

REVIEW

OF

REV. HENRY J. VAN DYKE'S DISCOURSE

ON

"The Character and Influence of Abolitionism,"

A

SERMON

Preached in the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church, Twenty-Third
Street, New York, on Sabbath Evening, December 23, 1860,

BY

REV. J. R. W. SLOANE, PASTOR.

ALSO, BY SPECIAL REQUEST,

IN THE CHURCH OF THE PURITANS (REV. DR. CHEEVERS'),

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S E R M O N.

Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.—PROV., xxxi., 8.

Remember them that are in bonds as bound, with them.—HEB., xiii., 3.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.—COL., iv., 1.

THE passages which I have read, and many others scattered throughout the pages of Scripture, thick as stars in the galaxy, furnish a sufficient warrant for calling your attention to a remarkable discourse which I propose to pass under review to-night. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isaiah, lix., 19. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence." Isaiah, lxii., 6.

Were the author of the discourse some obscure or eccentric individual, without position and without character, we might pass it by in silence, leaving it to the scorn of the Christian world, and the oblivion to which it must ultimately be consigned. When we consider, however, that he is a minister, said to be a man of intellect and of culture, pastor of a large and respectable congregation in a neighboring city, occupying an important and responsible position in a religious denomination which is one of the most powerful and influential in the country, the cause of truth and righteousness demands a different mode of treatment. We are to remember, also, that the principles which he advocates are those of the Old School Presbyterian Church, with which he is connected ; that his senti-

ments, however abhorrent to all right Christian feeling, are thundered from hundreds of pulpits Sabbath after Sabbath by men who are the chosen moral and religious teachers of the people—men, too, by no means contemptible or to be despised.

It may be said that I do injustice, when I charge upon an ecclesiastical body the sentiments of a solitary individual connected with it. To this, I reply that the Rev. Mr. Van Dyke claims that these are the principles of his Church, and no one has ventured to deny the claim. I hold in my hand a volume compiled of articles selected from *The Princeton Review*, the acknowledged organ of the Old School Church. There are in this book two articles, one entitled "Abolitionism," being a review of certain speeches and discourses of Old School ministers in favor of slavery; the other entitled "Slavery," being a review of the work of Dr. Channing upon that subject. These articles, from the pen of the justly distinguished Dr. Hodge, state the principles of the Old School Presbyterian Church on this question, and have never been repudiated. Of these articles, Mr. Van Dyke's sermon is virtually a reproduction, a kind of echo, rather a faint and feeble one, too, as compared with the masculine vigor of the original. I do not assert that it is a plagiarism, or a copy; but I do assert that it is all here,—in this book!—even to the quotations from Dr. Channing and the attacks upon Dr. Wayland; that all the principal points, definitions, and arguments are taken from these articles; that Mr. Van Dyke has put on another man's coat, after brushing it up and slightly altering the fashion to suit the times. This substantiates his own claim, and my charge, that he speaks the received sentiments of his Church. It may be replied that the opinions of the Church have greatly changed since these articles appeared. I have no doubt a change has commenced and is progressing in that body; I have seen not a few signs which indicate such a change in it; although I have sometimes feared for it, as some one said of *The New York Observer*,* that it would be the last thing converted previous to the Millennium. Doubt-

* This journal is generally regarded as an organ of the Old School Presbyterian Church.

less there are many in its membership and ministry who heartily repudiate such views, but it so happens that these persons are never heard, while those who speak are all upon the other side. But again I ask, will any prominent minister of this city rebuke or oppose Mr. Van Dyke? Will *The Princeton Review* acknowledge its sins of twenty-four and sixteen years ago, and condemn such sentiments? Will *The Presbyterian*? Will any Minister, Magazine, Journal, or Review, having any acknowledged right to speak the mind of the Church, give such a deliverance? I pause for a reply.

When Prof. Hitchcock, some two or three years since, was reported as entertaining views of interpretation at variance with the received doctrines of the orthodox upon that subject, the Rev. Mr. Van Dyke was the first to sound the alarm, to warn parents who had committed their daughters to the educational influences of "Packer Institute"* of the dangerous heresies being instilled into their unsuspecting minds by the attractive lectures of the distinguished Professor of Union Theological Seminary.

The man whose soul was disquieted by a rumor that unorthodox views concerning the Book of Genesis were being presented to a score or two of young ladies, in the class-room of a Female College, preaches to a full house on a Sabbath evening, and permits to be published in a widely circulated journal on Monday morning, and afterwards revises in order that it may be printed in pamphlet form and scattered by thousands over the country, a sermon in which he declares American slavery to be a divine institution, authorized of God, warranted by his Word, and sanctioned by the Savior of the world.

Had this gentleman preached an indefinite atonement, denied the doctrine of decrees, of election, of future punishment, of the perseverance of the saints, or any other embodied in our Confession of Faith, he would have been libeled for heresy, and compelled to recant, or else have been deposed, and forced to demit his pastoral charge! But when he preaches, as God's truth, what Lord Brougham calls "the wild and guilty fantasy that

* Packer Institute is a large seminary for young ladies in Brooklyn.

man can hold property in man," defends from the Scriptures what the Rev. Dr. Breckinridge, looking a Louisville audience in the face, pronounced "the most atrocious system upon which the sun ever shone,"—what Wesley defines as "the sum of all villainies,"—nobody rebukes the blasphemy; nay, so far from being condemned, he is applauded, and loses neither jot nor tittle of the respect and esteem in which he is held by his co-workers in the ministry! What wonder that infidelity abounds! that profane wits sneer at professed orthodoxy! and that the way of truth is evil spoken of!

We must remember that this is the hour of one of the sternest conflicts between despotism and liberty which the world has ever witnessed; an hour in which mighty scales hang poised in even balance. While the friends of freedom in all lands stand, with anxious eyes and palpitating hearts, awaiting the issue, it is proposed to decide this contest by throwing some thousands of copies of this sermon upon the side of tyranny!

Mr. O'Connor, at a treasonable meeting held somewhere down town the other day, informed the South that their dangers did not arise from the politicians, the political parties, or the press, but from the conscientious convictions of the sober, serious, and religious masses of the North, who had been taught, and who firmly believe, that slavery is a crime and a sin! With an artless simplicity which in such a quarter is beautiful and refreshing, he asks the southern Hotspurs to stay their treasonable hands, and afford time to the North to correct its false opinions; this, he considers, can easily be accomplished, by means of various agencies, chief among which he mentions the preaching of Mr. Van Dyke, "et id omne genus."

Approaching the discourse more nearly, we must at the outset give Mr. Van Dyke the credit of candor in his general statement of the question. He plants himself fairly and squarely upon the broad ground that *slavery is right*. Such a man, however much we may detest his principles, or object to his mode of defending them, commands respect for the boldness of his position, and the honesty with which he states it; while your thoroughbred time-server, who always begins, "I am as much opposed to slavery as any one, but—but"—and then closes his mean abuse

of anti-slavery men and anti-slavery parties with whining cant about the ameliorating influences of the Gospel, and an appeal to the Bible argument, deserves and receives nothing but sovereign contempt.

The first thing which arrests attention is our author's definition of abolitionism. He says, almost copying the words of the *Review*, "By abolitionism we mean the measures and principles of abolitionists. And what," he continues, "is an abolitionist? He is one who believes that slaveholding is sin, and ought therefore to be abolished. ["Regardless of consequences," says the *Review*, but Mr. Van Dyke more candid, and assuming broader ground, omits this qualification; he goes on:] "This is the fundamental, the essential, characteristic of abolitionism—that slaveholding is sin—that holding men in involuntary servitude is an infringement upon the rights of man, a heinous crime in the sight of God. A man may believe, on political or commercial grounds, that slavery is an undesirable system, and that slave labor is not the most profitable; he may have various views as to the rights of slaveholders under the Constitution of the country; he may think this or that law upon the statute books of the Southern States is wrong, but this does not constitute him an abolitionist; to be entitled to this name he must believe '*that slaveholding is morally wrong.*'" Here we have it—the italics are his own—abolitionism is the belief "THAT SLAVEHOLDING IS MORALLY WRONG." With a candor which can not be too highly extolled, with a fullness of statement which leaves nothing to be desired, avoiding all subtle distinctions about "malum in se" and such like equivocations, he comes directly to the point and pronounces every man an abolitionist who believes slavery to be morally wrong. Scorning all distinctions of theory and practice on this great question, putting in the same category John Brown and Henry Ward Beecher, Garrison and Seward, Phillips and Lincoln, grouping together Garrisonians, radical abolitionists, political abolitionists, gradual emancipationists, and republicans, he stamps all with the same brand, "abolitionists,"—writes this same superscription over all, and proceeds to denounce them as covenant breakers, haters of God, and foes to the best interests of human society!

