E
449
.S856

Stiles, Joseph C.

Speech on the slavery resolutions, delivered in the General Assembly which met in Detroit in May last.

New York, 1850.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

Class E449
Book S856

SPEECH

ON THE

SLAVERY RESOLUTIONS,

DELIVERED IN THE

General Assembly

WHICH MET IN DETROIT IN MAY LAST,

BY

JOSEPH C. STILES.

New-York:
MARK H. NEWMAN & CO., 199 BROADWAY.

1850.

45615
'04

JOHN A. GRAY, PRINTER,
79 Fulton, corner of Gold St.

To the Rev. J. C. Stiles:

Dear Sir:—The undersigned, having listened with deep interest and gratification to your argument upon the Slavery question, delivered before the General Assembly at its late session in Detroit, respectfully request that you will, at your earliest convenience, prepare a report of it for publication, with any such abbreviation or expansion of the several parts as may suit your own pleasure.

May 30, 1850.

Chas. H. Read,	Geo. Duffield,
William Sterling,	Erskine Mason,
David H. Riddle,	Joseph F. Tuttle,
Clifford S. Arms,	S. M. Gould,
J. Henry Clark,	A. C. Lathrop,
David Malin,	J. G. Wilson,
Geo. F. Wiswell,	David Dobie,
Geo. Duffield, Jr.,	E. D. Willis,
Charles Starr,	J. Holmes Agnew.

Dear Brethren:—Absence from home, feeble health, and multiplied engagements, have prevented my earlier compliance with your kind request. I have made liberal use, you perceive, of its latitude, especially in writing out certain arguments which were only numbered or named during the delivery of the residue.

With great respect, brethren,

I am yours,

JOS. C. STILES.

Messieurs Chas. H. Read, Wm. Sterling, and others.

SPEECH.

Mr. Moderator:—On this long-vexed question, at this very moment menacing more than ever the rupture of Church and State, permit me to express my strong conviction that he argues most cogently who argues most kindly. May I be assisted to remember this. I shall express myself with the earnestness of fresh investigation, but I beseech my brethren to interpret all my language as uttered under the conviction of ultimate fallibility, whatever may be the seeming confidence of the moment. Especially does it become me to cherish this remembrance when I call to mind that the South is the land of my birth, and the home of my kindred, and may well therefore be exerting a present influence over my judgment of which I am altogether unconscious.

The Memorialists complain of the Southern Church, and charge her, not so much with slave-making, nor with slave-trading, as with slave-*holding*. They direct the attention of the Assemby to the character of this institution, and inquire concerning the method of its expulsion from the Presbyterian Body.

Two solemn questions demand our investigation:

What is the moral character of slaveholding?

What the duties of the parties concerned?

FIRST.--THE MORAL CHARACTER OF SLAVEHOLDING.

It need hardly be stated that he who exerts a compulsory authority over a human being as a master, who holds a fellow-man in the relation of involuntary servitude, is the party implicated in the charge.

Let it be premised that in this investigation we are bound

to regard slaveholding in its most favorable aspect. Who are before us? The Southern Public at large? No, sir! We have nothing to do with it. It is the membership and the ministry of the Presbyterian Church who stand accused. They are our brethren and uncondemned. We are bound therefore in Christian justice to consider them as carrying out this relation with all the good feeling and principle of which its nature will admit.

The Memorialists affirm that SLAVEHOLDING IS SIN.

If it is simply intended that slaveholding, in the language of the Majority Report, "leads to sin," I am prepared to yield my hearty assent. In the master, slaveholding insensibly tends to breed indolence, pride, impatience, irritability, hard-heartedness, and arbitrary temper. It tends to make the servant discontented, deceitful, and dishonest; to break down every high motive to general industry, as well as to all intellectual and moral culture. It saps the energies of a community, discourages personal enterprise, and perils universal peace. Yet while the moral bearings of slaveholding do, in general, lie in this direction, it should be conceded that this relation does frequently present the most amiable testimonies of mutual affection and fidelity, on the part of master and servant. Nay! strange as it may seem, I am persuaded that there exists more love and confidence between the two races at the South than at the North.

The sinful *tendency* of slaveholding, however, is not *all* that our brethren would express by the language employed. They charge that slaveholding is *sin per se, sin in itself, nothing but sin.* They insist that he who *holds this relation for a moment, thereby sins;* that *every act* of a master's authority over his servant is *an act of oppression;* in fine, that there is no law from heaven applicable to this relation but the law of immediate abolition. This, in general, will be conceded to be a fair statement of the views of the Memorialists.

Mr. Moderator, this method of expression I am not prepared to adopt, and must beg leave respectfully to say, that in my judgment, the proposition which affirms that slaveholding is essentially sinful is overthrown, first, by a *simple*

statement of the facts in the case, and again by a *just view of every argument adduced to support it.*

First. STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

Slaveholding is an existing relation between man and man. We hold it true of human relations, that there are three grand moral grades: one purely virtuous, another purely vicious, and a third of a compound nature.

A relation perfectly *virtuous* is marked by the five following criteria:—1. It is directly planned by God for the good of man. 2. Its moral bearings are decidedly salutary. 3. Christianity can, and does, coalesce with it, i. e., it acts in and through it. 4. Christianity can, and does, regulate it. 5. Christianity will but improve it to the close of time. The relations of parent and child, of husband and wife, illustrate this class.

The characteristics of a relation perfectly *sinful* are the following:—1. It is expressly forbidden by God. 2. Its moral bearings are decidedly injurious. 3. Christianity cannot coalesce with it. 4. Christianity cannot regulate it. 5. Christianity in its progress will surely do it away. Professional thieves—associated pirates illustrate this class.

There exists also such a state of things in human society as a *mixed* relation. In the sense above described, it is neither purely virtuous on the one hand, nor purely vicious on the other, but partakes of the properties of both. Now under which of these categories shall we place the relation of slaveholding? Certainly not under the first head. As clearly not under the second. Palpably under the third. Observe two facts. Slaveholding does not bear the first and capital mark either of relations perfectly virtuous, or of those perfectly vicious. It was not planned by God on the one hand, neither is it expressly forbidden by God on the other. Again, slaveholding equally divides the four remaining characteristics of each class. It lacks two of the essential marks of relations perfectly pure, viz.: virtuous bearing, and permanency under the gospel; but possesses the remaining two, viz.: co-existence with the gospel, (i. e., the master's exercise of compulsory authority may be a duty discharged,) and reg-

ulation by it, (i. e., the gospel does lay down rules to guide the conduct both of the master and the slave.) In like manner slaveholding possesses two essential marks of relations perfectly sinful, viz.: vicious bearing, and disappearance under the progress of the gospel; while it clearly lacks the two remaining essential properties of such relations—impossible coincidence with the gospel, and impossible regulation by it.

I apprehend that this statement of truth few men will dispute. In general, mankind will promptly admit, first, that in moral character, human relations are threefold, good, bad, and mixed; second, that slaveholding belongs to the third category, and not to the first, or second—in a word, that in morality, slaveholding stands between such relations as parent and child, and husband and wife, on the one hand, and such relations as banded thieves and murderers on the other.

If these be facts, then without argument, upon a mere statement of the case, it appears that slaveholding, as a relation, is *not* sinful in itself. Consequently Southern brethren are not obnoxious to church discipline simply because they do not instantly adopt Abolition principles.

In weighing this statement of the case, permit me to say,

1st. Our Abolition brethren should not aggrieve us who hold more moderate principles, by the misstatement of our moral estimate of this relation. It does seem to us that by the law of unrighteous position, of inordinate feeling, in their ordinary statement of our sentiments our brethren are unconsciously impelled to wrong our principles in order to justify their own. We *do not hold* (as we are often said to do) that slaveholding is either a *Bible institution* or that it receives *God's high sanction.* On the contrary, unlike every such institution, it was not planned by God, does not naturally tend to the good of society, and will assuredly fall before the gospel. It will break half their opposition, if our brethren will think and speak of our sentiments as we think and speak of the subject.

2d. Our Abolition brethren should sustain us by the prompt admission that slaveholding is a relation which God in the Scriptures does certainly recognize and regulate. We hold that slaveholding, unlike relations purely sinful, is not ex-

pressly prohibited by God, but does consist with the spirit, principle, and practice of Christianity, so far at least that God does certainly prescribe the duties which become the parties in this relation. It will throw our brethren largely into sympathy with us if they will bind themselves on every hand to concede this undeniable truth, viz.: If slavery is not a regular institution of the Bible, it is a *scripturally regulated* relation amongst men.

3d. If such are the moral characteristics of this relation that God neither sanctions it as an institution of his own, nor yet prohibits it as a relation sinful *per se*, then it is perfectly reasonable that a state of human society, so peculiar, should receive a peculiar treatment at his hand. This it certainly does. On the one hand, he does not enjoin it upon men to form this relation; on the other, he does not tear society to atoms by demanding its immediate abolition. On the contrary, wherever it exists, he imposes rules upon the parties which, if observed, will gradually work it off amongst the things that were, and meanwhile contribute to accomplish a grand providential end, by giving exercise to some of the most singular and beautiful shapes of the Christian principle.

4th. In view of this statement, you may infer the response which should be given to an inquiry so frequently, solemnly, and *confidently* propounded in this Assembly: "*Is slavery* RIGHT, or *is it* WRONG?" If this inquiry respects the *relation* of slavery, we answer: It is neither *wholly right*, nor *wholly wrong*. There is right about it, and there is wrong about it. It has no such right as would sanction its enrollment on the catalogue of Bible institutions. It involves no such wrong as should constrain God to inflict upon it the anathemas directed against theft and murder. If the question respects this or that *act* of slaveholding, we are ready to reply: If the act is performed in obedience to any one of the rules which God has prescribed for the conduct of the master, like any other act of obedience to God, it is right. If the act is performed in violation of any such rule, like any other act of disobedience to God, it is wrong. If the question respects the *character* of this or that slaveholder, we answer: If the master in question holds his servant in any such spirit, or with any

such aims, as permit and prompt him to obey the spirit of the rules enjoined upon the master in the Word of God, he is an innocent, a worthy master. If he holds him in an opposite spirit and for opposite ends, he is neither a worthy nor an innocent master.

We repeat, therefore, upon an intelligent statement of the case at large, it is hard to conceive how any candid person could adjudge that the simple fact of holding slaves constitutes our Southern brethren such "*prima facie sinners*" as makes it the duty of this Assembly, as far as its authority extends, to enjoin forthwith the commencement of criminal process against them, throughout the length and breadth of the Church.

If the statement of the case does not carry our brethren with us, then, Mr. Moderator, I respond :

Second. In my judgment, the ARGUMENTS ADVANCED to establish the entire sinfulness of the relation of master and servant, fairly examined, DISPROVE THE PROPOSITION WHICH THEY WOULD SET UP.

The reasons advanced by opposing brethren on this floor, may be grouped under the five following heads :—

I. THE LIBERTY ARGUMENT

May be stated thus : *God has made every man so far free, that no one man has a natural right to exercise compulsory authority over another. The master does exercise such authority ; therefore he sins.* The defect of the argument lies in the erroneous statement of the major proposition. The fact is, the negation of a natural right of control over others is *not absolute* but qualified. The argument, you observe, requires the absolute form of statement, viz. : that every exercise of compulsory authority is a violation of natural right. Inordinate feeling, I apprehend, is the parent of this error. By this phrase—inordinate feeling—I mean such a state of mind as cannot justify itself by the facts of the case, and therefore unconsciously forces the intellect to sustain its extravagance, by one of two processes—either by incorporating with the subject elevating properties which do not belong to it, or by separating from it

depreciating circumstances which do attach to it. Now *inordinate sympathy with the supposed wrongs of the slave*—how readily it rises, and when roused how impetuously it heaves to inflict some palpable and flagrant condemnation upon the offender! How shall this be done? The fact is, the face of society presents a diversified catalogue of cases wherein one man exercises compulsory control over another, and thus countenances the right of the master. To sustain itself, inordinate anti-slavery excitement boldly strikes off the whole series of qualifying circumstances, and states the case absolutely. But clearly in this shape it is a misstatement. Who questions the rightful authority of the parent over the child, the guardian over the ward, the principal over the apprentice, the keeper over the lunatic, the jailor over the convict, and the governor over the subject? The Liberty argument, you perceive, is a failure. God has not made man so free that no one man has a right to exercise a compulsory authority over another. The statement must be qualified, and when you qualify it properly, you will find that it gives a stronger countenance to this disputed relation than would at first be imagined.

