The governing race, or, Is slavery sanctioned by the Bible?

THE GOVERNING RACE; OR, IS SLAVERY SANCTIONED BY THE BIBLE?

A BOOK FOR THE TIME, AND FOR ALL TIMES.

By H. O. R.

“God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”—GENESIS, 9: 27.

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THE GOVERNING RACE.

PART I. IS SLAVERY SANCTIONED BY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The furious controversy concerning Negro Slavery, now raging throughout our land, is no longer a mere political question. Both parties have appealed to the Bible.

Those who sustain or vindicate the slavery of the negro race in the United States justify themselves by asserting that “this institution is just, wise, and beneficent;” that “it is ordained by Nature, and is a necessity of both races.”—Speech of Mr. O’Connor.

They also declare that “this social institution (slavery) is founded entirely on the revealed laws of God; the Bible is the source of all our laws, as well social as civil, and hence reverence and worship of its Divine Author are more general among southern slaveholders than almost any other people.”—De Bow’s Review, Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 1860, p. 12.
Furthermore: “That slavery is a great moral, social, and political blessing—a blessing to the master, and a blessing to the slave.”— *Speech of Senator Brown, of Mississippi.*

The abolitionists, on the other hand, assert (of slavery) that “God has forbidden it.”— *Dr. Cheever’s Speech at the Cooper Institute.*

“Slavery is founded on principles of injustice, extortion and oppression, manslaughter and robbery; slavery is the foster-parent of inhumanity and murder.”— *Sermon by Rev. Dr. Mattison.*

“American slavery is the sum of all villainies, and a combination of all cruelties, crimes, and robberies, of murder, piracy, and adultery, and whatever else is impure, unholy, and accursed.”— *Resolution of the Anti-Slavery Convention, Buffalo, January 10, 1860.*

From the above expressions of the anti-slavery party—and volumes might be filled with the like bitter invectives against the system—it must be plain to every reflecting mind that this fierce and agitating controversy cannot be settled by compromises. It is a question between right and wrong, morally, not politically considered; it is, therefore, taken out of the reach of expediency altogether.

Even the most upright and patriotic statesmen, were they wise and self-sacrificing as those who won our independence and framed the Constitution, could not settle this now vexed question. Those who deny the right of man to hold another man in the bondage of slavery spurn the authority of the Constitution and the laws of Congress; they appeal to a “higher law.”

There must, then, be found somewhere moral power to compel obedience to the Constitution of the United States, or the Union will be dissolved, or resort had to physical force.

The law of God is the rule directing and compelling a rational creature in moral and religious actions. There is no moral lawgiver save the Lord God. There is no code of His divine law save that contained in the Bible.

Let us, then, people of the United States, take up this momentous question in the true spirit of Christian obedience to God's law; seeking, reverently, to understand what is set forth in the Old and New Testaments concerning slavery, and submitting ourselves to the authority of the Bible as the only unerring standard of truth and righteousness.

The Bible gives us three notable instances of laws in which our Creator imposed certain specified penalties for sin on certain classes of the human race.
The first was God's sentence on Adam for eating the forbidden fruit. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” The ground was cursed for his sake, (or sin,) and all his sons, to the end of time, were subjected to the same hard necessity of labor.

Will any Christian say that this sentence of God was unjust? Will any man of right reason contend that this judgment ever has been set aside without worse evils to the human race than hard labor being the result?

When the penalty for disobedience—death—was for a time remitted to fallen man, was not hard labor the best condition in which he could be placed for his repentance and reformation? If Adam and all his descendants had submitted to the punishment, and had “done well” their work, would they not have been accepted of the Lord? Have not the most dreadful crimes against God and man resulted from the selfish attempts made, by individuals and classes of men, to escape this universal doom of labor, and to impose their own tasks on others, while those selfish rulers of the people live on the bread earned by the sweat and blood of the laboring classes?

Do we not feel that God's law, in this penalty of hard labor, is founded in mercy as well as righteousness, and that its failure to reclaim man arises from his own sins against this righteous ordinance?