At this point, our admiration of Mr. Van Dyke's candor must, unfortunately, cease. It would call me entirely too far from the main question to enter into a critical examination of all his authorities. I stop only to say, that I do not accept the interpretation which Mr. Barnes* gives of Mr. Van Dyke's text, for reasons hereafter to be stated ; and I repudiate Dr. Wayland's explanation of the *supposed* silence of Christ. I can not omit, however, to notice the disingenuous use which Mr. Van Dyke makes of McKnight, of whom he says, "Let me quote another testimony, on this point, from an eminent Scotch divine, I mean Dr. McKnight, *whose Exposition of the Epistles is a standard work in Great Britain and this country, and whose associations must exempt him from all suspicion of pro-slavery prejudice.*" As to the *standard* character of Dr. McKnight's work, hear the celebrated Robert Haldane, in the appendix to his great work upon Romans, p. 760, Carter's edition : "In adverting, in the foregoing exposition, to the fundamental heresies of Mr. Stuart, I have also pointed out, in various places, the *deeply heretical character* of Dr. McKnight's Commentary, and have stated enough to draw the attention of the reader to the errors of that *very dangerous and unsound* commentator. Dr. McKnight's work on the Epistles has, probably, done more *extensive mischief* in this country, than any other that can be named. His 'AUDACIOUS HETERODOXY,' as it is termed in the *Presbyterian Review* of May, 1836, and daring perversions of the Word of God, have been most pernicious!"

I am aware that one man's orthodoxy is another man's heterodoxy, but I am now speaking to an Old School Presbyterian, who will not venture to deny or controvert this opinion of McKnight, as expressed by Robert Haldane. But Mr. Van Dyke is yet more disingenuous in his assertion that McKnight's associations must exempt him from all suspicion of pro-slavery prejudice ; such a declaration might, with equal justice, be made concerning Rev. Gardiner Spring, D.D., of this city, or Dr. Thornwell, of South Carolina. McKnight was born, be it remembered, in 1721, and died in 1800 ;—a period in which "pro-slavery prejudice" was as prevalent in the churches of

* Rev. Albert Barnes, author of *Notes on the New Testament*.

Great Britain as it is now in the churches of the United States ; his commentaries were published in 1795, and although Wilberforce and Clarkson had been at work ten years to get the African slave-trade abolished when his book was published, he did not find it in his heart to say one word in favor of their cause.

Yet, Mr. Van Dyke attempts to carry back the present anti-slavery sentiment of the Scotch divines, and attach it to a man who died seven years before the slave-trade was abolished, and thirty-four years before the accomplishment of West India emancipation, and who, so far as I know, never wrote a single word in condemnation of slavery or in favor of emancipation.

His first proposition is stated in these words : " Abolitionism" (the belief that slavery is morally wrong) " has no foundation in the Scriptures." Passing the patriarchal age, and for some unaccountable reason omitting the beautiful and powerful argument which the apologists of the " patriarchal institution" have been accustomed to draw from the three hundred and eighteen trained and armed servants of Abraham, to say nothing of the curse pronounced upon Canaan, he comes at once to the law of Moses, quotes the usual passages, omits with oblivious indifference all the explanations which the great scholars on our side have given of these laws, sets up a man or two of straw, knocks them down as easily as a boy his nine pins, asserts that God sanctioned slaveholding, that all the abolitionists in the world will not make him believe that God ever sanctioned sin, and that, therefore, slavery is not sinful. To this I reply by a direct contradiction of the premise, and a denial that God sanctioned slavery under the Theocracy, or that slavery ever existed there, except in direct violation of his law and will. This I proceed to substantiate, not by assertion, but by arguments patent to every understanding.

In the first place, there is no word in the Hebrew language for slave, none for slavery. There is a word for servant, and one for servitude, but no word like our word slavery, denoting a condition of involuntary servitude ; no specific term that expresses that form of relation between man and man. It may be

replied that the absence of the word does not imply the negation of the thing ; there is no such word as slave in the law technically called the " Fugitive Slave Law," yet no one denies that slaves are meant. We do not, however, rest the argument upon the mere absence of the word from a particular document, but from the entire language ; had slavery been a divine institution, as Mr. Van Dyke argues, surely there would have been a word to express the idea specifically. The fact that there is no such word is a strong presumption that there was no such thing.

In the second place, there is no account in the Old Testament of any permission for the sale by one person to another, of a third who was allowed no voice nor will in the transaction ; no such transaction is recorded ; on the contrary, all such traffic in human flesh, in " slaves and souls of men," was absolutely prohibited ; it never was attempted except in direct violation of the law, and never failed to bring down upon the people the withering curse of Heaven. There was no purchase of men, except from themselves, by voluntary contract for a specified sum, for a definite time, known and agreed upon by the parties ; there were no slave-hunts in other countries for a supply of servants ; there was not a single barracoön on the borders ; there were no slave-pens in the cities—no auction blocks, upon which men, women, and children might be placed and sold to the highest bidder in all the land. You might have passed through all the tribes from Dan to Beersheba, without ever meeting a cofile of slaves !

In the third place, the special statute designed to prevent this crime, " He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death," forever brands with the stamp of God's reprobation and curse American slavery, and rendered the practice of such an iniquity in the Jewish Commonwealth impossible. The law does not read, he that stealeth a slave and selleth him, nor he that steal-eth a servant even, and selleth him, but he that stealeth *a man*. It was the crime of stealing a man from himself, of removing him from a condition of freedom to a condition of bondage, as our slaves were stolen in the first instance from Africa, against

which this law was directed ; the very grossest outrage that can be perpetrated on humanity, a crime in God's sight of the deepest dye, and therefore adjudged worthy of the severest punishment known to the divine law, namely, death. Dare Mr. Van Dyke deny this ? So have said all the churches ;—his own included, in its testimony of 1801—previous to its enlightenment and sanctification by the price of cotton, sugar, and tobacco ! So have all the civilized nations of the world agreed, by declaring the foreign slave-trade *murder* and *piracy*, words all too mild to express the enormity of its guilt. There was no such crime as slave-stealing known in Israel, for the simple reason that there were no slaves to steal. However criminal helping a man to freedom may be, it is not forbidden in the divine word ; on the contrary, as we shall presently learn, something like it is highly commended. But the crime of man-stealing was known in the heathen nations round about Israel ; and against the practice of such an enormity, God guarded his chosen people by the fiery sword of this express and unqualified enactment. Can any man deny that American slavery originated in man-stealing ? If so, does it not stand condemned and cursed in its very root, by the law of that God whose judgment is according to truth ? Moreover, as if the Spirit designed to anticipate all subterfuges, it is added, “and if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” Had it been made for our system, and designed to meet the argument with which it is attempted to be supported, it could not have been more specific.

How many transfers then, I ask, in the name of all that is sacred, does it require to transform this vice into a virtue ?—this crime, against which the judgments of Heaven are denounced, into a grand missionary enterprise, and its practice into the highest exercise of a heavenly beneficence and piety ? “Nobody pretends any thing of this kind,” replies some well-meaning individual, about forty years behind the present stage of the controversy ; “the southern people would be glad to get rid of their slaves, if they could, but do not know what to do with them.”

I hold in my hand the discourse of Dr. Palmer, of New Orleans, delivered on Thanksgiving Day, a man of whom Mr.