I am prepared now to affirm, that the doctrine of *Human Rights*, properly understood, rather establishes the master's authority over the servant. I am free to concede, I know no *direct* right of the master. Where shall we find the basis of such a right? Not in any such inferior physical and intellectual structure of the African as indicates God's purpose to subject him to the permanent dominion of his superior neighbor; not in that original curse of God which consigned the descendants of Canaan to eternal servitude to the posterity of his brethren; not in the fact that the forfeiture of the captive's life on the battle-field works a forfeiture of his own liberty and that of his posterity for ever; not in the payment of a valuable consideration for the services of the slave; not in the authority of the law to convert him into a chattel; not in the custom of good men to treat him thus, and call it right; not in your inability to discover what advantage could accrue to the slave from immediate abolition. No! Mr. Moderator! every such basis of the master's claim I utterly discard.

Where then shall we find in nature a competent foundation for the power which the master exercises? We shall find it, I apprehend, largely in the shape of an obligation upon the master, resulting from a natural right in the person of the slave.

Human rights I take to be summarily *three*. 1st. The right of *existence*. Life is the gift of God, and operates a right of existence against all save Him who bestows it. This right involves a reasonable use of all the faculties and powers of the subject. 2d. A right of *happiness*. The Creator has surrounded man with every object suited to refresh the desires of his nature, and thus invests him with a right of indulgence, a right of happiness. 3d. A right of *supervision*. God, in creation and providence, frequently places man in a state of dependence wherein the enjoyment of his natural rights can never be reached without progressive development, under competent supervision. This indicates a right of supervision. Such a right is universally felt to result from the coincidence of three things. Let there exist an incapacity of self-government, which renders its exercise mischievous to the parties and to society, and for which God in creation or providence has appointed a guardianship, and all men will feel that every such human being has a right to wise and kind supervision. A child by nature has no power of self-government. Left to self-direction, a child will surely injure itself and all about it. God in the constitution of things has made provision for its necessity in the parental relation. Were there no other basis than this, all men would feel that the child was entitled to supervision at the hand of his parent. There results, of course, to the parent, a right of authority over the child. So upon the death of the parent, and the legal appointment of a guardian, all men feel the right of supervision on the one side, and of control on the other. So also in the case of the apprentice, of the lunatic, of the convict, and of the subject. In each of these cases there is for the time being a natural or moral incompetency of self-government; in each case, self-government exercised would seriously damage the subject and the community; and in each case God has indicated a governing superior. Now it would seem impossible for the human

mind to withhold its assent from this truth, viz.: that in each of these cases, these three things constitute a clear right in the inferior to kind and wise management, and consequently confer an indisputable authority on the superior to exercise such control.

I hold now, Mr. Moderator, that these three things are equally applicable to the case in hand. 1st. The slave is incapable of self-government. As a general remark who doubts this? 2d. The sudden release of the slave from the accustomed direction of the master, would produce irreparable mischiefs to himself and to society. Who questions this? 3d. God has pointed to the party who is to exercise control over him. This too is undeniable. Now as in each of the other cases, so in this, these three circumstances lay the basis of a right of supervision on the part of the servant, and of course, of control on the part of the master. Dispute this position; carry out your principle. The children of this generation rise up in mass, assert that God made them as free as their parents, demand immediate absolution from all authority, and set out at once to exercise unrestricted self-government. Does not every eye see, that the child's ignorance of himself, of those who lie in wait to destroy, of the consequences of right and wrong conduct, &c., &c., — his utter incapacity to support, instruct, direct, or defend himself, — in a word, his incessant, invisible, unavoidable temptations to an indolent and profligate life, would make enlargement from parental control the severest curse which could be inflicted upon himself and society, and for this reason, the most unrighteous act the parent could perform? Mark the analogy in the case of the slave and that of the child. 1st. There is in the framework of society an existing practical guardianship. 2d. The slave is just as incompetent to guide, support, and protect himself; just as much exposed to indolence, sensuality and imposition; and just as certain, freed from the master's supervision, to inflict upon himself and society the most disquieting and outrageous mischiefs. Now would it be right to cast the reins upon his neck and turn him loose,—right to himself,—right to community? Above all things, I ask, what does the child, what does the slave need? Surely, wise and kind su-

pervision, until he can be educated to take care of himself, to enjoy his liberty. This is a boon of which he stands in perishing need. By the law of love, therefore, it is duty not to withhold this supervision and leave him to perish, but in efficient wisdom and philanthropy to exercise it.

I hold, Mr. Moderator, that this is by far the most exalted, nay, the only perfect law of Human Rights. In the language of the Majority Report, "The *laws of guardianship*" and "the *demands of humanity*" clothe it with an impregnable endorsement. Deny this view of the subject, and the end of natural liberty is denied to one half of the human family. Carry out this doctrine faithfully, and all our brethren who are now incompetent to enjoy their natural rights are put under a benign supervision, which provides the best present substitute for the privation, and secures the ultimate beneficial possession of their liberties at the earliest period.

In weighing this view of the Liberty argument, should my brother object, 1st, That the parental relation is not slavery, the relation of guardian and ward is not slavery, of the lunatic and his keeper is not slavery, &c. &c.,—I answer, the argument asserts no such thing. There are differences, of course, in different objects. The argument simply inquires, first, whether there is not an agreement in three certain things; and second, whether those three things do not lay the basis of a right of supervision, on the one hand, and of control on the other.

2d. That masters at the South do not hold their slaves by any such benignant lien as my doctrine supports;—I admit the fact that very many do not. And here let me say, that in the sequel I hope to secure as frank an admission on his part, that the number of masters who do hold some such views on this subject, is vastly greater than he had hitherto supposed.

3d. Should he object again, that my doctrine of natural rights does not sustain the doctrine of eternal servitude, I readily grant it, and am free for one to say, that I hold no such doctrine. And now I trust that my objecting brother will be as prompt to concede, that the view presented certainly does overthrow his doctrine of *sin per-se*, since his principle imperatively demands immediate abolition, whereas

mine demonstrates in the master an indisputable authority for the time being.

The Liberty argument! I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether it does not fight against its author?

II. Scripture Argument.

Mr. Moderator: How does Scripture teach that slaveholding is sin? Where is the text? It is my deep conviction, sir, that almost as invariably as a religious assembly has entered upon a formal discussion of the question before this house, many a sober inquirer after truth has been impressed with profound surprise by two things: The readiness of our Abolition brethren to deal out their abhorrence of the man who would prostitute the Scriptures to the abetting of any doctrine on this subject save that of abolition, and yet the extreme reluctance with which they themselves come square up to the Scriptures. Mr. Moderator, I am sensible of no inconsideration when I bear this testimony—that in all the discussions I ever remember to have heard on this subject, private or public, this has appeared to me in general a characteristic feature: Few who hold extreme doctrines attempt a Scripture argument, and those who do rarely reach the Word of God. Nor can I deny, sir, that our present debate would seem to have moved along thus far in very good keeping with this description. One of our excellent brethren in his *Scriptural* discussion avers that slavery in its moral bearings is a violation of the governmental system of the Bible. This system develops the intelligence, the morality, the dignity, the liberty, and the felicity of man; but slavery is unfriendly to such results. Another, in *his Scriptural* argument, affirms that, in legal interpretation, we are to have decisive reference to the grand spirit and principle of the law; and all seeming exceptions should be disposed of, if possible, so as not to violate this radical characteristic. Now since the spirit and principle of *Scripture* law is *love*, slavery must of course be a violation of it. I have stated the substance of the views of the speakers to the best of my recollection; and if these brethren came nearer to the Scriptures, or any others approached as closely, I do not remember it. Why

is it that complainants seeking to establish a charge of *sin* seem so strangely compelled to keep at arm's length from *God's Word*, the only standard of sin? Let not my brethren be displeased when I express my judgment that it had been strange indeed if these good men had made freer use of Holy Writ. I believe it to be true, Mr. Moderator, that the Scriptural argument generally advanced to support the doctrine of immediate abolition, sifted to its foundations, will be found to be strictly *anti*-scriptural. In its capital features, I hold it to be precisely that method of reasoning which sets aside the Bible and lets in all heresy. It is, in one word, neither more nor less than a surrender of the Divine declaration to human deduction. Scripture says, "The *Lord our God is one Lord.*" Therefore, says human reason, God is not *Three!* But God himself advances, and declares, I am "FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST." What does that man who objects still? He surrenders the second Divine declaration to his own deduction from the first, and becomes a Unitarian. Scripture says, "*God is Love.*" Then, says human reason, God will never destroy His own creature in hell for ever. But God responds, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." What now? Why, he who objects still, discards the Divine declaration and stands upon his own deduction, and becomes a Universalist. Scripture says, "*God works in man to will.*" Then, says human reason, "Man is not free." But God adds, "Work out your salvation." And yet the reasoner objects still. Clearly then he gives more credit to the inference of his own judgment than to the direct declaration of the God of truth, and thus becomes a Fatalist. So exactly in the case in hand. Scripture says God's law is love and justice, and by a thousand texts commands evey man to be equitable and benign in the treatment of his neighbor. "Therefore," say our brethren, "in view of this great law of justice and mercy, no man can hold a slave and please God." But stay; God himself advances, and responds, "Ye masters, while ye stand over your servants, do this and that unto them, and you will please me." I ask my brethren, first, whether this is not the clear voice of the *New Testament*? I ask again, if they still insist that he who holds a slave, do what he may, sins against

God, whether they do not place more reliance upon their own judgment than upon God's knowledge? Whether they do not sacrifice God's teaching to their own reasoning? If they do, then the Scripture argument of Abolitionism is *anti*-scriptural.

I know of but two classes of texts employed by opposing brethren. The first is *positive*, and may be summed up in the second table of the law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is perhaps no one word of Scripture quoted with more confidence on this subject than this form of the general commandment: "Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you." One of our brethren, doubtless in allusion to this passage, thus expresses himself: "My objection to slavery is this, I do not want to be a slave." Had the Saviour said, "Do unto others in *their* circumstances as you would have them do unto you in *yours*," the passage would prove the doctrine it is brought to establish, but the world would lose far more than the slave would gain. Such an interpretation destroys all the wisdom and philanthropy of this noble text. This word of Jesus Christ rather requires us to do unto others in *their* circumstances as we would have them do unto us were we *in the same*. As I *am*, like my brother, I do not desire to be a slave. But were I in the place of the slave,—on the one hand destitute of all competent capacity to support, protect, or guide myself; on the other, subjected to the authority of a superior, who managed me largely that he might ultimately develop my power to serve God, man, and myself to higher advantage,—then I am prepared to say I would desire to be a slave. This whole class of passages therefore, properly interpreted, sustains the relation as I have attempted to explain it.

The second class is *negative*, and is summed up in this sentiment: "Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor." The power of this class of passages is destroyed by the application of a well-known rule of interpretation, viz.: General laws are always to give way to Particular laws. The reason is obvious. You reach the will of the legislator more surely through his own language, expressed in the Particular law, than you do through your inference concerning his will, drawn

from his words in the General law. In the formation of a General law, the eye of the legislator passes over a large field of particulars, and without resting on any one of them for a moment, employs itself in comparing *this* general truth with other general truths, that he may mark their distinguishing features. Now it is only through an interpreter's inference that you cover any particular case by the General law. Whenever therefore the legislator himself takes up any particular case and expresses himself thereupon, most surely you are not now to go back to your inferences from the General law. You have express evidence of his will. General laws of course always find their interpretation in the special laws enacted upon the same subject. Now, Mr. Moderator, I call upon my brethren to say whether God in the New Testament does not treat of this precise relation of master and servant; whether he does not in his own language bring up a great variety of supposed acts on the part of the master to the slave and of the slave to the master; whether he does not explicitly express himself touching his own estimate of the moral character of these acts? Mr. Moderator, through you I do beseech my brethren to give me an explicit response to this question: So far from announcing to men that any act of a master, as such, to a servant, as such, is an act of oppression, does not God on the contrary most perspicuously and repeatedly affirm that such and such acts of the master are what he would have him do—are his duty—are what God himself deems not oppressive, but absolutely right to his fellow-men? What then, sir, have we, under law, to do with our *inferences* of oppression, when the *Ruler himself instructs us* that these very miscalled acts of oppression are but duty commanded, the very wisest, kindest, and best acts in the circumstances the party can perform; the very acts which He, the Maker, calls for? I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether the *Scripture* testimony relied upon to prove the doctrine of sin *per se* is not an eminent failure?