So, too, of the second penalty: God's sentence on Eve. She was subjected to increased sorrows in maternity, and to that dependence on her husband which placed her under his personal control; and this doom for her transgression was to be and is imposed on all her daughters, and will be on them to the end of time.

Will any Christian say that the sentence was unjust? Will any man assert that this law should be abrogated, and the wife cease to “reverence her husband” as “the saviour of the body?” Would it be well for humanity to have this penalty set aside, and the wife, spurning dependence upon her husband, and leaving the duties of home and the care of their little children, push forward in the conflicts of public life, and engage in the hard labor that wins bread?

The third instance of these special judgments for particular sins was that given against the posterity of Ham. The earth was recovering from the curse of the flood, which the “corruption of all flesh” had rendered inevitable. Noah and his three sons, and the children born to them after the flood, were beginning to enjoy the fruits of their labor when the awful scene occurred.
A class of persons, descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, was doomed to a state of servitude, of menial labor and dependence for their improvement on their brethren, the descendants of Shem and Japheth.

We will give the text, because it is not always convenient for the reader to seek out references, and this text is very important:

“And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard.

“And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

“And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

“And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father: and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

“And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

“And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

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“And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

“God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”

( See Genesis, 9 th chapter, verses 20 to 28, inclusive. )

Such is the brief record of holy writ. The import cannot be mistaken, nor the penalty of the transgressor misunderstood. A class of persons, descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, were sentenced to perpetual servitude or inferiority, and the descendants of Shem and Japheth—the latter more especially designated as superior—should be masters.

Let us pause here and examine the nature of the sin which could justify Noah in passing such a sentence of degradation on his “younger son.”

Obedience to the law of God is the first duty of man. This divine law settles the destiny of the human race.
It was this law which governed Adam in Eden, and “disobedience” was the sin that “brought death into the world, and all our woe.” Next to obedience of man to God, our heavenly Father, comes the duty of obedience of children to their human parents.

This is proven, because such obedience is made the first commandment of the second table, thus showing it to be the root and foundation of moral requirements in the laws that govern society. Obedience to parents establishes in their children the habit of obedience to law, and also sanctifies the religious principle in human nature, by giving honor to that condition of life which represents the relation of man to his God.

So important for human improvement is this obedience of children to their parents, that the merciful God, condescending to the weakness of our fallen nature, offered a reward, the promise of long life, to those who honored their parents. No other commandment in the decalogue has a promise annexed.

But were the laws of the decalogue in force when Ham sinned?

Assuredly; because these moral laws are righteous, and righteousness is eternal.

Disobedience to parents was not and is not sin because forbidden in the fifth commandment, but because it was and is a sin of itself; therefore it was and is forbidden.

Noah, “the preacher of righteousness,” understood the requirements of God's moral law. He knew, as well as we do, that murder was sin. Had not Cain been condemned by this law?

He knew that adultery was sin; and all the myriad corruptions that flow from disobedience to the moral law. Had not those sins been punished by the awful judgment of the Flood?

Sin is, in its own nature, a disturber and disorganizer. It debases before it destroys. It is disobedience to God, and adherence to the devil—as manifested by our first parents.

The sin of Ham, that of dishonoring his father, was aggravated in the highest degree by the relation which Noah held to the future of our fallen race. He was the head of humanity on earth. He was prophet, priest, and king. He represented the judgment and the mercy of God to man. He embodied, in his experience and wisdom, the laws, precepts, and knowledge which were to guide his posterity in the better way.
It is no excuse for Ham to say that his father had done wrong; that he had debased himself by drunkenness.

We do not seek to palliate the transgression of Noah. In yielding the reins to appetite, and thus dethroning reason, he had committed a grievous sin against the natural laws of God. Was he not most grievously punished for his fault when “he awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him?”

Think of the old man, the loving father, who had seen the world of transgressors swept from off the earth because of their wicked lusts and corrupt imaginations: and then to find the poison of the same polluting depravity in his own family—the little group spared from the general destruction!