Van Dyke says, "that his soul is knit to him with the sympathy of Jonathan for David." From this discourse he quotes a long passage in a foot-note to the pamphlet edition of his sermon, with high approval. Here are the closing sentences: "My servant, whether born in my house or bought with my money, stands to me in the relation of a child. Though providentially owing me service, which providentially I am *bound* to exact, he is, nevertheless, my brother and my friend; and I am to him a guardian and a father. He leans upon me for protection, for counsel, and for blessing" [especially the blessing!], "and so long as the relation continues no power, but the power of Almighty God, shall come between him and me." Here is another passage from the same discourse, which Mr. Van Dyke does *not* quote, "This argument, then, which sweeps over the entire circle of our relations, touches the four cardinal points of duty *to ourselves, to our slaves, to the world, and to Almighty God*. It establishes the nature and solemnity of our present trust, *to preserve and transmit our existing system of domestic servitude, with the right unchallenged by man, to go and root itself wherever Providence and nature may carry it.*" This chivalrous sentence from New Orleans—bristling with Dr. Palmer's own italics—seems to have been rather uncourageously omitted by his enthusiastic friend on Brooklyn Heights. "This trust," he adds, "we will discharge in the face of the worst possible peril. Though war be the aggregation of all evils, yet, should the madness of the hour appeal to the arbitration of the sword, we will not shrink even from the baptism of fire. If modern crusaders stand in serried ranks upon some plain of Esdraclon, there shall we be, in defense of our trust. Not till the last man has fallen behind the last rampart shall it drop from our hands; and then only in surrender to the God who gave it." Well done, Dr. Palmer! Here is the exhibition of a courage second only to the piety which may reasonably be supposed to characterize one who has been called to the pastorate of one of the largest, wealthiest, and most influential churches in this city;* also to the important post of assisting

* Dr. Palmer recently received a call to the late Dr. J. W. Alexander's church in Fifth Avenue, New York.

in the education of the rising ministry of the Old School Church in Princeton! Mr. Van Dyke, with characteristic modesty, charges abolitionism with being not only a fanatical but a bloody spirit; and almost in the same breath, declares that his soul is knit, like the soul of Jonathan to David, to this modern "Peter the Hermit," who declares a crusade of blood, for the purpose of carrying slavery, not only into all the territories of the United States, but into all parts of the habitable world.

In the fourth place, the law for the fugitive rendered involuntary servitude in the Hebrew Commonwealth impossible—"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee; he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." This law, as explicit as it is humane and merciful, guarded against the tyranny of masters, and gave the sacred right of protection to all under the Theocracy. What a contrast to the infernal enactment which disgraces our *Christian* nation! Yet, in the face of this benevolent decree of God, this man, professing to stand upon the Mosaic institutions, calls upon the Northern States to repeal their "Liberty bills," in order that he who is flying toil-worn and weary, but with the light of the north star in his eye, and the light of the hope of liberty in his heart, from the prison-house of bondage, may be pursued by the hounds of the law, seized by the strong arm of the civil power, and thrust back into that hell of toil, suffering, and woe, from which he is attempting to escape! Would you do it? Not one of you! Would I? Not though opposed, as Luther said, by as many devils as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses! Would Mr. Van Dyke? No; I do him the honor to believe that he would not; that his words belie his heart. Try him with the case mentioned the other evening by our eloquent young friend, Mr. Tilton.* A mother, whose hour is near, hastening by flight to a land of liberty, in order that her child may be born not a

* Mr. Tilton had delivered a lecture a few evenings before in the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church.

slave but free! No imaginary case! Just such a one occurred under my own roof, although, unfortunately, I was absent at the time. There were those there, however, who knew how to give protection and sympathy. When pressed to stay until her trial should be over, she replied in words which so far surpass the noblest utterances of Roman mothers in pathos and sublimity, that I would scorn to place them in comparison—"I can not stay; I want my first child to be born in a free land!" God bless her, it *was* born in a free land! Mr. Van Dyke could not stand and say, looking into the eyes of those mothers to whom he ministers from Sabbath to Sabbath, "I would have sent her back." If he should say it, who would believe him? If he should *have done* it, who would not despise him? Yet, what an account that man will have to render who preaches such doctrines in the abstract, or advises that others shall do that which is so contrary to all principles of natural kindness, to say nothing of justice, and so directly in the very teeth of God's express command!—"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me."

In the fifth place, the law of the Jubilee rendered slavery impossible among the chosen people—"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." No limitation, no restriction; the Jubilee was glorious, because it was a proclamation of liberty to *all* without distinction; but if it had no reference to the foreign-born servant, it would have been a farce, a mockery, for all Hebrew servants went out at any rate by the law of their service. Mr. Van Dyke affirms that there was no jubilee for the heathen servant, nor for the Hebrew whose ear was bored. The idea, as it relates to the latter, is too absurd to be tolerated for a moment. Is it to be supposed that any man who possessed common sense would, merely because he loved his master, consign himself, wife, children, and children's children, to the latest generation, to a hopeless bondage?—or, that God would have enacted a law which would have permitted such injustice to arise from such folly? The truth is, that the term *forever*, in this connection, is idiomatic, and means only to the year of jubilee. The very nature of the regulations as to land

and property make this certain. The argument is fully elaborated in the larger works upon this subject. If any thing can be made clear, this has been, that the jubilee was a proclamation throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof; and that the first notes which pealed from every hill-top of Judea, on the first morning of this auspicious year, proclaimed to all servants the termination of their servitude. What a moral obliquity does it argue to find a man desirous to construe every passage in which there is room for a doubt, in favor of this atrocity! I do not wonder that a distinguished man said of such characters, that *their* god was *his* devil.

In the sixth place, the whole nature of the covenant which God made with Israel was for the security of freedom and justice to all, not for the establishment of a hateful tyranny. Mr. Van Dyke says, and says truly, "There was not one slave in all that mighty host who gathered around Mount Sinai, to receive the law by which their future institutions were to be moulded." The admission is important; it shows, at least, that if that vast multitude of SLAVES which Abraham possessed descended to his sons, the stock had by this time run out. But observe what a view this presents of the justice of God. He did not simply permit, did not merely "wink at," this system, but actually ordained it, established it by positive law where it did not exist—established a trade in slaves in the wilderness, between Israel and the heathen nations! The absurdities start up before this assertion like the men of Roderick Dhu in the presence of Fitz James. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him, *for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*" "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know *the heart of a stranger seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*" "Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. For I am the Lord thy God." "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you *as one born among you, thou shalt love him as thyself*, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." We can explain the avowal and advocacy of such sentiments as Mr. Van Dyke's only by a reference to

the blinding nature of a monster iniquity. Such men have been so long accustomed to plead and apologize for slavery, that they are at length absolutely incapable of distinguishing right from wrong, darkness from light, sweet from bitter.

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen,
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

In the seventh place, I do assert, notwithstanding Mr. Van Dyke's disclaimer, that the argument for polygamy, the twin sister of slavery, is stronger than for slavery. I can assure him that the day is not far distant when his arguments for oppression will be as abhorrent to all right-thinking men, as those of Brigham Young for the accursed system which he has established in Utah. Polygamy was *tolerated*, slavery was not.

In the eighth place, were we to grant all that these men claim for the system which prevailed in the Jewish Commonwealth, they would be as far from having found any justification of American slavery as ever. They must needs show the same divine warrant as they suppose the Jews to have possessed. They must take all the laws and regulations with it; for in cases of divine authority it will not do to select; all must go together. But how long would American slavery last under those laws?

They would pierce it through and through in a thousand directions. Their enactment would be equivalent to immediate emancipation. American slavery could not live a day under single enactments relating to Hebrew servitude. Give the American slave about three-sevenths or one-half of his time, as was given to the servants among God's people, and how much would slave property be worth in the South?

But what sort of slavery is it for which Mr. Van Dyke pleads? He can not in accordance with his Presbyterian principles (belief in the unity of the race, descent from Adam, and representation through him,) put it on the ground of diversity of color and inferiority of race. Either of these positions would overthrow his entire system of belief—he knows that God hath made of one blood all nations of men. The logical consequence

of his plea then is for the enslaving of the white, as much as the black ; but would he dare to say *this* ? What is the ground of right on which he plants himself ? This he has not told us. He would be curious to hear an explanation of this point.

But, I am asked then, what was the nature of Hebrew servitude ? I answer, a voluntary contract entered into between two parties, and only two, upon the ground of value received and service performed, so hedged about with careful and just enactments that the rights of both parties were fully secured. "Born in the house," "bought with his money," "possession," "inheritance," "possession forever," etc., are idiomatic phrases, and can not by any process of philological or critical torture be made to mean "*slavery*"—while all the laws and regulations which I have cited, and I have but glanced at points capable of indefinite expansion, together with many others just as forcible, make it absolutely certain that no such system did or could exist. Men will not believe, all arguments will not make them believe, and are thankful they are not permitted to believe, that the God of Heaven authorized one man to live on the unrequited toil of another. That *is* injustice, there *is* a law written upon the heart, and the only effect which such arguments produce is to shake men's faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures. The very light of nature in man gives the lie to all attempts to prove that one man has a right to the labor of another to whom he gives no equivalent. If Mr. Van Dyke pronounces an appeal to the light of nature *infidelity*, he may go and settle it with Paul and the Westminster divines.