You are prepared now to have me advance and say, that in my judgment the *Scriptures*, properly interpreted, destroy the doctrine of sin *per se* in the very manner in which it is held to establish it.

Positively. It is an undeniable truth that God in the Old Testament authorizes the Jew to sustain the relation of a master to his heathen slave.

In the 25th chapter of Leviticus, God contrasts at length two classes of servants—Jewish and heathen. He ordains that they occupy different grades. The Jewish servant is to receive the treatment of an hired servant. "As an hired servant he shall be with thee." The heathen servant is to receive the treatment of a slave. "Thy bondmen and thy bondmaids shall be of the heathen." Two points of contrast are clearly laid down. First, the Jewish servant was redeemable by himself or his kinsmen at any time. "One of his brethren may redeem him, or if he be able he may redeem himself." The heathen servant was *not redeemable.* "They shall be your possession." Second, the Jewish servant must be released at the jubilee. "He shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he and his children with him." The heathen servant was *not* to be released at the jubilee. "Ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you."

I readily admit that God in the laws of Moses furnishes various indications of his compassion toward the slave, and some signs of his unwillingness to look with permanent favor upon this institution; and yet, as a general regulation for the time being, it is an indisputable fact that God does here recognize and authorize the relation of master and bondman. "They shall be your bondmen for ever."

Now the question arises: Can the holding of a divinely-authorized relation be a sin *per se?* Can obedience and sin co-exist? My brother responds, "There are *Christian sinners* as well as other sinners." Mr. Moderator, my brother's mind in this language does not come within sight of the argument. That Christianity, that obedience to God, can co-exist with sin *in the man* everybody knows; but this is heaven-wide of the case. Can Christianity co-exist with sin in the *act?* That is the point. Can *obedience* make up a part of *sin?* You say that slaveholding is an *act of sin.* The Word of God here shows you that slaves were held of old in obedience to a divine regulation. In what part of an act of idolatry or an act of murder can you put obedience to God? If I mistake not, the

teaching is—"These are contrary the one to the other." If then obedience is not disobedience, and men held slaves of old in obedience to Old Testament teaching, the holding of a slave is not an act of sin.

Again: It is a Scripture fact that the New Testament recognizes the relation of master and servant, and imposes reciprocal duties upon the parties. Who questions this fact? It will not be disputed that the Scriptures on the one hand command the servant, in view of the master's claims, to "obey," to "honor," and to "be subject" to him; "not despising him," "not answering him back," not "purloining from him," &c.; on the other, that they enjoin it upon masters, in view of the claims of the servant, to "do the same things unto them," especially to "give unto them that which is just and equal," to "forbear threatening," and to remember in all their treatment of their slaves that they too "have a Master in heaven."

The argument upheld by this unquestionable Scripture fact may be thus stated: What God commands man to do is not sin. God commands man to do the duties of a master; therefore the man who discharges the prescribed duties of a master does not sin. Against what point will you drive your objection to this argument? Against the major proposition? Surely not. Who dares to say what God commands it is sin to do? Against the minor proposition? Surely not. Who will venture to affirm that God does not lay commands upon the master touching his obligation to his servant? Against the conclusion? Surely not. For if he who follows God's commands is not a sinner, then the master who follows God's commands does not sin. What will my brethren do with this argument? How can the doctrine of sin *per se* and the doctrine of the New Testament stand together? To hold a slave is a sin in itself. Yet God tells the master how to hold his slave, and what to do with him. Can God tell a creature how to commit sin? Can a sin-hating God make rules to direct the idolater, the murderer, the thief, in the work they do? Can a sovereign God give rules to a subject to break his own law? How preposterous the position of our brethren! The whole controversy comes to this: If God has

a right to give laws to his creatures, the holding of slaves is *not* sin *per se*.

Negatively. Let it be premised that it lies at the basis of every word of God to his creatures, that whatever is sin God requires every soul to abandon instantly. The doctrine of our brethren therefore, the doctrine of *sin-in-itself*, carries to every slaveholder God's command of immediate abolition. Now, the Bible, so far from requiring the instantaneous disruption of the tie between master and servant, *contemplates its continuance*. You may see this truth in the absence of all evidence of its divine discontinuance. Had Christianity demanded the immediate abolition of this venerable, deep-seated, all-pervading feature of the frame-work of ancient society, there must have sprung up a sudden, prodigious, and perilous domestic and political agitation, which would have blazed out upon every record which descended to us from primitive times. But we have not one reliable word of any such revolution, either in Scripture precept or narration, or in ecclesiastical or profane history. You may see it in the presence of everything which would naturally indicate the fact that Christianity did not abrogate this relation. Here are God's commands to the parties respectively. Tell me, how can a master or a servant do his duty except through the existence of the relation itself? Here is the palpable tenor of Scripture teaching. More than once on the holy page, God states, seriatim, the duties of parent and child, the duties of husband and wife, and the duties of master and servant. When God states the duties of parents and children, he means surely that the parties are to go forward discharging the same. So when God prescribes the duties of husband and wife, he requires the parties to go on and perform them. This you admit. Now when God addresses the same species of commands to master and servant, surely he intends that they too shall proceed to do as he has commanded, *i. e.*, he palpably contemplates the continuance, not the disruption of the relation. Here, too, is the obvious force of Bible terms and phrases. Servants are more than once commanded to obey their masters "in *all things*." The multitude and diversity of acts of obedience which make up the sum total of a ser-

vant's duty cannot be crowded into one moment. To meet this necessity, therefore, the relation must continue. The master too is commanded to do the "same things" to his servant; and these same things are not one or two acts of duty, but a multitude, and of course demand the preservation of the relation for the time being. "Let every man," says the apostle, "abide in the same calling wherein he is called." Conversion does not require a change in a man's natural, social, or civil obligations. Abide contented in your condition, whether married or single, whether bond or free. "Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it." Continue contented in your relation to your earthly master, for you are the Lord's freeman. This language clearly teaches the valid existence of the relation after the conversion of the servant; while Paul's last word utterly demolishes the allegation that primitive Christianity wrought the immediate abolition of this institution: "*But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*" Certainly, the apostle says, "You are a slave. Well! remain contented in your calling, and do your duty. Should it happen however that Providence opens a way whereby you may acquire your freedom, this on the whole is a better state; avail yourself of it." Finally, here is the historical fact of the recognized existence and validity of this relation naturally running along the sacred record through a continuous period. In the year of our Lord 59, Paul addresses his bond brethren in the church of Corinth. In 60, Peter sends his instructions to the servants scattered through the churches of Asia Minor. In 64, Paul calls up the attention of those who belong to the churches of Ephesus, Colosse, and Philippi. And in 65, Paul educates Timothy and Titus in the proper method of teaching and exhorting the respective parties to this relation.

In view of this evidence, what intelligent mind can believe for a moment that Christianity as administered by the apostles did actually put to death the relation of master and servant, as an institution too sinful to breathe under its eye? Such a stroke had jarred the world, and its tremors had been felt to this day, at least in the records which reach us from earlier times. But where is the testimony to any such occurrence? On the contrary, there on the face of the sacred record stands

acknowledged, regulated slavery. God's commands to the parties presuppose the existence of the relation, else the commands themselves would not have been delivered; and its valid continuance, else the created duties could not be discharged. God's Word requires the parties to abide in the relation in which Christianity finds them, describes a continuous obligation on both sides, and speaks of the dissolution of the relation only as a possible occurrence; while God's ministers from church to church, and from year to year, are found most solemnly dealing with master and servant as variously bound to each other and deeply responsible to God.

Thus, if I have rightly understood the Word of God, there is no testimony upon its pages, either positive or negative, that slaveholding is *sin per se;* but ample evidence, both negative and positive, that the holding of a slave is *not* of necessity a *sin.*

I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether the SCRIPTURE argument of our brethren, fairly investigated, like the argument from Natural Liberty, does not recoil upon its author and overthrow the doctrine it was enlisted to establish?

III. THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

Our brethren contend that the divine imposition of reciprocal duties upon master and servant, in the New Testament, does not protect slaveholding from the charge of sin *per se*, because,

1. It is an *historical fact that there were no slaves in the primitive Church;* that the Greek terms translated in our version "servant," do not mean "slave," but freed-servant.

I apprehend, Mr. Moderator, it will be no easy task to set aside the adverse testimony already elicited from the Scriptures in the discussion of previous topics. But let us examine this argument on its own merits.

I affirm that the cardinal rules of interpretation indisputably fix the current import of the disputed terms, i. e., the New Testament "servant" was a *slave.*

1st. Words are to be understood in their most known and usual signification. Consult every cotemporaneous Greek

writer, every lexicographer, commentator and Biblical critic, and there would be assembled a harmonious mass of testimony in favor of the popular import of these terms, which would probably silence the most prejudiced opponent.

2d. Words are to be defined by reference to their *connection*. Again, words are of course to be explained in view of their use in *different passages*. Still again, words are to be understood in reference to the *nature of the subject* about which they are employed. These three rules are identical in their application to the case in point. Group together all the predicates of the term "servant" in the New Testament, collect all the commands, prohibitions, and admonitions addressed to this person, and we shall find that the Scriptures seem to describe the state and character of the *slave* with great clearness, and to prescribe for it with great address.

Every condition in life has its peculiar besetments. Those of the slave are strongly marked.

The first peculiar temptation of the slave is, to serve from necessity only, and therefore *without conscience toward God*. His condition strongly tempts him to feel that in truth there is no moral obligation in the case; no, not even to his Maker. Now the Scriptures see this, and multiply such injunctions as the following: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, in singleness of heart as unto Christ." "As the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." "Doing service as to the Lord and not to men." Knowing that God will amply reward your fidelity.

The second peculiar temptation of the slave is to serve from necessity only, and therefore *without love to his master*. His seeming to receive so small a benefit from his labors, naturally unites with other influences to indispose him to work with a kind and cheerful heart. The Scriptures see this, and meet the necessity of the case by imposing upon servants such commands as these: "Count your masters worthy of all honor; despise them not, because they are brethren; rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefits"; "Serve them in singleness of heart"; "Please them in all things"; "With good will doing service."

The third peculiar temptation is this: He *never* serves

when he can help it, and will only *pretend* to serve when this is necessary to secure him from the displeasure of his superior. The Scriptures see this, and thus admonish the servant: "Obey not *with eye-service.*" Mark here, first, lack of principle. There is no conscience toward God, no love of his master, nothing to rouse him to labor until the eye of his master falls upon him. Again, fearfulness and pretense. The eye of the master starts him to serve, and always with an air as though he had not been idle. How strikingly does the slave fill out this description. Who that has lived in a slave-land does not instantly recall times and occasions without number or description, in which he has first seen the lounging slave, and then the instant motive power of the master's eye, at least upon his frame? No wonder the Scriptures repeat the injunction, "*not with eye-service.*" Again, the Scriptures admonish servants to obey their masters, "*not as men-pleasers.*" They seem to say, 'Do not feel that you have accomplished every end if you have simply kept the man, the master, from being displeased with you.' He who is familiar with the practical operation of slavery, will not be surprised that the Scriptures repeat the injunction, "*not as men-pleasers.*"

The fourth peculiar temptation is this: The slave serves with his body when he must, and lets out the rebellion of his heart when he may. The Scriptures see this, and command servants, "Count your masters worthy of all honor." "Be subject to them with all fear." There is a profound respect indicated in this language which hardly befits any existing relation between freemen, but well becomes the more humble and dependent condition of the slave. The Scriptures add, "not answering again." Sound judgment, I apprehend, discovers some lack of propriety in the application of such a precept to the dignity and rights of a freeman, though a servant; while it must appreciate its consummate importance to him who is the most dependent of all men. The Scriptures impose a deeper humiliation upon the servant, and command him to obey his master "with fear and trembling." That such an injunction should be addressed to a freeman is inconceivable; even to him who occupies the most abject admissi-

ble state among men it would seem to be a very strong prescription. But Scripture advances still one step further, and enjoins it upon the servant when "buffeted," and not "for your faults, to take it patiently"; yes! and go on to serve even "the froward." None other counsel than this can be addressed to the slave in view of the necessities of his condition; but to require a freeman when buffeted unrighteously to submit to it with patience, and continue in the service of the froward, is what I judge no man interprets the Bible to teach.

