answered that so far from uttering such sentiments, Dr. Boardman had refused to attend that meeting."

Many will be glad to have it in their power to contradict the report above mentioned, and it is hoped the proper correction will be made by newspapers which have given currency to it.

A NEW PAPER.

It will be seen by the prospectus in our columns that the "Sentinel" suspended at Alexandria, is to be revived in Richmond. The gentlemen who undertake it have ample experience and enterprise to make it a paper of merit equal to any in the country.—Mr. R. M. Smith who is to have charge of the editorial department was, until recently, connected for about eighteen months, with that department in the Richmond Enquirer. His reputation as a writer stands very high. It is hoped the Sentinel will secure a standing for ability and dignity which will make it a model.

The Letter from Rev. Dr. Hoge will be read with interest. Having heard, a good while ago, that such a letter had been sent from Havana, it had been almost given up as lost, when it reached us barely in time for this week's paper. It is published now to the exclusion of other matter. The author, it is hoped, has been in England for about twenty days, and has accomplished much of the work contemplated.

Omitted for want of room this week, a number of obituaries.

ABOLITION DOCTORS OF DIVINITY: NEW YORK AGAINST PHILADELPHIA.

The Christian Observer has had access to a late Northern paper, from which we obtain two opposite enunciations from the cities just named. Dr. Bellows, a distinguished Socinian of New York, comes out in a recent address with his Abolitionism as fiery as if he had received it fresh heated from below—which is very likely: "It is no longer a war in defence of the Union, the Constitution and the Enforcement of the Laws. It is a war to be carried on no longer with the aim of re-establishing the Union and the Constitution with all their old compromises. God means not to let us off with any half-way work. I am now convinced, and I consider it the most humane, the most economical, and the most statesmanlike policy, now to take the most radical ground possible; to assume that this is a WAR FOR THE SUPPRESSION, OR THE EXTINCTION OF ALL PERSONS who wish to maintain the slave power—a war to get rid of slavery and slaveholders, whether it be constitutional or not."

This seems to have the virtue of honesty on its side; we like open dealing. On the other hand, Dr. Albert Barnes, a well known Presbyterian (N. S.) minister of Philadelphia, has published a sermon on the "Conditions of Peace," and very surprising to all who know him. He has heretofore taught that if the Bible tolerates slavery, men will not, and they ought not to receive it as a revelation from God." But in his late sermon he intimates that N. York city might not have travelled far beyond Canal Street, if it had not been for Cotton, and "if the South had not been willing that on certain well known terms their money should be in the hands of the merchants and brokers of New York." He contends that the "Control of slavery, and all the laws regulating it, ought to be left to the States as such, in all respects, absolutely and exclusively."

There are two feelings which will probably be awakened in the breasts of most who read this: the first of pity that Dr. Barnes had not come to this conclusion long ago; the second of contempt for the sordid consideration which brings him to it now.

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

Letter from Rev. Dr. Hoge.

HAVANA, Jan. 5th, 1863. Rev. and dear Brother—I do not know that I have anything specially worthy of the attention of the readers of the Central, and therefore I address my letter to you, giving you the option of taking it all to yourself, or of publishing any part of it that you think might be interesting to others.