We come now to the New Testament. We confess our astonishment that he did not shrink back affrighted at the monstrous character of his assertions and inferences. Slavery he affirms was just as common in Judea in the time of Christ as to-day in South Carolina ! That Christ was familiar with the laws of Roman slavery ! That no man, having any pretensions to scholarship or candor, would allege that these laws were as mild as the very *worst* statutes of the slave-codes of modern times ! That the Savior was acquainted with the law that gave the master the power of life and death over his slave, and with all the vast abuses of the system, and that nevertheless, there is

no rebuke or denunciation of the system. That while all other sins are freely and fully condemned, this is never mentioned but in terms of the utmost respect. Of course, there is but one inference—He approved. Christ then approved a system that gave the master the right to put his slave to death at his pleasure, a system never matched in atrocity except by that prevailing among *us*, one which the writers of that age mention only to excite abhorrence of a period that could endure such wickedness, one which has called forth the most indignant bursts of condemnation from all modern writers who have treated of that epoch, and which more than any other cause, perhaps more than all other causes, contributed to the overthrow of the proud fabric of the Roman Empire. It remained for the Christian ministry of this land to find this lowest deep of moral perversion, and to baptize this horror of the centuries with the sanction of Jesus Christ!

It is not difficult to detect the monstrous fallacy of the position. The assumption that slavery existed at that time in Judea is wholly gratuitous; the statement is without the shadow of proof; on the contrary, forbidden as it was to Israel, there is every reason to conclude that it did not exist there in any form or degree, and that Christ did not come in contact with a slave during the course of his ministry. Will Mr. Van Dyke tell us what sort of slavery this was which Christ did not reprove? Roman slavery, he says. What then had become of Hebrew servitude? When did it disappear? When did the other atrocious system take its place in Judea? But who does not see the fallacy of the attempt to sanction, from the silence of Christ in the New Testament, a system not only so opposed to all principles of natural justice, but so directly in the face of those tremendous denunciations against oppression in the Old Testament? The sect of the Essenes existed in the time of Christ. Yet they are not even mentioned; no allusion to them even by him or his apostles—except very obscure references to this sect be allowed in one or two passages, are we, therefore, to conclude that Christ approved of their perversions of the Scriptures and their denial of the doctrine of the resurrection? Christ does not mention idolatry, did he

therefore approve of idol worship? He does not once mention or allude to the gladiatorial combats; are they, therefore, a divine institution? But the *apostles* spoke of these things, says an objector. They spoke nothing of the Essenes, or, at any rate, obscurely, and, if any thing, respectfully; so of the gladiatorial contests. They spoke also of slavery. The law, Paul reminds Timothy, was made for *man-stealers*, an advice not unnecessary in some quarters at the present time; at any rate, nothing could be more delightful than a discourse from Mr. Van Dyke upon that declaration. Fancy now this reverend apologist for slavery attempting an argument with some distinguished champion of "the ring;" he commences by calling prize-fighting unnatural, cruel, brutal, wicked, or by whatever other epithet he may find most expressive of his abhorrence and detestation of such brutality. Stop a moment, if you please, says the gladiator, "I am no heathen philosopher, groping my way by the feeble glimmerings of the light of nature, no modern infidel appealing to the corrupt and fickle tribunal of human reason; I plant myself upon the Inspired Word; my motto is 'To the law and to the testimony.' Where in the New Testament, either by Christ or his apostles, is my calling forbidden?" While Mr. Van Dyke is thinking up his passages, our champion turns upon him, "Every body knows, sir, that it is no sin to knock a man down under certain circumstances; as to its cruelties, they are nothing compared to what occurs sometimes in families; there is, sir, as you have stated, a child in an orphan asylum in Brooklyn, who was thrown by its father into the fire and almost roasted to death; better save your 'tears and shrieks' for children, and leave men to take care of themselves. So far from being inhuman, as you represent it, we are the very best of friends; besides the Scriptures always speak of it in terms most respectful; you don't consider yourself better than the Apostle Paul do you, Mr. Van Dyke? Hear what he says, 'So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.' 'I keep my body under,' a clear reference to our abstemious habits, when preparing for the combat. More than this, sir, he compares the heavenly assembly to the respectable company which assemble to witness our manly sport, 'Therefore, seeing we also are compassed about

with so great a cloud of witnesses.' These things, too, were spoken in the time of the Roman games, much more brutal than ours, as every scholar and man of candor must admit, before the ameliorating influences of the Gospel had produced so marked a change upon our pursuit!" Where is the Rev. Apologist in such an argument?

But, then, was Christ silent? I answer most positively that he was not. All things which he said are not recorded, for the simple reason that the world would not contain the books; but, did he not constantly appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures? Are we, in order to please a few contemptible slaveholders, to suppose that he omitted those passages, which denounce oppression? And if those passages did not condemn Roman slavery, for what purpose were they written? What is oppression if slavery is not? But, again: the great principles of his teachings are diametrically opposed to all such iniquities; and, were men to practice them, American slavery would terminate before to-morrow's sun shall sink in the west. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," words quoted almost literally from the Mosaic law, with reference to men of another race; one of those two commandments upon which hang all the law and the prophets. Does the slaveholder love his neighbor as himself? Can the toiling slave obey this divine command? I am sure I could not were I in his place, and my neighbor interpreted to mean my master or overseer. Christ's first sermon was an abolition discourse, from an incendiary publication called the Prophecy of Isaiah, an anti-slavery book of the Old Testament. The text which he selected was this memorable passage, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, *to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*" "Therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." But what is the great sum of Christ's teaching? Love to man and to God. What the great end, but to fill the earth with love and peace? As far as the east is distant from the west, as far as light is from darkness, as heaven from hell, so far

are the teachings of the divine Savior of the world from any alliance with this dark and bloody despotism.

The teachings of the apostles are precisely what might have been anticipated from men who had learned in such a school. There is not one word of approval, nor the slightest indication that slaveholders were admitted to the church. Slaves were admitted, but it is susceptible of demonstration that slaveholders were not received into the communion and fellowship of the Apostolic Church. The Roman law accounted slaves as *pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus*, as nobodies, as dead, as brutes; Christianity recognized them as immortal beings, elevated them to the rank of men, and welcomed them to all the privileges and immunities of the spiritual commonwealth. The early Christians had all things in common; they were exhorted "Let each esteem other better than themselves, in honor preferring one another." Husbands were exhorted to love their wives, and wives their husbands, children to obey their parents, and parents to provide for their children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, all of which duties are impossible of performance in a relation which is one of absolute authority on the one side, and of absolute subjection upon the other, and which annihilates the institution of the family. "Masters," says the Apostle, "give unto your servants that which is just and equal." This is equivalent to a proclamation of immediate emancipation! The law of American slavery is, "black men have no rights that white men are bound to respect." Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal. Is it equal justice that a servant should have a right to his wife and children? Give him that right, and American slavery is doomed. Is it just and equal that the servant be taught to read the Word of God? Give our slaves the alphabet, and they will tear down the prison-house of their bondage ere ten years have come and gone. *Just and equal?* Let this be given to the slaves, and the homes and plantations of the South are theirs; for, have they not made them with the toil of their hands, the sweat of their dark faces? We have never claimed for them that which is just and equal, only that they be permitted to go out free,

although spoiled, and robbed of every thing ; this we have asked, and intend to keep on asking, until God, in his mercy, grants our request. This passage forever settles the question of American slavery, so far as the New Testament is concerned, just as it settled the question of Roman slavery in favor of liberty in the early church. The passage which Mr. Van Dyke has selected as his text gives no countenance to the system. I might advise a slave to submission and respectful treatment of his master, not because the master had any right to him, but *for his own sake*. Granting that "under the yoke" means slaves, there is nothing gained to his cause. I have no doubt, however, that when properly understood, this passage cuts through and through the system, like a two-edged sword, indicating two classes of servants, those who had unbelieving masters, and, therefore, were under the yoke ; and those who had believing masters, and were, therefore, free ; demonstrating that Roman slavery was totally inconsistent with the practice of Christianity.