The last temptation of the slave is to feel that since his master will not pay him for his labor when he ought, he may pay himself when he can. I suspect it is naturally an underground public sentiment in every community of slaves, that there is no theft in taking from the master. Little pilfering, apart from the power of the gospel, will be very apt to prevail where slavery exists. The Scriptures see this and say, Obey your masters "*not purloining*."*

By the rule of interpretation now under discussion, the disputed word "servant" must find its definition in the *nature* of the *subject* which it is employed to express. We have the description of the subject full before us in the Scripture. I affirm that herein the Bible describes the qualities and circumstances of the *slave*, because, as we have seen, every appeal of the Scriptures speaks with singular application to the peculiarities of his character and condition. I affirm that the Bible does *not* describe the *free servant*, because there is no peculiar basis in his character or state for any one of all the Scriptural commands addressed to the servant. A freeman serves whom he chooses, as long as he chooses, and for what he chooses; he is paid for his labor, and loses employment if he is not diligent, skilful, and respectful. There is nothing therefore in his condition which naturally impels him to serve either without conscience toward God or kindness toward man, or

* I am not to be understood as giving a portraiture of slavery at large. For whatever be the evils of this institution, in our own country slaves are generally a happy people, and not greatly distinguished for immorality. I design here only to present those peculiar temptations to vice in the slave, which would most naturally attract the legislation of a moral governor, and thus furnish a key to the character addressed.

which gives such power to the master's eye; nothing which peculiarly exposes him either to deception or discontent or dishonesty; nothing that demands either a trembling service or abject submission to injurious treatment.

3d. Another rule of interpretation requires us, when one leg of an antithesis is ascertained, to go to its opposite for the other. Of the Scriptural servant the apostle says: "If thou mayest be made free." What is the present state of that servant who is *to be* made free? It would seem rather hard to escape the blunt force of this passage, unless we could devise a process whereby a man already occupying a certain state might still be put into the same. Clearly, if at the time, the party was *out* of a state of freedom he was *in* a state of slavery.

4th. Words are always to be understood with reference to the state of society in which they were spoken, its usages, prejudices, &c. Now two things, I apprehend, all parties admit: First, That the term servant, when literally employed by the tongue or pen of an apostle, always fell among a people where slavery prevailed. Again, the Greek terms translated servant in the New Testament, in common parlance *out of the Church*, did always carry the idea of slavery. These facts suggest two instructive inquiries. Did there actually exist any considerable class of free domestics in that state of society? If there did, would the apostles address them by terms universally applied to another and far more degraded caste? Dares any white man at the South look a man of his own color in the face and call him "*slave*," and speak of his "*master?*" The usages and prejudices of all slaveholding society are dead against any such signification of the word.

Finally, The opinions of the learned should always have weight with us. The uniform current of testimony from historians, general scholars, and Biblical critics, settles the fact beyond controversy, that there were slaves in the primitive Church. My brother from Virginia, adverting to the favorable bearing of American testimony on this subject, has reminded us of the sentiments of two of our most distinguished scholars occupying very different positions in the ecclesiastical world, *Drs. Channing* and *Wayland*. Of the mass of fa-

vorable testimony beyond the waters, I will simply glance at the opinions of two still more eminent Biblical students. LARDNER argues against the authenticity of the so-called "Apostolical Constitutions," because they provided such an unreasonable multitude of holidays for the slaves. To imagine that so serious an encroachment upon the rights of the master would have been tolerated for a moment in that state of society, he holds to be perfectly absurd. You see *his* opinion. HORNE, in commenting upon 1 Tim. vi. 1, states the fact that one class of the Pharisees taught that the proselyte in becoming a Jew abandoned all his heathen relations, social, civil and natural. He supposes it probable that this party would apply their doctrine to Christianity, and contends that the convert on entering the Christian Church left slavery behind him. He understands Paul in this passage to strike at this class of primitive Abolitionists when he taught this lesson: in order that blasphemy against the name of God and his doctrine might be averted, it is the duty of servants under the yoke to count their masters worthy of all honor, love and service. Nor did he hesitate to pronounce those early Abolitionists who "teach otherwise" ungodly, proud, ignorant, contentious, and mischievous to the last degree; persons to be avoided on account of their sentiments, spirit, and conduct.

It does not appear to me, Mr. Moderator, that I have passed by any of the great ordinary rules for interpreting language, nor travelled far to find them, nor forced their application to the subject. It would be strange indeed if all this body of principles verily work the other way, and teach that a servant under the yoke is a freeman above it.

II. But this *historical* argument finds a refuge in a second position. Admit the existence of slavery under the eye of the apostles, yet the *peculiar abominations of our American system* demand that the Church should instantly and indignantly rise up and pronounce it accursed of God. But what comparison is there between the modern and the ancient institution? By Roman law, slaves were held "pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus." The master might force his slave to become a harlot, or a gladiator; might chastise him without limit as to method, severity, or continuance; might torture

him at will for crime, caprice, or pleasure; nay, might put him to death at any time, in any manner, for any purpose or for none. The distinctive Roman principle was this: *That a slave could not be injured by his master.* I venture to affirm that there is not an inch of ground in these United States where any one of this catalogue of cruelties could be inflicted without awakening the instant vengeance both of law and public sentiment. When men in our day cut up and feed out their slaves to give their fish a richer flavor; or sit at ease and enjoy themselves in the excruciating tortures by which the slave gives up life before their eyes; or when the blood of hundreds in one sacrifice is shed upon the grave of a departed kinsman in some sort of sympathy with his ghost,—it will not then be in season to speak of the *peculiar* excesses of slavery in our day.

I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether this Historical argument does not share the fate of its predecessors? If the apostles did verily regard slavery in the days of ancient Rome as a domestic relation which Christianity might regulate and Christians might fill, what right has any uninspired disciple of Jesus to pronounce this institution under the moderated features of our own day, such an insufferable sin against God as demands its instantaneous abolition, be the consequences what they may?

IV. The Progress Argument.

I should have been gratified to hear some more distinct statement of the mode of reasoning relied upon under this head. From the discussions rather of the lobbies of this house than of the floor, as far as I have been able to understand the mind of my brethren, the sentiment seems to be this: Ancient language concerning slavery is inapplicable in our day, in view of the *greater light* of modern times. The argument, I apprehend, they would state thus: The divine withholdment of specific truth in ancient times left the sin of slavery uncondemned. The providential impartation of greater light in our day calls upon us to come out and condemn it.

Permit me to inquire whether the introduction of this topic does not reduce the reasoner to an unwelcome alternative. If

his Scripture argument has foundations, and the Bible verily teaches that slaveholding is sin *per se*, then this argument fails. If the Progress argument has foundations, and Scripture has not furnished any definite light upon the subject, then the Scripture argument fails. Be this as it may, I invite your attention to two answers to the reasoning under this head.

I. *The argument has no foundations.* The conclusion lacks a premise. It is not true that decisive light touching the character of this institution was withheld from the primitive Church.

1st. The *end* of my brother's argument would seem to forbid this position.

I admit that God does withhold truth on various topics, and for various reasons. For instance, when the mind is unprepared to receive it through lack of intellectual development. Paul would now lay down advanced principles of religion, but his slow-learning brethren are not able to bear the teaching, and he must needs still feed them with milk when they should be living upon stronger diet. So when there is a lack of moral preparation through prejudice. Jesus did not at first disclose to his disciples the exact dignity of his person, the manner of his death, his purposes touching the future relations of the Jews and Gentiles to his Church, &c. &c. Offenses, too of inferior criminality God does sometimes comparatively wink at for a season, which at a future time he fully exposes and condemns. I apprehend, however, that these offenses will always be found to be *mala prohibita*, and that there is not, in all God's revelation to man, any approximation to the fact which this argument assumes. Here is a case of sin *per se*, a case of the most flagrant enormity. God brings it up again and again in the Old Testament and in the New, but never, never to the close of the sacred canon reveals its true character, and actually ceases to speak to man leaving him to find out as best he can, that this whole thing is a stench in his nostrils, and that he expels the perpetrator from the fellowship of his people. I lay no great stress upon this point of evidence, yet I would respectfully ask my brother whether there is not something like a quarrel between the first necessary fact of his Progress argument, viz., that God of old with-

held from man his judgment of the moral character of slavery, and the conclusion which he builds his argument to sustain, viz., that slaveholding in itself is an outrageous offense against God.

2d. The *Scriptures* emphatically forbid it.

What additional instructions upon this subject could have been reasonably expected in God's Word? It cannot be denied that the institution of slavery is made the subject of deliberate and systematic regulation, both in the Old Testament and in the New; that in both, the relative duty of the respective parties, the motives by which they are to be actuated, the spirit they are to cultivate, the ends they are to seek, the temptations they are to avoid, the final account to which they are held, and the solemn retribution they must expect, are all stated and discussed with ordinary perspicuity. Now if the *Progress* argument is true, and God has withheld reasonable instructions concerning the character of this relation, on what topics, I ask, has God given us what might be termed a reasonable degree of information? I venture to affirm that the whole catalogue of social relations, husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, ruler and subject, pastor and people, &c., scarce furnishes a solitary instance of more perspicuous, definite, frequent, or extended Scripture teaching. One fact every eye accustomed to overlook the holy page will promptly recognize, namely, that this doctrine of master and servant is frequently brought up by holy writers in immediate connection with the most clearly defined and important human relations, and not only treated as to general method precisely as they are, but not unfrequently with decidedly greater particularity and elaboration. I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether this argument does not fail at its foundations? It sets out with the allegation that God in the Scriptures has actually failed to give man due light as to his duty in the relation of master and servant; an unreasonable allegation, by the way, since it charges God either with incapacity, for he has certainly made many efforts to convey such instruction, or with malignity, for he wilfully hides needed truth, and leaves man to wander unwarned in desperate sin. But if the world has no right to rise up and

charge God with having wickedly left us in the dark touching duty in the great relations of husband and wife, parent and child, ruler and subject, &c., then this *Progress* argument fails, and we need not that man should mend the perfect work of his Maker in this matter.

II. *It destroys the foundations of the Bible.* You say, my brother, that God of old gave not to man by revelation adequate knowledge of the moral features of slavery. Very well. You say that the world in her progress has reached advanced providential light on this topic ; and you are prepared now to speak out touching the enormity of this institution. Very well. Now, brother, where is my Bible? I will trust you with this responsible office. Go through the Word of God and gather together all the topics on which man needs Divine teaching, and has received *no more* than God has given us on the subject we discuss. You yourself will admit that here are the residue of the great social relations which make up more than half of human life; these must all be thrown by as so many great moral topics on which we have as yet no adequate inspired instruction. Here, too, are a thousand acts which I daily perform, and ten thousand views and feelings embracing God and man, of whose moral character I have no more discriminating Bible instruction than I have of the duties of master and servant. All these too must be laid aside as matters about which I have yet to learn where and how the line of duty is to be drawn. I call upon you to tell me where is my Bible. See, my brother ! These providential lights bring us *no arbiter.* How shall we reach the decisive truth on any one of these multiplied points about which God has so inconsiderately neglected to inform us? You say that light upon slavery has reached you, and that by the law of Human Rights every holder of a slave is bound to release him instantly. I insist that providential light has reached my mind also, and that the law of Human Rights requires the master to keep his hold upon the servant for the present. Now I beg you to bear in mind that *you*, a poor, fallible creature interpreting the lights of Providence, are not my Bible. My Bible is *God acting arbiter between fallible men, and stating the truth.*

And now I insist upon it, if your Progress argument is right, and there is no adequate Scripture light on the subject of slavery, and of course no adequate Scripture instruction on the nine hundred and ninety-nine points of Christian duty of which God has said only *as much*, then you have taken away my Bible, and I am undone. But this is not all.