What was the anguish of the Roman Brutus, passing sentence of death on his own sons for treason against the State, compared with the sorrow of Noah, dooming his “younger son,” for treason against nature and rebellion against God, to that condition of perpetual inferiority which, like a brand of shame, would mark a portion of his (Noah's) descendants forever!

As in the case of Adam and Eve, it was sin that brought the curse and the punishment. The sentence is proof of the guilt of the sinner. The doom was not from Noah, but from the justice of a righteous God.

Ham had shown, by his conduct, that he loved iniquity. His sin was more wicked in its inception, more polluting in its nature, than the fratricide of Cain. The brother struck at the natural life of his brother; the son aimed to overthrow and destroy the moral life of mankind by the dishonor of his father. Had Ham's sin gone unpunished, all fear and love of God, all reverence and obedience for His laws, must have perished, because only through and by the parental relation was religious duty then taught and exemplified.

He who commits sin is the servant of sin. Ham had, by his own wicked carnality, sold himself to the power of evil; he was in the bonds of corruption. The penalty of his awful crime was 8 death! There was only misery and destruction before him and his till the sentence was pronounced.

Then we see how mercy preponderated. Ham was reprieved from direct personal punishment, and only one of his four sons was subjected to the penalty of servitude. Even to Canaan there was mercy shown. He was to live and not die. His brethren were his keepers, his task-masters, and in the special promises made them and their posterity he and his were included.
Why was Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, singled out for this doom of servitude? Commentators and expounders of Scripture have conjectured that this son was with his father, and joined him in mocking Noah. But what God has not revealed concerning this transaction, human reason can never discover.

We know, however, if we believe the Bible to be divine revelation, that “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” (Ps., 10:9.) We know that “the curse causeless shall not come.” (Prov., 26: 2.)

There is no recognition of any original inequality between the three brothers, causing the differences in their destinies. It was the natural propensities, exhibited in this transaction, which decided their condition.

Had the brothers of Ham listened greedily when he “mocked at his father,” had they yielded to his wicked temptation of dishonoring him by indulging in filthy imaginations concerning their father, they, too, would have been accursed. Their chaste reverence and filial obedience were accepted and rewarded, and thus the good gained its first great triumph over the evil in our fallen world.

“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

“God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”— Genesis, chap. 9, verses 25-6-7.

Has not this announcement of the destiny of the three tribes or races of men, descended from Noah, come true, according to the Word?

Does not history, secular as well as sacred, confirm the truth of this prophecy in the past?

Is it not true at this moment that the posterity of Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem, and that the posterity of Canaan are in servitude to the posterity of Japheth?

We have not time to go into details here, or to quote authorities; but no person acquainted with ancient annals can deny that one race, the black, a branch of the Hametic stock, has, so far as is known, always been in a state of servitude, either to tyrants of their own color, or to masters of the other two races.
The hieroglyphical records of the oldest monuments of old Egypt show the black man then a slave. Nearly the whole continent of Africa is now a place of black slaves. If some few of these men, as rulers, have liberty to destroy or sell others of their own race, the women, one-half the population, are without exception slaves to the physical force and brutal lusts of the male descendants of Ham. From the ferocious king of the Ashantees, whose ornaments and monuments are the skulls and bones of his slave victims, to the Yorubas of Central Africa, whose government is a “perfect despotism;” and on to the Makololos of the South, described by the Rev. Dr. Livingstone, where the negro man is supported by the labor of his slave wives, we find two conditions of life, polygamy and slavery, everywhere. Till the first is overcome it is in vain to talk of freedom or improvement for the black race.

The whole negro population of Africa, some eighty or a hundred millions, with the exception of those belonging to Liberia, and, perhaps, some few tribes improved a little under British rule at Sierra Leone, now manifest in their low animal propensities, the same utter lack of reverence for duty, the disregard of decency, and the insensibility to shame, which characterized the conduct of Ham towards his father Noah, more than four thousand years ago.

These sensual propensities, when predominating, mark the lowest type of human beings, whatever may be the color, or in whatever caste, country, or condition they may be found.