So much for the Scripture argument. The only excuse which we can make for a man who attempts to justify, from the Scriptures, a system which originates in the atrocious slave-trade, which denies all secular and religious instruction to its victims, which makes merchandise of men, women, and children, which is the very nursery of petty despots, promotes every hateful immorality, and originates no virtue, is, that he is given over to strong delusion to believe a lie.

Poor Dr. Thornwell of South Carolina, and his brother in distress, the bellicose Dr. Palmer of New Orleans, despairing of ever being able to convince the North that slavery is not sinful but a most lovely, beneficent, patriarchal, and divine institution, are already shaking off the dust of their feet and tearing their raiment as a witness against us. In other words, they are preaching disunion with all their might, while Dr. Mc-Vicar and Rev. Mr. Prentiss (he should be D.D.,) are charming delighted audiences with their scriptural arguments for the slave-trade, with special reference to its adaptation to the spiritual wants of the negro race ! Was there ever such an instance of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness ? Did

impiety ever go beyond this? Can such diabolical perversion of the truth be matched? Yes—by the man who stands in a northern pulpit, and *approves*; declaring that his soul is knit to such men by the *Word* and *SPIRIT* of God as the soul of Jonathan to that of David, and denouncing as madmen and fanatics those who will not indorse his “doctrines of devils.”

Mr. Van Dyke's second proposition is—“The principles of abolition have been propagated chiefly by misrepresentation and abuse.” Still keep in mind his definition of abolitionism, *the belief that slavery is morally wrong*. This second proposition declares that the anti-slavery sentiment of the North, which has so lately spoken in thunder tones that have carried dismay to the heart of this despotism, has been produced by misrepresentations of slavery and abuse of slaveholders, which declaration I pronounce as in itself a misrepresentation, and a slander upon the most intelligent people upon the face of the earth. To declare that the sober, intelligent, and conscientious masses of the North have been influenced to hate slavery, in some instances to enact statutes for the better protection of the fugitive, and at length to place in the presidential chair a man who believes slavery to be a social, moral, and political evil; to declare that all this has been produced by misrepresentation and abuse, exhibits a recklessness of statement, an audacity of impudence, absolutely inconceivable.

Yet, this is what Mr. Van Dyke asserts, what Mr. O'Connor repeats; the pulpit in this instance leading the bar.

As to Dr. Channing's opinion twenty-four years ago, of some who were then technically styled abolitionists, I have nothing to say—perhaps it was just—more probably unjust, it matters not—the opinion is rather too old for present use. Nor do I care to justify all that has been said and done by the friends of freedom during the thirty years of this increasing conflict. I could not vindicate all that was said or done by the great reformers of the sixteenth century. They were sometimes rash, vindictive, fierce; they used terrible weapons; sometimes, doubtless misrepresented their opponents. But what does this prove? that their cause was not just and good? By no means; only that men are men, not angels. So we find them in all his-

tory. They were right, and conquered not by misrepresentation or abuse of their opponents, but by the invincible power of truth. So I say of this glorious anti-slavery movement, if there have been mistakes or misrepresentations, if foolish or wicked men have allied themselves to its interests, (and in what good cause are such not found?) these have retarded, not advanced its progress; it has conquered, not by these means, but in spite of them. But how does he sustain this assertion? Resting his weakness upon the twenty-four-years-old testimony of Dr. Channing, to which I have alluded, he proceeds to declare that we have misrepresented the legal relation existing between master and slave. He asserts that the laws of all civilized countries recognize property in man! This will be news to the great English jurists. But the proof is at hand. In case of a railroad disaster, the wife can obtain damages for the loss of that piece of property, that "chattel personal" which she calls her husband; the husband in the same way for the loss of the valuable services of that "possession forever" which he calls his wife! Well, this is admirable! To say nothing of the refined and spiritual idea of marriage which it implies, we consider it a capital idea; it has all the qualities of a good rule; it works both ways. We hope to see it at once carried into effect; by all means let it be understood that the slave has the same right of property in the master which the master has in the slave. As the property is mutual, a kind of joint stock in the case of the husband and wife, so let it be with the master and slave—the latter having as sacred a right to sell the former, or his wife and children, as the former has to deal thus with him. With this arrangement, I should be quite satisfied.

Again: he complains of the manner in which abolitionists have employed those instances of cruelty which are so frequent in all slaveholding communities; avers, that upon the same principle we might condemn the family; husbands abuse wives—wives, husbands, sometimes!—parents, children—children, parents, etc. To this I reply, that it is an old rule and a logical one, that "The tree is known by his fruit"—one that we are warranted to apply, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Thus have men argued against all tyrannies and oppressions

since the world began ; thus would we test the family relation ; if it was found productive of more evil than of compensatory good—the fruitful parent of vices and miseries, rather than of happiness and virtue—we would all say at once, down with it. This trick, however, which the apologists and defenders of slavery have of incessantly comparing it to the family, is deceptive. The comparison is absolutely blasphemous. The family is a divine institution, older than the church, older than the commonwealth—the parent of both, originating in the divine love, crowned through all the ages with richest blessings —“The purest source of bliss that has survived the Fall.” Slavery is simple oppression, originating in man’s pride and covetousness, prompted and impelled by Mammon, “the least erected spirit that fell from heaven.” The very point which clinches the argument against this system, and brands it with Heaven’s reprobation and curse, is the undeniable fact, that it forbids marriage, subverts the family, and renders either impossible.

There has been no misrepresentation, however ; the man is yet to be born who can paint slavery in its true colors ; the word is yet to be coined which expresses the combination of wickedness which constitutes its essence. Could it rise in all its dreadful lineaments before the eyes of the civilized world to-night, its doom would be sealed before to-morrow’s dawn. Mr. Van Dyke talks about Christian families in the South, in which the slaves are well fed, well clothed, and kindly treated. Suppose it granted—How many, I ask, of these millions of slaves are in the family of the master, or in any way connected with it ? They toil during the day upon the plantation, under the eye of the overseer or underdriver ; pass the night in cabins more or less comfortable, according to the ability or humanity of the owner, but always separated from the mansion, of course ; they have no more connection with the master’s family than his horses and mules—not a particle ; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, as little effort is made for their improvement. Talk about families !—mockery of mockeries ! Why, I have seen a slaveholder upon his horse, with his gun in his hand, followed by his dogs, out upon the hunt of a runaway slave ! Fancy a

father pursuing his son or daughter in that style! I have seen a slave-girl rise from the side of her mistress, and hobble across the floor, confined by fetters which clanked like those of a prisoner in his cell, to prevent her from flying to the woods, as she had formerly done, to escape the infernal tortures which that mistress inflicted upon her in outbreaks of passion. A mother might thus treat her daughter, but would it be tolerated? I have seen the face of a babe six months old streaming with blood, from a cut inflicted by the lash of the whip of an overseer, who, in his reckless haste, had aimed the blow at the nurse who held it in her arms; but I forbear; and yet Mr. Van Dyke dares to talk about misrepresentation, and asks us to send back the fugitive who is escaping from such service!

But let us look for a moment at ordinary slave life separated from these cruelties—I mean separated in imagination—for in reality they never are and can not be—they belong to the system; if you keep men slaves, you must treat them harshly; the relation is one of wrong inflicted upon the one side and received upon the other; it never can be harmonious. This is the apology I make for the southern people; they are no worse than others; they are not devils incarnate; the *system* makes them what they are, and compels these cruelties; they know it themselves, and in many instances deplore it. But let us look at this mode of existence apart from this cruelty. Go with me, then, to a Kentucky tobacco plantation. At early dawn you hear the horn of the overseer; as soon as it is possible to see, men, women, and children of sufficient age ready for work, march to the field, and work until breakfast. Breakfast consists of a large piece of corn-bread and fat meat—enough of both—with water to drink; dinner the same. I have sat by a poor fellow upon his log as he ate his unsavory meal; and when he said to me, “Don’t you think we poor negroes have a hard time of it?” I felt that that was indeed a hard life; and as I looked to the blue heavens above, I wondered that the arm of the Almighty was not extended for their deliverance. Supper in the cabins, with some additions, provided the females are not too much fatigued to prepare it.