My letters from Nassau have informed you of our success in running the blockade. There were eight gentlemen in our party, all anxious to get to Europe as soon as practicable, and we accordingly chartered a small schooner, (not as large as some of the oyster boats I have seen in the dock at Richmond,) to convey us to Cuba—miles distant. We got on board about sundown, on the 31st of December, expecting to sail immediately, but we found the captain and mate missing. These two worthies, as well as the other four members of the crew were all negroes, free of course, and said to be expert seamen, as they had spent their lives in the perilous profession of wreckers. When the captain came on board we induced him to go ashore and find the mate, and in about an hour he returned with him. Then the steward wanted to go ashore, but the captain objected, and refused to let him have the boat. A violent quarrel then commenced, the whole crew joining in with a perfect battle of discordant sounds such as West India negroes only can execute. The presence and remonstrance of eight white passengers had no effect in arresting this very unpleasant altercation, in the midst of which the steward jumped overboard and swam ashore.—The schooner being anchored in the harbor about a hundred yards from the quay. The captain threw a block of wood at his head before he had swam three lengths from the schooner, but fortunately, or unfortunately missing him, he made his escape in safety. This scene was somewhat discouraging, as it showed that there was no discipline on board, and we hesitated to trust ourselves on such a frail craft, with such a crew, for so long a voyage. But we were impatient to get on, and concluded to run all risks. It was about 10 o'clock at night when we weighed anchor and tacked out of the Nassau harbor with a head wind.

The morning of the first day of the New Year found us on a rough sea, in the narrow dirty cabin of a small schooner, without even straw in our bunks to lie on; weary and sore from rolling from side to side all night; but as the day advanced, the sun came out, and best of all, the wind shifted and blew steadily in our favor for the remainder of the voyage. In our company of eight passengers three nations were represented, and several churches, but all agreed to meet in our cabin just at sundown for a short devotional exercise, which I conducted reading the 145th Psalm, and then offering

prayer, in which we committed ourselves and all dear to us, to the care and keeping of God for the year upon which we had entered; entreating his "presence to go with us," in sunshine and in storm through the whole voyage of life, and at last to bring us all into the haven of eternal rest.

On Friday the 2d inst., we had occasion to admire the skill of our Captain in bringing us, without chart or any nautical instruments on board for taking observations, by several islands, reefs, and the light house of what is called the "Double Head Shot," almost at the time he said he would at the beginning of the voyage. With almost the instinct of birds of passage those black navigators find their way over the trackless sea, conveying travellers safely from New Providence to Cuba. By the light of a brilliant moon we sailed along by Cardenas (the landing place of Lopez) and Matanzas, and at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning, a gaily painted little steamer came out and towed us into the spacious and beautiful harbor of Havana. After coming to anchor, we were visited by the health officer, who made his way to us in a little boat covered with an awning and having the Spanish flag (two red bars, with a yellow bar between, and the arms of the Queen in the centre) flying from a staff at the stern; and then came the custom house officials, detaining us an hour or two for the examination of passports, and baggage, and finally we were permitted to go ashore and congratulate ourselves of being safely landed in the Capital of the "Queen of the Antilles."

Immediately on landing we were struck with the contrast presented with everything to which we were accustomed at home, in the appearance of the people, the style of architecture and colors of the houses,—yellow and blue being the favorite tints—the neatly wares of the vendors of fruits and small wares,—mules buried under immense packs of hay and fodder, which elsewhere would have been transported on wheels,—the narrow streets and sidewalks wide enough only for one pedestrian,—and the droll looking equipages conspicuous among all of which was the Volante—a kind of chaise or gig, holding two persons, drawn by a horse in very long timber shafts, by the side of which is hitched another horse in traces, still longer, on which the driver sits, holding the bridle of the other horse in his left hand. The driver, or postilion, wears a jacket gamfully trimmed, tight breeches, and boots which come up above his knees, and armed at the heel with gigantic silver-plated spurs. The volante is the favorite vehicle of Habaneros, and is almost as much an "institution" among them as the gondola among the people of Venice. Those owned by private persons are often very much ornamented, the tails of all of which was the Volante—a kind of chaise or gig, holding two persons, drawn by a horse in very long timber shafts, by the side of which is hitched another horse in traces, still longer, on which the driver sits, holding the bridle of the other horse in his left hand. The driver, or postilion, wears a jacket gamfully trimmed, tight breeches, and boots which come up above his knees, and armed at the heel with gigantic silver-plated spurs. The volante is the favorite vehicle of Habaneros, and is almost as much an "institution" among them as the gondola among the people of Venice. 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