We know that such people never improve when living together, without care or coercion, or both, from persons of better developments. We can understand that such a race must be degraded, would degrade themselves, and that only by divine miracle, or by the natural means of subjection to, and training by, a higher class of minds, a better organized race, could the lower type be influenced, instructed, and finally improved.

Was it not merciful, as well as righteous, for the wise and good God to place such a race under tutelage or subjection, that they might be saved from themselves?

“A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

Was God’s sentence on Canaan, by the mouth of Noah, an unjust judgment? It was the punishment of a great sin, not the arbitrary decree of an offended father; it was from the Lord.

A state of human servitude or slavery is then compatible with divine justice, with the perfect righteousness of God’s laws, as 10 surely as the necessity of hard labor in order to gain bread is for man, or the
sufferings of women in childbirth and the subjection of the wife to her husband are compatible with His righteousness.

The aim of just punishment is to make those that suffer it better, and not worse. When it has the latter effect, it is through the perversion of the law by the criminal himself, or through the sins of other criminals; not by the penalty he suffers.

Now, let us see what were the regulations given in the Bible concerning slavery; let us see if these are not framed so as to make the servitude of the condemned race a blessing, and not a curse.

Abraham\* is the first slaveholder on record; yet from the tenor of the divine history there can be no doubt of the prevalence of slavery among all nations before that era. When the covenant of God was established with the patriarch, all his servants were admitted to the rite of circumcision, all were made members of the church, and thus given the opportunity of knowing and serving the true God.

\* It has been urged by those who denounce slavery as sin, that Abraham was drawn into polygamy by having bond-women in his household, and that the two institutions are, therefore, coincident and equally iniquitous. No conclusion could be more erroneous. The connection between Abraham and Hagar was not marriage. He never considered the bond-woman as his wife, never defended her conduct, never protected her from the anger of her mistress and his wife, Sarah. Hagar was the slave always, and her son was not the true heir, as St. Paul bears witness. The whole history of that miserable attempt to bring about the purposes of divine wisdom by human devices, wicked in their inception, because contrary to God's holy law of marriage—one man with one woman, the twain made one—as established at the creation, shows the folly as well as sinfulness into which those persons who are really seeking to do good will fall, if they set aside the laws of God, or interpret His statutes to suit their own selfish purposes.

Was not this a blessed privilege to those born idolators? Was it not better to be a servant or slave of Abraham than a free citizen of Sodom?

From the time of this patriarch till the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, there are few direct allusions to slaves or bond servants among the chosen people.

But let us dwell a moment on the memorable narrative of Joseph's enslavement. His brethren “hated him,” seized him by violence, “sold him to the Egyptians.” Were they as wicked as murderers? They committed a heinous crime; but was it as “accursed” as the sin they had proposed, when they said: “Come, let us slay him?” (Gen., chap. 37, verse 20.) Were they punished as God punished Cain?—as He
punished Ham? 11 Let these questions be well considered before we brand slavery as “the sum of all villainies.”

Joseph was sold a slave in Egypt, and his example is a model for all in his condition. He feared God and kept His commandments, and was faithful in all his duties to those whom he served. God blessed Joseph in his bondage; and so will He bless goodness in every condition of life. Did the servile condition of Joseph disgrace him, or prevent his final exaltation? Nay, more: was it not the direct means to his promotion in honor and usefulness? Could a sinful condition have done this?

Did either of his masters suffer because of buying and holding him in slavery? Did not each party, master and servant, gain good by the connection? Could this result have been reached if slavery is sin, like disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, theft, false witness, covetousness?

The seed of Jacob were destined to become slaves in Egypt. The manner by which they were reduced to servitude was unjust and wicked; their taskmasters were cruel. For this cruelty and injustice the Egyptians were punished.

If slavery is sin, would it not have been rebuked in this instance, because here was a flagrant breach of the law of servitude for sin, as established in the case of Canaan? The Hebrews were of the race of Shem, consequently were not subjected by that law to the inferior race of Ham. Yet not a word of condemnation against slavery itself is to be found in the Mosaic history; all the denunciations are against its abuses.