III. *It sets up a Bible of humanisms* in the place of the Word of God. I know not what child of man's crazy fancy you may not make Bible to me upon the principle of your *Progress* argument. Here is the doctrine of *Womanism*, so solemnly baptized of late in the West by a string of Female Conventional Resolutions. Your *Progress* argument puts as large a basis under this vagary as under your Abolitionism. The Scriptures we think sufficiently explicit in defining woman's position in society. It tells us that the head of the woman is the man, for woman was made second, and is the weaker vessel. As such she is commanded to submit herself to her own husband, as to the Lord, and to be subject to him in everything. If she would be chaste, discreet, or obedient, she must be a stayer at home, that she might bear children, guide the house, and build the same. But the moment she leaves her modest sphere, and would assume a more conspicuous and commanding position, that moment Scripture meets her with the outcry, "It is a shame for a woman!!" &c.; that moment Scripture sends her back with the mandate, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection," "For it is not permitted unto them to speak nor to usurp authority, but to be in silence." All this would seem to indicate clearly enough that it does not belong to woman to take the lead in human society.

But your doctrine, in the hand of the champion of this new light, assumes that all these Scriptures were penned in a dark and barbarous age; that doubtless God had many things to say, important to the perfect development of woman's capacities, relations, and rights, but these preparatory lights had not then come, and consequently society was not able to bear the revelation. Now, however, in her onward progress, society has reached the abundant and elevated teachings of history,

science, and universal improvement. Now the shades of Scripture times are passing away, and hosts of new truths are coming to light. More conspicuous than all, nature's grand doctrine of Liberty and Equality springs to view, and, favored by the novel and glorious illustrations of popular government, what a hearty cheering it radiates through all the ranks of the oppressed. No wonder woman, downtrodden into the very earth from its foundations, should begin to feel the stirrings of sympathy with her long-lost rights! No wonder she now begins to realize in all her soul that her Maker's hand has formed her just as free, just as gifted, just as worthy as her companion, and that there existed not the shadow of a reason why she should not have been permitted to enjoy her equal rights in filling the higher stations of life, and to employ her equal capacities in the distinguished toil of lifting man to his destined perfection. Poor thing! What a barbarous usurpation has stripped her all life long of the high prerogative of her nature, and doomed her to stand back and resign all share in making laws, governing States, commanding armies! What a glorious day for woman! Providence with his new lights has come to her rescue. Let arrogant, rebuked man now give place, and welcome woman to her legitimate dignities.

Mr. Moderator, why are not Womanism, and Communism, and Socialism, and Shakerism, and every other foolery of the earth, as well founded upon this doctrine of *Progress*, as Abolitionism? *We* say that the duty of master and servant, the social position of woman, the law of property, &c. &c., are all clearly revealed in the Scriptures, and that man has no commission to perfect the Word of God, and thus the matter is at rest. But our opposing brethren contend that God of old made revelation to man only as far as he was able to bear it, and that new developments were to be providentially expected in the progress of society; that revelation upon the subject of slavery, as upon many other topics, was only partial, and that new light has now come, and that the world must follow it. I ask now, why have not these fanatics respectively as much right to affirm, first, that for the hardness of man's heart revelation of old was only partial

touching the Rights of Woman, the Distribution of the gifts of the Creator, &c. &c.; second, that new light has come to man on these points respectively; and, third, that the world must follow it?

In weighing this argument let me say—

1st. That the Bible is a revelation to MAN.

Therefore *that* progress which either ascertains the original import of the text by sound rules of construction, or discovers that this or that old or new method of living is or is not covered by this or that rule of Scripture,—*such* progress, I say, is legitimate, and onward to the Millennium.

2d. The Bible is *not* a revelation to a *generation.*

Therefore that progress which proposes to enlighten the proper original import of God's Word; which, confessedly or covertly, leaves the Scriptures to find the rule of life in improving developments,—I say *such* progress exactly cuts the cable after the ship has gone to anchor because she could not live in the tempest. A law above the Constitution may possibly be seen in one direction, but progress beyond the Bible is out of sight altogether.

I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether I may not lay by this PROGRESS argument with its predecessors? For if it so far fails of its end as to put down God's Word, and set up human extravagance, like the residue of the catalogue, it turns upon its author with a vengeance.

IV. THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT.

Brethren contend that *experience* establishes the essential sinfulness of slaveholding. The gospel reforms society. The Church has effectually tried the doctrine that slaveholding is *not* essentially sinful, and nothing is done. And nothing will be done until we change the ground, come back to the truth, and make slavery—*sin.*

To this argument it might be responded, If the tardiness of the operation disproves the genuineness of the principle, why not throw up the plan of missionary operations? Surely our missionary progress has been slow. Why not look up another religion? Christianity, after 6,000 years, has yet most

of her work to do. But I answer more particularly: *All things considered, if more has been done by the gospel in many branches of Christian benevolence in this land, during the last thirty years, I know it not.*

Let us study the work of the Southern Church with an impartial mind, and inquire whether opposing brethren, instead of venting a prejudiced conscience fretted by the imagination of a stationary criminality in the whole business, should not thank God and take courage, in view of the wholesome progress of the cause; and instead of calling for discipline upon Southern brethren, whether they should not heartily lend a helping hand in the work they do? I invite my brethren to glance over the field with me, and candidly weigh the following considerations.

I. *The strongest and purest expression of anti-slavery sentiment, probably ever made by man, has been uttered by the South.*

I doubt not that pure and strong Anti-slavery convictions are entertained at the North, and that our brethren furnish every reasonable evidence of their sincerity and earnestness. But we have no evidence yet of the supreme strength of this conviction. How will you try the purity and the power of a sentiment in the human heart? Surely not by words only; not by any process of stubborn and imperious public agitation; not by any determined political stand against Southern measures; not by any transient aid and comfort rendered to flying slaves. All these and many similar developments may cost but little. On the contrary, the power of a principle exhibits itself in the labors it can put forth, the oppositions it can resist, the self-denials it can bear,—in a word, by the *sacrifices* it can make. Where shall we find the most commanding expression of that calm, enlightened, benign, high-souled Anti-slavery sentiment which is uttered by sacrifice? You point us to England. For freedom in the West Indies—20,000,000 pounds sterling!! This was a noble testimony of her will to give freedom to the slave, the like of which our Northern friends have never approached. Three things, however, should work some abatement of our first impressions of British devotion to this cause. This sum was furnished by the

very richest treasury in the world. Only the interest of this sum has been paid; the principal never will be until the great English debt is cancelled. Nor do I deem it scandal to say, that probably no small portion of this sum was paid to self-interest, and not by benevolent principle. A friend travelling in England at the time of the preparatory public agitation of the subject, informs me that one argument which told powerfully in persuading the English people to adopt this measure was the widely published doctrine that, since free labor was so far superior to slave labor, by this operation West India sugars would be purchased in England at a penny a pound below its present cost, so that England would receive 100,000,000 pounds in return for her 20,000,000.

It gives me pleasure to remind you, Mr. Moderator, that near 250,000 slaves are computed to have been freed in this country, mainly at the South. Assuming the average value of the slave to be 100 pounds sterling, you have, sir, upon this principle *more* than FIVE AND TWENTY MILLIONS OF POUNDS STERLING *contributed to this cause of putting away slavery from these United States* by the SLAVEHOLDERS of the South. Mark the contrast. This immense sum has been actually paid out, not interest only, but principal also; not by a rich public treasury, but by private families who lived by the slaves they surrendered; not before the public eye, but in the retirement of private life; not under the cheering voice of universal praise, but possibly under the chilling looks of many a neighbor who charges the emancipator with the discontent which now springs up in the bosom of his Colored family; not under circumstances which provided the slightest hope of pecuniary emolument, but from no other possible motive than conscientious, quiet, kind, anti-slavery sentiment. Let Northern brethren weigh this, and hereafter give to the South the respect due to the very FIRST *position of friendship to African freedom by pecuniary sacrifice.*

II. *The men who dwell south of Mason and Dixon's line have done more to convert the heathen than the whole world beside.*

What is the whole number of converted heathen which

the American Church presents this day to the eye of God and the world?—

American Board,	26,000
Baptist Missions,	15,000
Methodist Missions,	13,000
Presbyterian Missions,	250
Episcopal Missions,	71
	54,321

Observe, Mr. Moderator, one branch of one Christian denomination at the South, viz., the Methodist Episcopal Church numbers 134,722 *Colored members.* More than three times as many *heathen* converted through Southern instrumentality as the combined American Church can produce.

What, sir, allow me now to inquire, is the sum total of the membership of all the heathen churches in the world? By those best informed on this subject the number is estimated at something like 200,000. Turn your eye once more to the South. Say nothing of the Colored members of all the churches in the State of Maryland, (and they are numerous,) nor of the Presbyterian Church, nor of the Episcopal Church, nor of the Lutheran Church, nor of certain branches of the Methodist and of the Baptist denominations, in all the South. Simply fix your eye upon one branch respectively of two Christian Churches. You will find enrolled upon their list of *Colored* members—

In the Methodist Church,	134,000
" Baptist Church,	130,000
	264,000

Thus, sir, a part of the Southern Church holds up this day to the gaze of heaven and earth *scores of thousands* MORE *of heathen fellow-men hoping in Christ through their labors than all the churches of the Free Soil of the world combined have yet gathered to the Master.* Let philanthropists employ all proper methods to FREE the soil of the world. It is a noble cause, and I will unite with them. But let our Northern brethren weigh one singular fact: These very brethren of the South, upon whom they themselves have been laying on so hard and so long for their cruel oppression of the bondman, and whom forsooth from year to year they have been so anxious to

persuade Providence to thrust out of the Church, as not worthy of a standing in it,—THESE are the *very men* whom that very Providence has made the honored instruments, in one sense at least, of doing *more for the salvation of the heathen world than all the Church militant beside. Yes, let them ponder this.*

III. *The Southern Church has effected a vast amelioration of the social and religious condition of the slave.*

When landed in this country, the African captive belonged to the most degraded heathen upon the face of the earth. His descendant still needs great improvement, but is far removed from the universal debasement of his progenitor. Changes for the better have marked the history of slavery, from its introduction to the present hour.