Thus passes one weary day after another, in tiresome monotony, varied only by diversity of tasks, or such incidents as may be supposed to arise from such a life—no hope, no object in view, no stimulus but the fear of punishment ; no possibility of improvement ; hedged around on all sides by an iron necessity that permits no alleviation ; yet, an immortal being, susceptible of all degrees of improvement and happiness, and painfully conscious of the injustice of the dreadful doom that oppresses and crushes him. Such is the life of the unhappy victim of this atrocious tyranny.

I speak what I have seen, and know whereof I affirm. I have read and listened to the speeches of others, and have spoken myself, but always with the consciousness of how far short all came of the reality. Slavery, to be known, must be seen, not upon the surface, *but as it is*. I have yet to look the candid man in the face who has thus studied it, who will not confess that it is a system of unparalleled atrocity ; that cruelty is the rule, and kindness the exception. Anti-slavery men, however, have never failed to insist that the sin consists in the relation. The self-evident truths of the "Declaration of Independence," and the teachings of the Bible have formed the great staple of their addresses ; these are the principles which they have attempted to instil into the minds of community ; if poisonous milk, it comes from a source whence such streams have not been generally supposed to flow.

The misrepresentation and abuse, however, have come from the other side ; the abolitionists have been the best abused men in the country ; their enemies have been well acquainted with the Spanish proverb—throw plenty of dirt, and some of it will stick. Sometimes it has come from dainty hands—pulpit, press, and platform, have vied in the ignoble strife of coining and applying opprobrious epithets to the men who have led in this conflict. These have been mobbed, hooted, hissed, pelted with unmerchanted eggs, exposed to popular violence, and to every indignity and danger ; politically, socially, *religiously* ostracized ; denounced as Infidels, Socialists, Jacobins, and whatever else might be considered odious and contemptible. If stung by such envenomed arrows they have sometimes turned upon the foe, and hurled back the charge in words somewhat

expressive, and not always too carefully chosen, who can wonder? I remember when I was a boy, William Allen, a noble fellow, son of a Presbyterian slaveholding minister of Alabama, who had been a student of old Dr. Beecher in Lane Seminary, and who gave up time and wealth for this cause. One morning I observed that his cloak was very much spattered with eggs; I proposed to scrape them off, but he coolly remarked, "that it was no sort of use, as he would only get as many more at the next place!!"

Wendell Phillips, the most magnificent orator of the country, (Calvinistic in theology, though often denounced as an infidel,) is followed to his home by a hooting, howling mob, his life protected by friends, and the police; but *who* disturbs Mr. Van Dyke while uttering his diatribe against abolitionists in Brooklyn? He expends a good deal of superfluous patriotism over a book which he saw in Scotland—whose frontispiece was a picture of a man with a fierce countenance beating a naked woman. Now I can say to Mr. Van Dyke that a member of his own denomination in full communion boasted to me of doing that very-thing! I can give him name and address, if he desires it. He abuses the American Anti-slavery Society without measure, and then displays his blundering ignorance by asserting that "Its President is a Chief Justice of the State of New Jersey!!" This will be news to Mr. Garrison! Who is this chief justice who occupies the honorable position of President of the American Anti-slavery Society?

He closes this head with these soothing and Christ-like declarations, "I believe in the liberty of the press, and in freedom of speech; but I do not believe that any man has the right before God, or in the eye of civilized law, to speak and publish what he pleases without regard to the consequences. With the conscientious convictions of our fellow-citizens, neither we nor the law have any right to interfere; but the law ought to protect all men from the utterance of libelous words whose only effect is to create division and strife. I trust and pray, and call upon you to unite with me in the supplication, that God would give abolitionists repentance and a better mind, so that in time to come they may at least propagate their principles in decent and respectful language!!"

Here is his third statement, "*Abolitionism*" (namely, the belief that slavery is morally wrong), "*leads in multitudes of cases, and by a logical process, to utter infidelity.*" We may safely challenge the world upon this proposition; it has never been matched. The assertion that the belief that slavery is morally wrong leads by a logical process to utter infidelity, is too absurd to merit a reply, and is worthy of one who could declare as Mr. Van Dyke does, that "When Paul stood upon Mars Hill he was surrounded by ten thousand times as many slaveholders as there were idols in the city!!" Athens at this period was crowded with idols beyond the power of computation. The Roman satirist, Petronius, declares that it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man! but Mr. Van Dyke makes the ratio to be ten thousand slaveholders to a single idol. Pausanias, who had some acquaintance with the condition of things, declared that replete as the whole of Greece was with objects of devotion, there were more in Athens than in all the rest of the country. This statement would give the city at that time, a population of some hundreds of millions! To such an extent did they abound, that Pliny declares "that many volumes would but contain something, since no man can speak of the whole." Yet, Mr. Van Dyke says ten thousand slaveholders to every idol! Poor man, he is so delighted with slaveholders, and his mind has so long dwelt upon them and their divine institution, that he sees them swarming in every direction! The declaration is important in this connection, inasmuch as it shows that he is no infidel, and by no means affected with incredulity. But to return to the proposition, it is absolutely incredible how any man in his senses could have ventured such a monstrous declaration. Why, my friends, I do not believe there is a score of you here to-night, however much you may differ from me on certain aspects of the question, who believe slavery to be right. Did it ever occur to you, that you were on the broad road to infidelity? in fact, that you are already suspended over its yawning abyss by a hair, more attenuated than that which held the sword of Damocles? That the only hope for you is the balm of a pro-slavery gospel, dispensed by the physician of the First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn? To make belief in American slavery as a divine institution the *punctum saliens*,

the starting point of a life of faith, its denial the gate that leads to utter perdition; that too, by a minister, exhausts my astonishment. But it is here, and must be met. Well, then, to go no further back, American abolitionism is the daughter of British; the discussion and accomplishment of West India emancipation originated, to a very great extent, the anti-slavery movement of the United States. Were the abolitionists of Great Britain infidels? Wilberforce, Clarkson, Sharpe, Stephen, Stanley, and all the men of that generation, or any part of them, or did they ever become infidels? Did not the churches of Great Britain with one united voice ultimately concur? and do they not believe with us, and against Mr. Van Dyke and his associates, that slavery is a moral wrong?

In the year eighteen hundred and fifty-seven an address was prepared and sent by the Protestants of France to the churches of this country, upon the subject of slavery; in this address they declare, "With respect to ourselves we feel it incumbent upon us to say publicly, that there is not one partisan of slavery among us. There is not among us one single Christian who is able to reconcile with the law of love and holiness the *possession of man by man*—(they evidently were ignorant of Mr. Van Dyke's husband and wife illustration)—the sale in the market-place of immortal beings, the barbarous rupture of the family tie, the suppression of marriage, the inevitable multiplication of immoral relations." Nearly six thousand signatures of French Protestants were attached to this address. We have yet to learn that the Protestants of France are *infidels*. Similar addresses were in preparation in Switzerland and Germany, but whether they were completed and sent, we are not informed. The address of the French found its way into but few of the journals of this country, and the great mass of professing Christians are yet ignorant that such a document is in existence.

Is our author ignorant that there are in our own land Presbyterian churches, with a ministry numbering more than seven hundred, and a correspondent membership, who declare slavery a sin against God, and admit no slaveholder to their communion? Has he forgotten the entire Methodist Church, which, however inconsistent in practice, has never gone so far as to

embody the doctrine of the "immaculate conception" of slavery into their creed, but the opposite? Or the New School Presbyterians, who have never expunged, as the Old School have, the early testimony of the Presbyterian Church against slavery as the crime of man-stealing? How has he overlooked the great mass of Congregationalists, Wesleyans, the Freewill Baptists, etc., etc.; all of whom assert its sinfulness, and deny that it has any sanction either in the Old or New Testament? I do not say that these denominations have done their whole duty, or any thing like it, upon this subject, but they are all included in the definition which he has given of abolitionism—the belief that slavery is morally wrong. I affirm that the man who gives such a definition, and then proceeds to assert that this belief leads by a logical necessity to infidelity, and attempts to prove it, utters a viler slander against the Church of God than any infidel of this or any other age has ever mouthed, is himself guilty of infidelity of the very worst and most dangerous character, and that such assertions from the mouth of orthodox ministers will do more to produce infidelity than all the harangues of all the infidel conventions that will be held until the days of the Millennium.