Nor were the Hebrews encouraged to seek their own liberation, or permitted to avenge their own wrongs. Even Moses, when he killed the cruel Egyptian taskmaster, was severely punished by the ingratitude of those he sought to aid, and by his own self-banishment for forty years; and his crime brought additional severity of bondage on his brethren in Egypt. God did not instruct His people to “take their liberty at all hazards.”

When Moses was sent to free the Hebrews, they were not incited to any act of violence, any deed of sin. They were to obey all the laws of God, and through His providence look for deliverance. (Exodus, chapters 3d, 4th, 5th, 7th to 15th.)

Will American abolitionism take this Bible pattern of emancipation for its rule? Will it keep God's laws?

At length Israel was emancipated and brought out from Egypt, not as independent individuals, who had, each one, the “inalienable right to personal liberty,” but as servants of Jehovah, the only living
and true God—a condition that every son and daughter of Adam inherits. All are equal here—all are bound to obey the laws of God.

12

Did the laws of God establish slavery in the Hebrew nation? Did the decalogue sanction slavery by its injunctions?

Let us carefully examine these questions.

When the Hebrews stood before Mount Sinai, they were just freed from Egyptian bondage. Probably there was not a slave in the congregation. What an opportunity was here to impress on this chosen people of God the sinfulness of slavery—if it had been sin.

If slavery—the property of man in man—had been the “sum of all villainies,” “the mother of all crimes,” would not God, by the Law He gave, have prohibited it as strictly, at least, as He prohibited murder, adultery, theft?

Yet we find that the Lord God in two of the ten commandments, which were to be the standard of all morality in the civil as well as religious codes of mankind, did provide for the condition of personal servitude.

The fourth commandment provides that the blessing of the Sabbath shall be on the servant or bondman, as well as on the master. Rest from labor one-seventh portion of time is the privilege of the slave; thus showing that God cares for all men equally, and has so framed His statutes that all may serve Him acceptably in whatever condition of life He has placed them.

Thus we see that the law of the first table secures the right of the slave to worship God. The law of the second table secures as surely the right of the master to hold his servant.

In the tenth commandment, “thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s man servant, nor his maid servant,” is as peremptory a prohibition as that which forbids theft. The desire, even, to take away the servant from his master is sin.

That the condition thus recognized and regulated by the laws of the Almighty was righteous as well as wise, no true believer in the Bible will dare deny. And that this condition was, or included, what we now call slavery—the right of man to hold property in man—is proven by the special laws of Moses, which were, in all cases, conformable to the law of Mount Sinai.
The first statute promulgated by the Hebrew lawgiver to the people concerned slavery. Hebrew servitude was established by statute. This was the law of the man servant:

“Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them.

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

“If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.

“If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself.

13

“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

“Then his master shall bring him unto the judges: he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”—Exodus, chap. 21, verses 2 to 7.

In the second clause, the rule concerning children born in slavery of these Hebrew parents, the mother being free, is left unexplained. But in a recapitulation of these laws this ambiguity is entirely removed. After providing that the Hebrew man may be sold as a slave even to a stranger, but must be well treated, not as a bond servant, but as a hired servant, and at the jubilee, the fiftieth year, then—

“Shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him.”—Leviticus, chap. 25, 41.

These laws in Exodus and Leviticus show three things or conditions:

First. A Hebrew man could sell himself, or be sold as a slave or servant, for six years, or till the jubilee; and if he had a wife and children they shared his lot and his liberation; but the daughters were never considered slaves.

Second. He could have but one wife, thus establishing monogamy as the law of marriage in slavery. If he had none when he became a slave, his master might give him a wife; and if there were children born, the wife and children continued with the master.
Third. The Hebrew man had a right to make himself a slave for life; the Hebrew woman was never permitted to become a slave. The Hebrew father reduced to poverty, who sold himself and family, could only sell his daughter to become a wife—either the wife of her master, or, if he were married, of his son. She was considered as betrothed, and was to be cared for as a daughter of the house. If the condition—honorable marriage—was not fulfilled, then the Hebrew maiden must be maintained like a daughter, or provided for in marriage with another man, or go out free. The Hebrew who bought her could not re-sell her.—(Ex., chap 21, verses 7–11.)