1st. The Southern Church has done her part in working *valuable modifications of the laws of the land.* An examination of the slave laws of successive generations will exhibit a steady advance in the considerate benignity of the legislator. Nor, should we overlook the beneficial changes wrought in the spirit and power of ancient statutes, through a constantly-improving public sentiment. There are benefits conferred upon the slave by statute, which of old never fully reached him in the administration. From the earliest times there existed a law, forbidding labor on the Sabbath. I well remember, when a boy, the universal custom of taking the servants on the Sabbath day to the corn-house to shell, or to the potato-field to dig, that the weekly plantation-allowance of vegetable diet might be distributed. This practice, I apprehend, is now universally abolished. That the spirit and principle of the Church did its part in effecting the change, you may learn from this incident. I knew a church member, who, grieved by the prevalence of this custom, personally persuaded his Christian brethren and friends to abolish it in their respective families, and finding one stout opposer of the innovation, beyond the limits of the Church, he at last calmly apprised him of the law of the land, and of his purpose of becoming Public Prosecutor if he did not yield to the public sentiment of his neighbors. There always existed a law forbidding the inhuman

correction of a slave. I am persuaded that there never existed in Southern society such excessive violations of this law as some uninformed persons at a distance imagine. Yet I well remember a state of things which must have operated to break the power of this benign statute. Years ago, any allusions to a Southern master's treatment of his slave would have colored his face as promptly and indignantly as though you had intermeddled with his conduct towards his wife, or his child, or his disposition of any chattel on his farm. But public sentiment on this subject has undergone such a change, that every community feels itself a trustee to some extent of the natural and legal rights of the slaves that dwell in its bosom, and the beneficiary now gets the fair protection of this law. It may throw light upon the manner in which this reformation was wrought, if I inform you that many years since, a Christian hearing that a servant had been cruelly chastised on a neighboring plantation, availed himself of the Patrol system of the South, and having ascertained the fact by personal observation, informed the overseer that he should prosecute him for breach of law. He did so, and had him convicted and punished. I stood by the side of that Christian man when he received intelligence that the enraged owner, in a neighboring city, had avowed his purpose to shoot him down as a dog wherever he met him. One year afterwards, I was again walking from a religious meeting by his side, when the son of the threatener delivered to that faithful Christian the father's permit to enter the only plantation in the county which had heretofore been closed against the good man's private visits for the religious instruction of the servants. In most of the Southern States there exists an old law, which forbids that a slave should be taught to read. When a boy, I well remember my conviction of the terrible authority of this edict. To the Southern mind in that day, to violate this law seemed a little like taking one step toward the application of the match to the magazine. Now, how changed is the feeling? The good influence of the Bible upon the slave, and every man's right of direct access to the Word of God is extensively understood. It has long been a common spectacle to see the children of a Southern family at night, or on the Sabbath, employed in teach-

ing the servants to read. It is many years since night-schools, in which Colored adults taught Colored children to read, were common in all our Southern cities, and I believe well known to city authorities, and generally unmolested by them. It is worthy of observation, that a few years since, when a Southern Legislature, alarmed by Abolition interference, revived this obsolete law, Christian public sentiment at the South felt if Cæsar moved to put away the Bible from the servant, God's people must move, as best they can, to bring it back. A consequent impulse was given to *Oral Instruction* far and wide, whose results have been singularly happy. One is this: that hundreds of servants learn to read now, where none were taught before. And hundreds of copies of the Scriptures are distributed among the slaves at this day, which would never have been received if the old law had been permitted to sleep. Thus you perceive that the steady improvement of public sentiment at the South, in part through the fidelity of the church, has been progressively working a beneficial change in the face of the government toward the slave, not only by procuring the enactment of humane laws, but by breaking down the governing power of unfriendly statutes, and giving force to such benign legislation as was a dead letter before.

2d. The same causes have wrought a corresponding *social improvement* in all things pertinent to the *present comfort* and *future prospects of the slave.* I apprehend there is but little to be objected to at this day, in the physical treatment of Southern servants. Their condition is at least fair in respect to food, raiment, shelter, work, and general discipline. A remarkable revolution has occurred in the habits of Southern society respecting the discussion of the nature and claims of this relation. Half a century ago, this institution appeared to the mass of Southern population as an impregnable fixture; and yet it is a singular fact, that, as a topic of deliberate meditation or discourse, it was clothed with a forbidding awe, which made it almost as intangible as a plot of treason. Now, he who journeys through the Southern States, in public houses and conveyances may hear as frequent discourse on this subject as on almost any other. And could he compare the sentiments of the present generation with those of the past, he would be delighted to mark the liberal tendency of the times.

The steady advance of the *spirit of emancipation* is another and most interesting feature of the general progress. The records of the American Colonization Society furnish gratifying testimony on this point. You will not forget, Mr. Moderator, the testimony of one of our brethern on this floor, that in his immediate vicinity one of his neighbors had recently given to this cause $500 ; another, $1,000 ; a third, $2,000 ; a fourth, $3,000—all men in moderate circumstances. Yes, sir, and in the wealthier sections of the South there are those who are this day giving their $50,000 to the freedom of the slave.

3d. In no respect, however, has the condition of the slave been more decidedly improved, than in his *religious privileges.* It is not surprising that his claims to spiritual care should have been early neglected. There was nothing encouraging in the state of the pupil, for he was exceedingly dark and unintelligent at best, and there existed no common language between himself and his teacher ; and nothing energetic in the spirit of the teacher, for the Church in that day had not been aroused to the high duty of transmitting God's truth to all within her reach. Since that period, however, light from heaven has been gradually shed upon the Southern Church, and she has responded to the appeal. To the observant eye, the Southern country is full of testimonies to this truth. The *dark, dreamy, superstitious views of religion*, into which the Colored population naturally fell in the beginning, are *rapidly giving place to better teaching.* In the early order of things in Southern society, the Church rarely made its way to the humble domiciles of the plantation to carry the gospel to their inmates, while the servants who found their way to the church of their masters were called on to participate in ordinances designed primarily for others, and of very little comfort or profit to the unlettered. Left to themselves, the Colored population very naturally constructed a system of worship very greatly deficient in truth, full of error, embracing in its active services large measures of bodily exercise, under repetitions and noisy songs and exhortations, and producing a Christian experience which consisted of little more than a tissue of dreams, visions, "travels," &c. It is now, however, many years since Southern conscience was taught to feel that it had a duty to discharge to the be-

nighted servant—a duty too long neglected. To this duty the Church betook itself, with commendable energy and system, and the face of the kingdom in this section of the country now presents a very different aspect.

There are a diversity of established methods in which the master brings the gospel to the servant. In the cities there are large Colored churches, sometimes of two or three thousand members. Church edifices they are assisted to erect when necessary. The pulpit is generally supplied by pious, talented, Colored preachers; sometimes by white brethren of the very first talent and highest stations in the Church.* Sabbath-schools, under the tuition of intelligent white teachers, male and female, are in common use in cities, towns, and villages. On plantations masters frequently conduct family prayer, so as to secure sound instruction to the servant. The travelling minister is almost always put in requisition for this service. Instead of the old-fashioned *Negro "praise-house,"* it is common in many parts of the country to build a neat "Plantation Chapel," and to invite all accessible ministerial aid. I am happy to know that on this subject of giving judicious religious instruction to the Colored population, there is a very commendable fidelity on the part of the stated ministry in all sections of the Southern country. Should you happen to enter a sanctuary in Virginia, when a Presbytery was in session, you might possibly hear the roll called, and each minister in his place summoned to give an account to his brethren, according to a stated order, of what he was doing within his bounds for the people of color; nor would you be more fortunate than I have been, if some holy elder (who, peradventure, paid a missionary to teach his servants) should rise a little out of order because he could not contain himself, and most tenderly and solemnly express the feelings of his conscience and heart, descriptive of that burden of responsi-

* One such church finds a regular pastor in the President of a College, who receives a salary from the Blacks of $600 or $800. A valued Professor in a theological seminary vacated his chair to devote himself exclusively to the instruction of servants. The President of Washington College, Va., recently resigned his office to conduct a periodical designed to convince his countrymen of the evils of the relation of master and servant.

bility to God and to the servant, which he felt rested in common upon himself and all his brethren. Had your Presbytery been assembled in South Carolina, the ministers would not have escaped with so *general* an inquiry. Each, in his place, would have been called to answer whether he had preached, during the interval of Presbyterial sessions, one half of every Sabbath to the servants of his neighborhood.

But the most important features of this reformation are yet to be noticed. *Catechisms* to aid the master in the private instruction of his servant have been drawn up, if I mistake not, by every prevalent denomination of the South, and distributed amongst the people. The country, too, has been largely *districted*, (where this operation was most needed,) and a Missionary employed to devote himself exclusively to the Colored population within the prescribed limit, in preaching, teaching, visitation, and Sabbath-school supervision. It is ascertained that the churches built for the worship of the masters, are in many cases injudiciously located for the accommodation of the slaves; and I am credibly informed that it is quite common to erect a new church in some position selected exclusively for the convenience of the Colored population, and devoted entirely to their service. I can think of no religious meetings on this earth more delightful, none that my heart more ardently pants to enjoy, than the worship of the masters and servants of adjacent plantations, under the ministry of their beloved Missionary. My own past experience forbad me to wonder at the tears of sympathy and joy, which lately fell from the eyes of a good master, while casually sketching to me in private his habitual enjoyment of such a privilege. In testimony of the sound, conscientious, intelligent interest which is felt by the Southern Church on this subject, I will only further say, that Essays, Reports, Pastoral Letters, Periodicals, &c., have long been in course of publication; that ecclesiastical bodies of all denominations have long been accustomed to give their highest authority, their best services to this cause; that Conventions, formed by delegates from different States, and composed of the very first men of the land, have sometimes devoted days to the most liberal discussion of this whole subject; and I am just now assured by one well informed

upon all this subject, that the whole system of imparting religious instruction to servants in all parts of the South is in a healthful and improving condition.

It occurs to me here, that my Abolition brother has been comforting himself at heart under the imagined recital of the indirect, but sure results of his own bold and fearless stand for Christianity and the oppressed. I apprehend that truth before God requires some considerable abatement of this self-complacent, most confident conviction. You remind me that the improvement in the condition of the Southern slave has been cotemporaneous with the Abolition movement of the North. The same period dates a similar improvement in almost every branch of Christian benevolence, in the cause of Missions, the Bible, Tracts, Temperance, &c. Were these, too, the fruit of Abolition effort? Does not a general effect call for a general cause? And is not all this advance of the kingdom to be accredited to a general diffusion of God's Spirit upon his Church? You respond, that *agitation* is the means which the Spirit ordinarily employs to effect general reformation. You will find it difficult of proof, however, that the agitation of the subject of slavery occasioned by the Abolition movement has secured that progress at the South, which I have endeavored to sketch. There are three grand objections to the wholesome power of the Abolition effort, arising out of one fact—the *position* of the agitator, beyond the limits of the body to be reformed. 1st. Such an agitator will always lack *influence.* His very first blow, and every successive one, strikes upon ancient prejudice, and wakes up opposition, and it will be felt and said constantly, You are a stranger, an intermeddler, and an enemy; and he will be sure to lack power over those he would move. 2d. Such an agitator will lack *knowledge.* He is not on the ground. He does not see and know that of which he speaks, and his zeal will tempt him to devour greedily the extravagances cast upon his ears; and you may rest assured these, his errors and extravagances, will be promptly detected and largely overrated by the assailed, to the limitation of his influence. 3d. Such an agitator will be very apt to lack *sympathy* and *discretion.* He is not part and parcel with the body he would reform, and will be almost

sure to be deficient in that spirit of tender interest, forbearance and allowance, that constant, cautious fear of the disastrous consequences of speaking too strong, or going too fast; all of which are so indispensable to the success of every reformation movement. Mr. Moderator, the sun does not shine, if the influence of our friends at the North, who would reform the South by their violent speeches and measures, is not, to some extent, like the agency of him who locks the door of the house he would enter. Yet I have never felt with Southern men in general that this was the only influence of Abolition on the South. Whether the natural, necessary effect of the movement to rouse attention to the subject, and to cast light upon some branches of it, has or has not been counterbalanced by the mischiefs proceeding from the extravagance of its radical principle, the uncharitable spirit of the agitator, and his frequent errors in statement, positively and stubbornly advanced, I cannot say. But my conviction is very decided, that our Abolition friends are accustomed to overrate their connection with Southern improvement, and to underrate home influence in the same. Mr. Moderator, without recurring to history for its proof, I venture to express the opinion, that as it was in the great Reformation, so in general it is in the multitude of moral reforms effected by the progress of society, in every part and age of the world,—*the successful agitators are integral elements of the body reformed.* The influence, the sympathy, the minute knowledge, the admirable discretion, and the undying interest, almost necessary to every such achievement, would seem to demand it. Whether the substantial progress of the interesting Cause of the Bondman of the South has not been effected in the same manner, I leave you to judge, upon the statement of a few facts.