But how does he attempt to establish this gross assertion? "One of its avowed principles," he says, "is that it does not try slavery by the Bible." Out of his own mouth he shall be condemned. He calls Dr. Wayland an abolitionist. I ask, does *he* test slavery by the Bible? He calls Albert Barnes an eminent abolitionist; does *he* test it by scriptural principles? But, forsooth, these men assert that the *matter* of the Scripture is to be taken into account in arguing the question of inspiration, and, therefore, are infidels! Such an impure system as slavery or polygamy, they declare, would be an argument against the Bible as from God, if it was found to sanction such crimes! This Mr. Van Dyke pronounces infidelity. Into the question which this declaration involves, I have no time to enter. Mr. Van Dyke, however, is sworn to the Confession of Faith. He will find the following language in *The Larger Catechism*, question fourth: "The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and *purity*, by the consent of all the parts and the scope of the whole which is to give all glory to God," etc.

His knowledge of the American Anti-Slavery Society, of classical literature, and of his own church standards, appears to be equally extensive and profound!

Was Judge Jay an abolitionist? Has Mr. Van Dyke ever heard of his work upon Hebrew servitude? Some go so far as to call Dr. Cheever an abolitionist; has Mr. Van Dyke ever seen his book, *God against Slavery*? Has the name of Rev. William Goodell come to his ears in the history of this controversy? Do Reformed Presbyterians, United Presbyterians, Free Presbyterians, etc., test slavery by the Scriptures? A more reckless assertion, based upon a more contemptible quibble, was never made; the plea of ignorance can alone save him from the charge of dishonesty.

Again: he declares that where abolitionism prevails, infidelity is most rampant. Where abolitionism prevails, the people are also most intelligent! In New England, to take his own example. Suppose his charge true, which it is not, let him show the connection. I advise Mr. Van Dyke to benefit his soul by attending the "Boston Anniversaries" next May; I mean, of course, the *religious* anniversaries, such as he would approve, not, *of course*, that of the American Anti-Slavery Society, not of the Church Anti-Slavery Society! Let him look upon the multitudes of earnest, intelligent, and conscientious Christians, who throng these assemblies from all parts of New England; let him hear the enthusiastic addresses from the representative men of her three thousand ministers; then let him visit New England where every village has its neat white church well kept and well attended. Taking up his pilgrim staff, let him then traverse certain sections of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, etc., visit the old waste places of his own church and of other churches, and then come home and preach upon New England infidelity! He knows, however, or if he does not, I do, for I was born upon the New England hills, that infidelity, so far as it has prevailed, has been the child of Unitarianism and Universalism, and has not, in any sense, originated in the anti-slavery enterprise. Theodore Parker was a *Parkerite* before he was an abolitionist, his theological opinions were in no sense the result of his views upon this question, and the very same may be said

of others. But to see the absurdity of this third statement, compare Massachusetts with South Carolina! I beg pardon of Massachusetts. Compare then, if you choose, a congregation of those whom Mr. Van Dyke calls infidels, listening to Dr. Channing, or Theodore Parker, developing their system of natural religion, with an audience in Columbia or Charleston, hanging with delight upon the lips of Rev. Mr. Prentiss expatiating upon the glories of that benevolent and Divine institution "The Foreign Slave-Trade!" I beg a thousand pardons of the infidels. The infidelity of New England is infinitely in advance of South Carolina orthodoxy. The Southern States of this Union are the great strongholds of Satan's kingdom, the seats of irreligion, impiety, and all wickedness, have breathed the pestilential taint of that moral impurity all over the land, and have done and are doing a thousand-fold more against the cause of Christ than all the infidels that New England has ever produced. Hear the French Protestants once more upon this point: "Are you aware of the language which is addressed to us from all sides? This is it, 'Protestantism accommodates itself willingly to slavery. In the United States, this odious institution reckons numerous defenders among the Christian bodies. It is *preached* for, it is *prayed* for, and for it every effort is made to conquer new territories. And this slavery for which so much is done, is the sale of families in detail, is the rupture of the marriage tie, is the annual prostitution of men, women, and children, selected for this odious purpose from the man-farms of Virginia and Kentucky, is, in a word, a monstrous fact, which is not only revolting to religious minds, but which outrages the first principles of humanity. And American Protestantism accepts this fact; they find it to agree with the Gospel; and, doubtless, the Protestants of Europe think as they do, otherwise, they had long ago uttered a loud cry of grief and reprobation.'" Did not intelligent Protestants in Syria declare, last winter, that the news which came from the United States of the banishment of the free colored people from their homes, of Mr. Fee, and others, from Kentucky, and of northern men of all classes who were peacefully pursuing their avocations, had done more to injure Protestantism in Syria than all the Jesuits ever sent out by the Propaganda at Rome? Missionaries in

all parts of the world declare that they are constantly met with a reference to slavery in the churches of the United States, as an argument against our religion. From all parts of the Christian world comes up a united testimony as to the immense evil which this system is doing the cause of evangelical religion, a testimony which is met by this defender of the faith in Brooklyn, declaring all who will not accept it as divine, and who are laboring for its subversion, to be infidels ! The men whom Swedenborg says he saw in the other world, who were dead and did not know it, were wise in comparison with these defenders of this atrocious wickedness. But, what of those men who have engaged in this enterprise, and come during its progress to deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, and those doctrines which we agree in esteeming fundamental to Christianity ? There are a few such, though I believe you could count them all upon your fingers. I ask, however, what occurred in the great Reformation from Popery ? Did all who abandoned Rome, all who did good service in the cause, become evangelical Christians ? The objection is stolen, Rome has urged it again and again, it is her standing argument against the Reformation. What is the reply ? Not the Reformation, but the corrupt system against which the Reformation was a protest, is chargeable with the infidelity. My reply is, not the anti-slavery movement, but a pro-slavery religion, against which it is a tremendous reaction, made these men infidels. From the churches came the strongest opposition, from the pulpits the bitterest denunciations of them and their sacred cause ; this course of treatment produced its natural effect, and in some few instances led to extremes of practice and of language against all religion, which the best friends of the cause deplore, and do not defend. Romanism produced the infidelity of France. German Rationalism is an unclean spirit from the stagnant marshes of a corrupt Protestantism. The pro-slavery church in this land is the fruitful mother of unbelief. As in the days of Christ, and of Luther, the worst foes of Christianity are those of its own house. Once more I fear within the walls of Zion will the battle of Christianity have to be fought ; but, blessed be God, it will be the last conflict ; the morning cometh, Messiah is on his march ; I hear the thunder of his chariot wheels in the crash of falling

tyrannies, the wail of despotisms, as they sink like the cities of the plain, never to arise. American slavery is doomed, its foundations are heaving, its pillars tremble like those of Dagon's Temple, "with horrible convulsion to and fro," destined soon to fall and bury in its ruins pro-slavery churches, and pro-slavery ministers, beneath the remembrance, aye, beneath the contempt of men. This is my answer to his third proposition.

The fourth, and last proposition, which our author lays down, is this: "Abolitionism," (the belief that slavery is a sin, morally wrong,) "is the chief cause of the strife that agitates, and the danger that threatens our country." This statement is both true and false, true in a sense which he did not intend, false in the sense in which he wishes it to be understood. Christianity is in earnest, in deadly conflict with all forms of wickedness, with every manner of oppression, a conflict which knows neither truce nor compromise until the battle is fought out and the victory won, until the banner of the cross floats in triumph upon every shore, and "Voices are heard in heaven proclaiming, now is come salvation, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." The language of Christianity is, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it him."

It has been the cause of much disturbance for well nigh two thousand years; it has "set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;" it has rent families, nations, churches, produced war, bloodshed, famines, persecutions, pestilences, destroyed art, trade, commerce, manufactures, overthrown proud cities, and turned fat lands into barrenness. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword." Messiah will smite the nations with the rod of his anger, until they submit, and give that glory to his name which is due. But, who is to blame? God's merciful and beneficent scheme for the amelioration of the condition of society, and the salvation of men? Or the wickedness and deceivableness of unrighteousness, which rejects the proffered mercy? Had men not persisted in embracing, and

believing, and promulgating the truth, we would never have heard of the persecutions of the early Christians. Had the Waldenses submitted to that *lawful* authority which was over them, and succumbed to the prevailing opinions of the world around them, there would have been no bloody slaughter amid those gloomy Alpine fastnesses. We should never have heard that noble outburst in their behalf of the great soul of John Milton.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine moutains cold,

* * *

Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks."