Now, remember that these ordinances were from God, and for His chosen people. Were the laws unjust? unrighteous? Will you contend with the Almighty? Are you wiser than He? Will you say, as some of the advocates for “human freedom” do, that “liberty is the inalienable right of men, and cannot be abrogated even by the consent of the individual who would become a slave?”

Why, those who assert this really abridge human liberty. The 14 right to his time, after he comes of age, is surely one of the elementary rights of the freeman. If he has the right to engage, that is, sell himself or his services for six months, has he not the same right to sell himself for six years? or to make the contract during life? This last condition was strictly guarded in the law. The Hebrew man could not make a surrender of himself at once. Time was given, six years, wherein to test his master, who was also his brother Israelite. If then the Hebrew servant wished to become a slave for life, he was at liberty to choose his lot.

You may say the man who did this was a mean, miserable wretch: probably so; that makes the state he had chosen best for him. And you deprive him of this resource for comfort and improvement.

There was another class of slaves permitted the Hebrews. The law reads thus:

“Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

“Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession.

“And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.”—Leviticus, chap. 25, verses 44, 47.

These heathen were the direct descendants of Ham, through Canaan, the accursed. This race, the people of the land, had become utterly corrupt. Like Sodom, the whole population of Canaan, and
the part of Syria given to the Israelites, was doomed. The country was ripe for destruction. Death by
the sword, or slavery under the conquering race, was the merited punishment of these depraved
human beings, who had sunk so low in their bestial sensualities and heaven-daring crimes that they
could not be reformed.

What greater mercy could be bestowed on them than perpetual servitude, under masters who had
the knowledge of the true God, and were bound, by the laws He had given them, to admit those
slaves into the religious privileges of their own holy worship?

At the great feast of rejoicing, the “men-servants and the maid-servants” were to have place with the
sons and daughters of the Hebrew congregation; while no stranger or hired servant, not Hebrew,
was permitted to come nigh.— Deut., 12: 12.

The priests, to whom a portion of the holy offerings pertained as food, were under a strict law on
this score.

“There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not
eat of the holy thing.

15

“But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house, (of
these slaves,) they shall eat of his meat.”— Leviticus, 22: 10, 11.

Here we are taught how closely the slave was identified with all the religious privileges of his master.
The former could not fail of being instructed in the laws of God.

So, too, in the marriage relation; the law of monogamy was carefully guarded for the man-servant,
as we have shown; it was the same with the maid-servant. If a Hebrew, among his captives, found a
beautiful woman that he wished to have, he was allowed, after certain preliminaries, to marry her;
he could not take her as a concubine; but if, after marriage, she did not please him, he could put her
away by giving her freedom. He was not permitted to sell her, nor to make her a slave, if she had
been his wife.— Deuteronomy, 21: 11, 15.

In short, slavery to Hebrew masters, who were admonished by Moses to remember “that they had
been bondmen in Egypt,” was the best condition in which the surrounding heathen people could be
placed.
All these careful regulations, however, prove the fact, that personal servitude was clearly established under the Mosaic laws; the persons subjected to the penalty “forever” were the descendants of Ham or Canaan.

Burke defines *law* as “beneficence acting by rule.” Moral law, God-given law, must accord with this definition. But every law, whether divine or human, that establishes duties must have penalties. Obedience is the good to be obtained; and the punishments for disobedience to divine laws are and must be exactly proportioned to the necessity for obedience, in order to work out the good which the command is intended to effect.

Death is the greatest penalty the Mosaic laws inflict. No tortures were permitted. Death was the punishment for idolatry, disobedience (continued and obstinate) to parents, murder, adultery, and manstealing. This last statute referred to and confirmed the rights of the master and the rights of freemen.