There has been unceasing agitation of this subject, in the wisest and happiest manner, by Southern men, from the date of the landing of the first slave on American soil. You know, sir, that before the Constitution of the United States was framed, while yet we were colonies of England, the Southern States protested against the introduction of this population. Now, sir, from that day to this, I affirm that Southern records, political, religious, literary, and historical, present a

constant succession of publications on the subject of slavery, by Southern men of the highest rank and talent, in Church and State, embodying as great a degree of accuracy, kindness, discretion, and fidelity of sentiment as characterizes any similar number of publications uttered at the North within the last twenty years. If there is any approach to truth in this statement, Mr. Moderator, with all the powerful and various advantages of home influence, have all these efforts been powerless, while similar efforts from abroad have been reforming the land? Again, sir, from the earliest period of our history, ecclesiastical bodies at the South, and especially of the Presbyterian order, have held up this subject to their churches, and pressed religious duty upon the conscience just as far as, in their Christian judgment, they were permitted to do. What has been the influence of this steady movement through past generations? I intend no disrespect, but for reasons too obvious to need a statement, I must be permitted to say, if any member of this body imagines that a strong Abolition announcement by this General Assembly will approach to the power over the Southern Church which will always follow the calm, solemn, faithful appeal of her own Presbyteries or Synods, he makes a great mistake.

Mr. Moderator, why may not reformation commence at home? Are the masses so involved in the common interest and prejudice against the truth that they are not likely to see and appreciate it? But bear in mind, all reformation commences with individuals, and all history shows that there ever have been at the South individuals friends of the truth, awake and active upon this subject. These publications and decisions of old, brought to bear upon the Colored race, what reformation element do they lack? There is mind there, and truth there, and the gospel there, and the Spirit there;—certainly, too, a closer view of the necessities of reformation, deeper interest in the work to be done, and higher influence over the body to be moved. Mr. Moderator, to some small extent I hold myself a witness in this case. I know by personal observation, that these Southern efforts have carried reformation power. Prior to the day when the South felt fretted by Abolition interference, now more than twenty years ago, I

well remember that a Christian man, born and bred at the South, rode many miles, called on me at my domicile in the State of Georgia, and solicited me to become a member of a Society which he purposed to form for the "RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE COLORED POPULATION." This devoted and talented minister of Jesus was himself made the General Agent of the Society originated at that time. Through him we put forth the first year an able tract on the "*Degradation of the Southern Slave*," and scattered it through the county. This, sir, did its work. We had our anniversary, and reported progress. The second year we drew up, and published, and distributed an able essay on the "*Obligation of the Master*." I noticed the effect of this document in all my itinerations. During the third year we published a "*Catechism*" to aid this responsible master in the discharge of his duty to this necessitous member of his family,—a document, let me say, of such singular value, that it found its way across the waters to the table of a missionary of the American Board, who thought he saw in it the precise desideratum for his own field, and had it printed, and set to the work of reformation among the heathen abroad. Suffer me to say that this Society has been in steady operation from that day to this, not only sending its Agent around the district to instruct the slaves at convenient station-houses erected for the purpose, but annually reporting, and occasionally publishing as necessity demanded. To the favorable influence of this movement, first upon the population under its immediate supervision, then upon the counties adjacent, and finally, through its publications, upon the friends of the cause at a distance, and even in other States, multitudes can bear witness. What had Abolition to do with the origin or power of this operation?

It was my privilege, about the period of the formation of this Society, to visit an eminent Christian who dwelt in a neighboring State, and where, you will remark, there now prevails through all the surrounding country as high a degree of religious fidelity to the Colored population as distinguishes any section of the South. I learned that he had been in the habit of employing a minister to preach to his large family of servants for many years. He informed me that, though his neigh-

bors far and near were at that time favorable to this species of operation, yet when he first commenced it, he was told that his movement endangered the peace and lives of the whites, and he must desist. He answered their arguments, and moved forward in his duty. They became more serious in their objections: he still persisted. At length their opposition waxed so firm and united that he was driven to tell them: "Gentlemen, I am engaged in my duty, and before I give it up, I will plant a cannon in every window of my house, and you shall go over my dead body to take away the Word of God from my family." I had the pleasure of preaching the gospel in his neighborhood, when the conversion of some of his early opposers led him to give me this history. Here is an operation that dates back its origin perhaps forty years from this time. What had Abolition to do with the waking up of this man's mind to duty? We accord to it, with all its ill-workings, some collateral stimulation of a good cause; and its friends, in turn, should concede that wherever similar improvements are witnessed in Southern society at this day, they may have had a similarly independent origin.

Here let me arrest this elaborate narration with one remark. This subject is presented at great disadvantage, for it comes before you, not through the pen of the historian who had explored the ground and collected the facts, but simply through the casual recollections of one who, years ago, was an eye-witness of some portions of the operation.

Mr. Moderator, what shall we say of this argument? Has nothing been done under that Anti-slavery doctrine which Abolitionism opposes? Sir, weigh the enormous disadvantages against which the Reform principle had to contend: the interest, the powerful interest, that both blinded and opposed the agent; the prejudice, the public sentiment, the laws that stood so directly, so strongly, so menacingly in the way; and in what branch of Christian benevolence has more been effected in the same time? You have seen, sir, that by the outlay of a sum of money four times as large as the whole American Church has contributed to all Christian causes from the beginning,* Southern men have earned the honor of

* See Appendix, No. IV.

exhibiting the very noblest Anti-slavery sentiment uttered by any class of men in our day; that the Southern Church have been the happy instruments, under God, of baptizing a larger number of heathen brethren than all the missionary operations of the world beside; that, by a self-denying, laborious, and intrepid zeal, they have wrought a change in the social and religious condition of servants, and the public sentiment of masters, which cannot fail to impart the deepest gratification to every bosom that ever felt one beat of philanthropy for the bondman.

I put it to you, Mr. Moderator, whether this argument of my brethren does not belong to the same catalogue of impregnable proofs of the principle it was enlisted to overthrow? If moderate Anti-slavery sentiment has really done so much, God and the truth must be with it.

I repeat, sir, the fair statement of the acknowledged facts of the case shows that slaveholding is not *sin per se.* So signally true is this, that every argument advanced to establish the doctrine overthrows its own foundations, and builds up the doctrine opposed.

SECOND.--THE DUTY OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED.

The duty of all parties may be comprised in one brief sentence: COME TO THE WORD OF GOD.

Let the *Master* come to the Word of God, and do what that Word so plainly enjoins. Let him remember that, in general, he owes his servant the love that belongs to every brother man; and, in particular, that kind and faithful guardianship which will give him that which is just and equal in his relation. So doing, he will be sure to labor to lift him ultimately above the disadvantages of his present position, by the wisest and surest method which his judgment and circumstances may suggest.

Let the *Servant* come to the Word of God, and do all which that Word enjoins. Let him, in general, love his master as he should love every fellow-man, and be particularly careful to discharge, with cheerfulness and fidelity, all the duties which Scripture devolves upon him as a servant. Let him strive to be content with his providential condition, and do

nothing to alienate, but everything to secure the good-will of his master.

Let the *Non-slaveholding brother in the Church* come to the Word of God, and see to it that, in general, he speaks to that master as God speaks to him in the Bible, and to that servant as God speaks to him in the Scriptures. And let him especially beware, lest he set himself above the Apostles and their Lord, by teaching such doctrines, touching these parties respectively, as the New Testament has not revealed, and by addressing such counsel to the parties as the New Testament never gives.

God has made DUTY the appointed channel of divine blessing. All good will follow fidelity here.

1. Nothing like Bible duty will *build up the character of the parties.* I am persuaded that there is nothing which will more beautifully develop the Christian character of the master, than a conscientious, just, and sympathizing discharge of all his Scripture duty to his servant: nothing which will more certainly or happily perfect the Christian character of the servant, than a studious, steady effort to serve his master in strict accordance with the spirit and terms of Scripture requirement.

2. Nothing like Bible duty will *brighten the prospects of the parties.* As for the servant, his present comfort and future hopes depend far more upon his fidelity than upon any other conceivable influence. Only let him be faithful toward God and man, and he will feel, in the depths of his own heart, the abiding consolation of high-souled virtue; a sustaining sense of integrity, cheered by the joy and peace of ever-flowing benevolent affection. Only let him be faithful, and his fidelity, as nothing else can, will be sure to act upon the master's intellect and conscience, so as to open his mind to clearer and still clearer views of his elevated relative duty, and win upon his heart to do for this humble, faithful friend all that wisdom and love suggest. Nothing like mutual fidelity will so certainly or so soundly convince the master that slavery, on the whole, is not a wholesome condition of human society for either party. It intrusts too much unguarded power to imperfect man. This he will daily feel.

It subjects the degraded yet elevated capacities of an immortal nature to too unpropitious a school for desirable development. This he will daily see. Such, I judge, will be the class of reflections and influences which mutual fidelity will be sure to bring to bear upon the master's mind. The result is obvious: an augmenting perception of what, on the whole, is best for both parties, and a growing, generous inclination to do for the inferior that which will ultimately plant him and his posterity upon the grand platform of equal rights.

3. Nothing like Bible duty will secure the *friendship* of the parties. Mutual daily action upon such principles must make the intercourse increasingly pleasant and kind. And when the slave is ultimately raised to freedom by the master's generosity, while the master feels it is more blessed to give than to receive, the nature of that gift will never, never permit the master's kindness to be effaced from the freedman's heart. Go and converse with the officers of the American Colonization Society—they will tell you freedom, thus obtained, is entailing eternal and tenderest friendship between these long embittered races. Who does not see that this is God's way of doing this work?

4. Nothing like Bible duty will display the very *brightest glory of Christianity.* Behold the operation of Christianity in working off slavery from the face of the earth! There is no relation under heaven so tryingly, desperately abject on the one hand, nor independent on the other. Consequently there is no such field amongst men for the exercise of generous, self-controlling, self-denying sympathy with the helpless on the one hand, nor of noble, cheerful humility; unrewarded, self-sacrificing consecration on the other. Thus, more singular and beautiful specimens of celestial virtue, than the gospel will work out in gradually dismissing slavery from the earth, I do not expect to behold in the day of the revelation of all things.

5. Nothing like Bible duty will *heal the breach of the Church.* The strife of Christian brethren should be allayed. Let all parties come to the Word of God. Now we see eye to eye. Now, brother harbors dishonoring sentiment—utters provok-

ing language—presses excommunicating measures against his brother no more. No! he now takes a different view both of the character and condition of his brother. He sympathizes, he encourages, he advises, he coöperates. The darkened, struggling, tempted, burdened mind of the other! who can tell what seasonable counsel, encouragement and strength in its momentous, self-denying work it imbibes from all this fraternal sympathy? Thus, kind patience on the one hand generates teachable respect on the other, and the brethren are brought together, and God's good work is accomplished.

6. Nothing like Bible duty will *ease off the friction of the nation.* Pronounce slaveholding *sin per se*, and act upon your dogma. There can be no cordial respect—no courteous language—no kind coöperation. There can be no compromise—no patience—no safe association. The one faces the other as a desperate wrong-doer. The second bristles up against the first as an impertinent, fanatical, provoking accuser. Mark! it is this very doctrine which is cutting, at this very hour, upon the tie of the Union with more severing energy than all other agencies combined. Let the State as well as the Church come to the Word of God—respect, cordiality, compromise spring up, and perilous friction instantly subsides into harmony and peace.

Now, let the parties *violate this injunction, and fail to come to the Word of God, and continue to legislate for themselves on this subject, and act on the doctrine that slavery is sin per se,* and what will be the issue?

Nothing can more seriously mutilate the character of master and servant: for it spreads an influence over the spirit of both, and makes the one hostile and insurgent—the other suspicious and severe;—nothing so effectually dissipate the prospect of present comfort or future deliverance: for without respect, the serving of the one must be pure hardship; without love, the spirit of the other will never cherish an inclination to emancipate;—nothing so certainly destroy all the foundations of friendship: for Abolitionism will disturb both parties for the present, and, if it ever frees the slave, it will entail an eternal hostility upon the races it tears apart;—

nothing more grievously wrong Christianity: for it will spoil those lovely shapes of Christian virtue to which the providence and Word of God entitle her in the glorious progress of the Gospel;—nothing more surely aggravate the present mischievous agitation of the Church, or compel Jacob's children ultimately to fall out by the way;—nothing has hitherto so fearfully shaken the State to its foundations—and nothing so sure to split it to atoms in the end.