Had there been no Huguenots in France, there would have been no massacre of St. Bartholomew; the world would have been saved that appalling tragedy. Had there been no Puritans in England, the fires of Smithfield never had been kindled! Had the Covenanters of Scotland been a little more yielding and inclined to compromise, twenty-eight thousand men, women, and children would not have died for the Word of God and the testimony which they held; there would have been no English, no American Revolution.

Were there no abolitionists in this country, that is, none who believe slavery a moral wrong, and who are determined to act upon that conviction, we would have neither strife nor agitation at the present time. All this is freely admitted—but what then? Why, then, let us adopt the advice of Messrs. Van Dyke and O'Connor, fold our arms, shut our crazy mouths, or open them only to shout hallelujahs to despotism, and vex the air with our huzzahs for the great Diana of American slavery, and accord to the Dred Scott decision, "that black men have no rights which white men are bound to respect." Let us invite Senator Toombs to Bunker Hill, and wave our hats while he calls the roll of his slaves at the base of the monument, above the ashes of the men who died with the declaration of the great Virginian upon their lips, "Give me liberty, or give me death." Let us, in the language of one who should have been called any thing else but Wise, "permit slavery to pour itself out without restraint, and find no limit but the

Western Ocean ;" or, in the more pious but less expressive phraseology of the saintly Palmer, the man to whom the soul of Mr. Van Dyke is knit by the Spirit and Word of God, as the soul of Jonathan to David—grant it the "right, unchallenged by man, to go and root itself wherever Providence and nature may carry it." Accepting the advice of this follower of one who came to proclaim deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, repeal our Liberty Bills, until, wherever the stars and stripes are seen to wave, there shall be no hiding-place for the flying fugitives ; put into our Creeds and Confessions of Faith, as the first fundamental principle of all true religion, the doctrine that slavery is right ; and denounce, as the most damnable of all damnable heresies, the belief that it is sinful and morally wrong ; lay the very foundations of our churches upon the crushed and bruised body of the slave, and cement them with his blood ; declare every church not founded upon this rock, and not adorned with a slaveholding ministry and membership a mere conclave of fanatics, and not worth a farthing candle. Then will the souls of those eminent evangelists of slavery and disunion, Drs. Thornwell and Palmer, be made to sing for joy, and the hope of evangelizing the world (the North included) once more dart its cheering beams into the darkness of their present desponding and discouraged condition. That delectable community which they call South Carolina will return to the fold from which she has wandered, bringing those evangelists of the slave-trade, Dr. McVickers and Rev. Mr. Prentiss, with her ; agitation will cease, quiet will be restored, and peace will plant her olive upon the hills ; King Cotton will ascend the throne from which he has been cast down ; our northern summers will be made bright by visits from our southern friends, and their bands of happy slaves ; our winters less cheerless by the hope of their return. Surely, we are all ready ! Who could refuse such requests from pious lips, with the promise of such blessings ?

Slavery, I affirm, is the cause of the strife that agitates and the danger that threatens our country ; this every wise man knows, and every candid man confesses to be true. The strife will cease, the danger will be averted when the last fetter has

fallen from the last slave, and liberty proclaimed throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof, and not till then. Build your house upon the shifting sand, and hope that, when the rains descend, and the storm beats, and the floods come, it will not fall. Make your home upon the slopes of Vesuvius, and expect that it will not be rocked by the earthquake, or swept by the fiery flood, when it rolls from its burning crest ; but do not expect that a nation can have peace which enslaves men ; that a kingdom will stand which violates God's law ; that a people can prosper who spoil the poor and oppress the stranger ; that you can avert the wrath of Heaven with sermons against abolitionism, or turn back the arm of the Almighty when it is stretched out, with prayers in which there is no confession of the guilt, or promise of repentance toward God ; or that your compromises and exhortations to peace will avail, when Jehovah rides forth upon the whirlwind, when " the Lord thunders in the heavens, and the Highest gives his voice, hailstones and coals of fire."

But has slavery been the meek and quiet lamb during these years which its apologists would have us believe ? They would make one think that the terrible lion of anti-slavery had stood with his tremendous paw upon its neck, with open jaws, blood-red tongue, glaring eyes, and erect mane ready at any moment to slay and devour, while the meek creature did nothing but bleat out piteous supplications for life ! I affirm that slavery has been the aggressive power, and that slaveholders have accomplished by their own madness what abolitionists, without their assistance, would have failed to affect. There is a painful misrepresentation of facts throughout Mr. Van Dyke's discourse which we must in kindness conclude is the result of a pitiable ignorance of the history of events. I can conceive how a man who had read nothing but the *Herald*, or the *Observer*, or some of their echoes, might reach such conclusions as those stated under this fourth head, but I can not conceive how a man abreast of the times, or having any tolerable acquaintance with the history of the last twenty years, could make such statements—I affirm that slavery has been the aggressor, and that the victory has generally been upon that side. In proof of this I appeal—

To the speeches of all the leading men of the South, from

Calhoun to Wigfall in Congress, and upon the hustings, to the tone of her influential press with which, thanks to the honesty and candor of the "Anti-Slavery Standard," we are pretty familiar.

To the imprisonment by South Carolina, of free citizens of Massachusetts guilty of no crime but a colored skin, their selling into slavery to pay their jail fees, and banishment from the State of the legal gentleman, Mr. Hoar, who had proceeded thither for the purpose of endeavoring to obtain justice for them by an appeal to the courts.

To the admission of Texas into the Union, and the consequent war with Mexico, in which life and treasure were lavishly expended in order to add additional slave territory to our already too much extended domain.

To the enactment of that infamous Fugitive Slave Law which affixes the severest penalties to obedience to God's law, and the plainest dictates of humanity, and visits with heavy punishments the performance of a duty which ninety-nine out of every hundred will discharge, the law to the contrary notwithstanding.

To the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, a measure proposed by Douglas, then a pliant, now a cast-off, tool of the Slave Oligarchy, and carried by southern votes—votes of the very men now talking about sacred compacts, and that too when not a single compact which the North has ever made has been, or is proposed to be violated.

To the attempted assassination of Charles Sumner, "the noblest Roman of them all," upon the floor of the Senate Chamber, by southern bullies.

To the atrocious Dred Scott decision, making slavery national, and freedom local; capping the climax of all judicial iniquity by the declaration that black men never were, are not, and can not be citizens, and have no rights which white men are bound to respect.

To the terrible scenes enacted upon the plains of Kansas until it was as though the seven plagues of Egypt had been mingled with the seven vials of apocalyptic wrath, and poured out upon that unhappy territory.

To the banishment of free people, white and colored, from Southern States, together with the whippings, hangings, and

burnings which have so aroused the northern mind during the past year.

In fine, to the whole history of the conflict in which this despotic power has been attempting to seize the Government and control it for the accomplishment of its own infernal designs.

This is my answer to the charges, arguments, statements, and perversions of this remarkable discourse, a discourse which marks the lowest point that the northern pulpit has ever reached. Yet I rejoice that it has been preached. It will open blind eyes, and carry its own refutation where my words can never reach. Moreover, I am relieved at the thought that we have touched bottom—there is surely no lower deep. I do not expect to hear the slave-trade advocated, even by Mr. Van Dyke—at any rate not in Brooklyn; as to what he would do in Charleston, I am not so positive; however this may be, from this point we must certainly ascend—remain stationary we can not.

But, I am asked, what is my remedy for present evils? When a man who has maimed himself in an attempt to take his own life, asks me what I am going to do about it? my reply will be, I exceedingly regret your folly and wickedness, but must decline assuming any responsibility for the act, while declaring my readiness to do all in my power to benefit and relieve him.

My remedy is, to stand firm, refuse all compromise, do our whole duty, think, speak, act, just as at other times, and leave the men who make the trouble to furnish the remedy; timidity, not firmness, has been the curse of every great and good cause in which it has been permitted to enter.

Be patient, forbearing, forgiving, kind, this is Christ-like, is divine; seek the best interests—the highest good—of all; but do not swerve a hair's breadth from the path of duty, for the sake of averting evils which, like the stone of Sisyphus, must evermore return to plague and molest us.

As Nelson said at Trafalgar, "England expects every man to do her duty." This is the hour in which God and Liberty expect every man to do his duty, assured that, as always under the Divine guidance and protection, the path of duty will be found to be the path of safety. *Amen.*