That servitude, as established in the Hebrew commonwealth, was a beneficent institution for both servant and master, there can be no doubt, because God willed it. The laws promulgated for its regulation must also have been righteous, and the best that could be framed and made effectual, in that period of the world, for the suppression of evil and the promotion of good.

Let us read them from the divine record:

“And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished.

16

“Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not Be punished; for he is his money.

“And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.

“And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.”

“If the ox shall push a man-servant or a maid-servant, he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.”—(*Exodus, chap. 21, verses 20, 21–26, 27–32.*
These were laws for the government of the heathen servants whose bondage was to be “forever.” Were the laws cruel? unjust?

Bear in mind that these slaves were of the race of Ham,* and only escaped utter destruction through this bondage. They had filled the land with wicked abominations, and were unfit to live; they must be controlled in order to be reformed.

* In the record of Noah's sons the posterity of Canaan is thus enunciated:

“And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth.

“And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite.

“And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite.

“And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

“And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comsat to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.”— Gen., chap. 10, verses 15 to 20.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their wickedness in the time of Abraham. That the inhabitants of the land given to the Hebrews were utterly corrupt and doomed to die, Moses thus declares:

“But thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jehusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee:

“That they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods: so should ye sin against the Lord your God.”— Deuteronomy, chap. 20, verse 17.

Joshua alludes several times to these different tribes, descendants of Canaan, who were to be destroyed or driven out, or made slaves. In his farewell speech to the Hebrew people, he thus enumerates the enemies they had overcome, as though speaking for the Lord God:

Thus surely does the Bible authority settle the question that the posterity of Canaan were desperately wicked, and must be either destroyed from the face of the earth or placed under the control of another race, descendants of Shem or Japheth.

Whoever will carefully and candidly examine the statutes of Moses, cannot fail to see that the sentiment of kindness and mercy is constantly mingled with the just judgment against sins and crimes. It was forbidden to “muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;” or to “take the mother bird with its young in the nest;” or “seethe the kid in its mother’s milk.” It was sin to “curse the deaf;” or “lay a stumbling block before the blind;” or in any way to wrong or “oppress the widow and the fatherless.”

The Hebrews were enjoined to do no unrighteousness in judgment:

“Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither stand against the blood of thy neighbor.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” — (See Leviticus, chapter 19; Deuteronomy, chapters 22 and 24.)

Did the holy God, who inspired all these wise, merciful, and humanizing injunctions for the government of His chosen people—did He allow wrong to be done or sin committed by His laws of slavery?

In the name of American Christians, we answer, No. The system of servitude or slavery, established by Moses, was right and good; the laws that regulated it were wise and righteous.

And here we would call attention to one point in these laws, namely, that the property of the master in his bond-servant is not only acknowledged, but it is shown that this ownership is a great safeguard to the slave against cruelty and injustice. The loss of the servant falls on the master as a punishment. — (See Exodus, chap. 19, verse 21.)
The Hebrew servant was not subjected to these penalties. He was to be treated like a “hired servant,” or “sojourner.”* The period of his service was limited; his ultimate freedom secured. He was sold and bought because he was poor and could not maintain himself, but he escaped imprisonment for debt, or the debasement of the almshouse. And when his time of freedom (the seventh year, or the jubilee) came, he took his former place in all his relations of life. These facts show that slavery, of itself, is not sin, nor crime, nor wrong; but that it was imposed as a penalty by Moses to prevent or punish sin and crime and wrong. 2

* “And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant:

“But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee:

“And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

“For they are my servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen.

“Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear God.”—Leviticus, 25: 39 to 43.

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The laws of Moses did not allow those monstrous evils of modern Christian civilization—pauperism and penitentiaries. Yet his legislation provided for the employment of both free and slave labor. Both were made legal for the tribes; both kinds were brought together and maintained under all the changes of the Hebrew government, throughout the whole period of Jewish nationality, from the great Lawgiver to the greater Law Expounder, and never a word of rebuke or an accusation of evil results is recorded in the Bible against this system of free and slave labor.

As another proof, showing the care taken to prevent wrong to masters, to servants, and to free citizens, we will cite the law concerning man-stealing:

“He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” (Ex., chap. 21, verse 16.)