Mr. Moderator, if there is an error in this land which light and love summon us instantly to abandon, it is, in my judgment, the doctrine that to hold a slave, no matter on what principle, for what end, is sin against God.

Mr. Moderator: For a series of years our Abolition brethren have been violently knocking at your door, and demanding the discipline of the Southern Church for the sin of slavery. If they can bear one word more, I shall be pleased to inquire whether they ever imagined what would follow an imitation of their spirit and practice by the Southern Church? Should it surprise them if, in her turn, she should respectfully solicit at your hand a solemn inquiry into the moral character of Abolitionism, and a recommendation to your inferior courts to purge the Church forthwith of this offensive element?

Confine your investigation to a single development of the principle.

It will not be denied, I presume, that a line of Abolition posts has been long since established on the extreme southern border of the Free States, from the Mississippi river, perhaps to the Atlantic, organized to apprise the oppressed population beyond the line that the moment a slave makes his way across to Free Soil he will there find every arrangement made, every power at hand, to transport him rapidly from his house of bondage to a safe refuge in the bosom of Canada. Reports of annual progress are frequently published by these organizations.

What, sir, is the moral influence of this movement,

1st. *Upon human respect for the authority of the Word of God?* God's Word delivers various commands to the servant,—commands, every line of which, be it remembered, carries just as much Divine authority as any text of Holy Writ. What

is the influence of the obvious spirit, ordinary language, and prominent act of this frontier movement, upon the authority of God's Word, especially on the mind of the slave? Is it possible for human ingenuity to invent a method which shall enlist a more palpable or powerful moral force to break down in the soul of the slave all regard for God's commands to him in the Bible? Does not this whole movement as it were put a violent hand upon him, and force him into a direct and outrageous disobedience of every Divine injunction addressed to him in the Scriptures? Reflect! His master God in the Bible commands him "*to honor*," "*to obey*," "*to serve*," "*to submit to*," "*to please*," "*not to despise*," "*not to answer again*," *not to purloin from*." Now, these Abolition brethren who meet the flying slave on the shore—does the spirit they breathe toward his master, the words they address to him about his master, the act they perform in its relation to his master, produce any other effect than to stir up the whole heart of the servant into the most positive and flagrant violation of the spirit and letter of every word of God to his soul concerning his duty to that master?

Oh, my brethren! I would that every bondman on the face of the earth were possessed of the freedom you so highly prize. But, *the Bible!* THE BIBLE!! framed to do this and every other good work for man—what deep and shameful dishonor you cast upon this Blessed Bible!! The violent tendency of this conduct is to break down the power of the Bible upon the face of the whole earth. Mr. Moderator, with great kindness I must be allowed to say, whatever benevolent promptings toward man do beat in the heart of my brethren, this, their act, in its *moral bearing upon the Scriptures*, I hold to be great dishonor to God, great hurt to the earth, and, therefore, great sin against God and man.

2d. *Upon the character of the master, the servant, and the agent?* Collect every command of God to the master as well as to the servant, in the Holy Scriptures, and I think you will find that this your frontier movement violently tempts the one party, and provokes the other to direct and universal disobedience. And if this is so, what must be its influence upon the agent? Mr. Moderator, when God at great expense and

in great love has stooped from heaven expressly to mark out the only path in which perishing man must walk to find spiritual deliverance, is it not a great sin that Christian men should throw themselves violently between God and the soul he is rescuing, and press that soul away from the path of life? Is it not the greater sin in that it is done in direct violation of apostolic example in similar circumstances? Can such work as this be of sanctification to the soul engaged in it?

3. There is one far more delicate, more shocking bearing of this frontier movement, which, Mr. Moderator, my brethren will pardon me if I advert to for an instant. I mean *its corrupting*, I am pained to say, its *degrading influence upon a certain class of young ministers of the gospel.* A young man has a generous and intrepid spirit: this is felt and valued by his every friend. Peradventure nature has not so largely endowed him with discretion and a sense of the propriety of things. He is called to Christ, and commissioned to preach the gospel. Kinsmen and acquaintances alike anticipate a life of heaven-blest devotion to the good cause. He becomes an Abolitionist. He sees his seniors all around him building shelters for the refugees, collecting funds, providing means, appointing agents, and forming plans to secure their rescue. Yes, sir, he sees them upon the bank opening wide their arms, and lifting high their inviting voice to the bondman across the river. What wonder, Mr. Moderator, that his fired soul should boldly, I will say generously, if misguidedly, over-step the line, and risk his own freedom in a clandestine enterprise to deliver the fellow-creature he had been taught to believe was so wickedly oppressed? A Judge on the bench, in the State of Missouri, once informed me that such a young minister had just been brought before him. The evidence was irresistible. No sympathy, no learning, no eloquence, no possible interposition, could protect him from the issue. He further assured me that he had received reliable information, that since his departure from home two others had been arrested under similar circumstances, whom he feared he should be compelled to dismiss to the same inglorious destination. Nor is Missouri the only State where such unhappy transactions have taken place.

Now, Mr. Moderator, I feel aggrieved for the honor of the denomination to which I belong, I feel aggrieved for the stained character, the wounded feelings, the blighted influence of these young servants of the Lord. Yes, sir, I feel for them; for I have heard of the generous and noble nature of one of them, of his favorable influence upon his keepers and his miserable companions in confinement; and, sir, I charge it to Abolitionism that such young men have been betrayed into such grievous impropriety. I hold it the legitimate fruit of its own wretched extravagance.

My brethren, unaffronted, will allow me to speak out, and say, not that it should tinge the cheek, but that it should rouse the judgment and awaken the conscience of every disciple of this creed, to be assured that his own Abolitionism has put forth a power, and wrought a deed in various sections of the country which, after regular judicial investigation, stands pronounced upon the records of this nation to be literally that *very act* which they themselves are wont to impute to other men as the consummation of all shame.

Mr. Moderator, I forbear. I simply designed by this (peradventure) rude suggestion to throw, if possible, some new light upon some of the many bearings of this solemn subject, that my brethren may reflect upon what seems not a little like hastening to form exaggerated conceptions of the guilt of others without a due consideration of the infelicities that lie at our own door; not a little like the indiscretion of driving Providence from his own field, and taking his work into our hands.

Appendix.

APPENDIX.

I.

A series of Resolutions drawn up by a Committee composed of opposite parties is always a singularly mixed production. You can generally discern the opposite parentage of its different parts. The member called to cast one vote upon the whole is often placed in a dilemma, and must choose between evils. In substance the Resolutions passed by the Assembly express a sentiment and propose a measure. I gave an affirmative vote approving decidedly the measure—the sentiment, only so far as it might be fairly interpreted to consist with the views I had expressed.

The second Resolution wears a very singular face. You see the contest and the compromise of opposite principles. Is slaveholding sin? The parties divide upon this proposition. It looks very much as though one gets the *sound* while the other satisfies itself with the *sense.* "The holding of our fellow-men in the condition of slavery . . . is an offense." The *sound* of this language clearly indicates that as a *general rule* to hold a slave is an offense. But this proposition is so largely qualified that the *sense* of the Resolution, as deduced from all the language employed to express it, would seem to call for an opposite interpretation.

Suppose the words were these: Slaveholding is an offense except in ninety-nine cases out of an hundred—the proposition is positive in its form, but the general rule clearly negative. Suppose one should say: Government is an offense except where it is constructed with some regard to the good of the subject, and administered with some reference to the principles of justice. All men know that governments in general are so formed and administered. The general rule here also, though awkwardly expressed, is clearly negative. So in the case before us—before slaveholding is pronounced an offense, the broad qualifications of the subject, probably, cast the rule on the negative side. The Resolution excepts, first—Those cases where slaveholding is "*unavoidable by the laws of the State.*" Now Southern laws very generally, if I mistake not, uniformly forbid emancipa-

tion. The sense of the Resolution therefore, in view of this exception, runs thus: The holding of a slave is not an offense unless you go beyond the limits of the country to find a case. The second exception respects those cases where slaveholding is unavoidable by "*the obligations of guardianship.*" Some would affix a restricted—a *legal* signification to this term "guardianship." I hold every master the *moral* guardian of his slave. By reason of his personal unfitness for a state of freedom, the obligations of guardianship, as I have interpreted them, require the present exercise of the master's authority. Upon this construction of the language, (it may not be the general one,) here is another exception covering all the ground of a general rule. The third exception has reference to all those cases where slaveholding is unavoidable by "*the demands of humanity.*" Clearly, if slaves in general are unprepared for freedom, humanity demands that they should be retained in a state of servitude for the present. Here you perceive is a third case, in the language of the exceptions, which covers the whole field of a general rule. Thus, in one view of the case at least, these exceptions are in reality the rule, embracing much the larger number of particulars. The language of the Resolution however would better express my sentiments (and I think its own) ordered thus: Slaveholding is not an offense, except when it violates those obligations of guardianship, those demands of humanity which pertain to the relation. This I judge to be the spirit and sentiment of the Assembly. Having remained at Detroit one week after the adjournment, I know that an impression was made upon the community by the discussion decidedly favorable to moderate principles. No time was left, after argument upon the merits of the case at large, to discuss the precise import of the terms and phrases of the Resolutions; yet I have no reason at all to suppose that the discussion produced so different an effect upon the Assembly itself, that this body intended, by this language, to advance and *take ground*, which, the Assembly paused in the midst of the discussion to call to mind and expressly admit, *no previous Assembly had ever taken.*

The *measure* I heartily voted for. "The *whole subject of slavery as it exists in the Church*," you will please to observe, the fourth Resolution expressly refers "to *the Sessions and Presbyteries to take such action thereon as, in their judgment, the laws of Christianity require.*" Our Church suffers for the lack of rest on this subject, and of time to attend to other business. This action of the Assembly, I take it, will secure both. Should a church or Presbytery hereafter contemplate a memorial on this subject, what could it desire the Assembly to do? To express its sentiments? This action of the Assembly expressly affirms that this body has herein made such expression of its sentiments on this subject as authorizes it hereafter to dismiss it to the Inferior Courts. To advise respecting the course to be pursued? The Assembly reminds them that the Inferior Courts, as advised by the Constitution, are the proper tribunal to decide such questions, and therefore the Resolution refers all inquirers concerning proper action in the premises *to their own judgment.*

II.

The term "relation" I do not employ in a strict but *general* sense; not simply to express those classifications of human conduct embraced by what are ordinarily termed "domestic relations," "public relations," &c., but any relative class of human actions. I retain all that is important to my purpose, the radical idea, viz.: man regularly acting toward man in a certain way.

III.

The statement touching the number and value of slaves manumitted, I derive principally from the publication of a friend remarkable for the accuracy of his statistics.

IV.

The following table of the sum total of the contributions of the American Church, from the birth-day of her Christian liberality, was prepared at my request by one well advised on all this subject. It exhibits the date of the formation of each of the prominent Benevolent Societies of this country, together with the sum total of its contributions from the beginning:—

1810.	Am. Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,	$5,547,090
1813.	Baptist Foreign Missionary Association,	1,183,834
1816.	American Bible Society,	3,500,000
1816.	" Education Society,	1,142,650
1816.	Presbyterian Board of Domestic Missions,	987,687
1819.	" " Education,	787,679
1820.	Methodist Missionary Society,	1,848,577
1822.	Episcopal Missionary Society,	942,458
1824.	American Sunday-school Union,	1,878,410
1825.	" Tract Society,	2,462,771
1826.	" Home Missionary Society,	1,897,259
1828.	" Seamen's Friend Society,	315,344
1832.	Baptist Home Missionary Association,	649,442
1833.	Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions,	960,934
	" " Publication,	397,473
1837.	American and Foreign Bible Society, (Baptist,)	378,566
1839.	Foreign Evangelical Society,	196,675
1848.	American Protestant Society,	92,812
	American Colonization Society,	1,000,000
	Sum total,	$25,668,557

Sum total of moneys surrendered to advance the cause of Emancipation, nearly $125,000,000

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 839 188 3