This statute was promulgated immediately after that of Hebrew servitude, showing that there was then established the relation of master or owner, and bought servant or property. The man taken
away must be in this condition, or liable to it, otherwise he could not have been stolen. A hired servant would not be thus guarded.

That the law was good, and worked well, we have the testimony of Hoses. Forty years after its enactment he thus reiterates it:

“If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.”—Deut., chap. 24, verse 7.

The punishment of death is not, by the laws of Moses, imposed for any theft except this of stealing a Hebrew, either from his master, or to sell. The right of the servant to his freedom on the seventh year, or at the jubilee, was guarded by this severe law; also, the right of the master to the services of his servant for the specified period was as strictly guarded.

Whether the death punishment was inflicted for stealing a heathen servant, whose bondage was fixed and “forever,” we are not told; but as the right of property in them was complete, it is not probable that the theft was made a capital crime. The relation between the Hebrew master and servant, being exalted by the ties of blood and religious faith, was more sacred than bond service. It came next after the nearest family relationship.

The Israelites were the servants of God. The posterity of Canaan, the son of Ham, were to be drawn to God through their servitude to the posterity of Shem and Japheth. Thus these slaves were unspeakably benefited by being sold from their heathen 19 to their Hebrew masters. Hence we find immunities guarantied to the slaves who, escaping from heathen masters, threw themselves on the charity of God's people.

“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee:

“He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best.”—Deuteronomy, chap. 23, verses 15, 16.

No Biblical commentator nor honest expositor has ever interpreted this statute as having any bearing on the bondmen of the Hebrews, encouraging these to run from one tribe to another, in order to be free.

Moses had settled the law of heathen servitude, and reaffirmed the right of the Hebrew master to hold those “bought with his money” in bondage “forever.” He would not thus stultify his own
enactments, nor destroy the internal harmony of the tribes. If he had done this, the history of his people would be sure to show the turmoil it raised.

But it was merciful thus to protect, by solemn pledge, those who, as strangers, voluntarily came to place themselves under the Hebrew government. The law making man-stealing a capital crime was also needed to protect these and other exiles in their freedom; because the Hebrew commonwealth was slaveholding.

Thus surely and unequivocally was servitude, both Hebrew and heathen, established and regulated by the laws of Moses, and never revoked by any subsequent statute, nor set aside by any usage or declaration recorded in the Old Testament.

We meet references to this domestic institution in all the sacred books, from Genesis to Malachi, and never a censure or reproof of the system of slavery itself, and but very rarely any rebuke of those particular sins which might be ascribed to, or be developed by, this state of society.

The wrongs against the poor working classes, forbidden by the laws of Moses, and condemned by inspired prophecy, were those committed against hired servants and other classes of the poor who have none to care for them, such as widows, orphans, captives, and strangers. The slave or bondman, among the Hebrews, had always a protector in his master.

In nearly every case where heathen bondage is alluded to, the glimpses given us show it to have been good both for master and servant. Let us read over a few of these brief sketches from the oracles of divine truth; it may serve to calm the feelings and enlighten the mind of many a true Christian now seeking for light on the exciting subject of slavery in our own country. Is it not a duty to study well the Bible record before we condemn as sin what God has ordained and justified?

Job, who must have been a very large slaveholder, and who reckons it among his great sorrows that he had lost them—“I called my servant, and he gave no answer;” see chap. 19, verse 16—thus urges that kindness and justice to servants were considered the distinguishing virtues of a good man:

“If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me;

“What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

“Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?”—Job, chap. 31, verses 13, 14, 15. (Read the whole chapter.)
Yet Job says nothing against slaveholding; he only shows that having bond-servants, like power, wealth, and other distinctions which a man may lawfully hold, he is answerable for the manner in which he uses all these blessings.

David thus pictures the trust of the slave in the kindness and power of the slaveholder:

“Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.— *Psalm* 123, *verse* 2.

What a wonderful ascription of praise to the love and tenderness of the good master and mistress!

In Proverbs many allusions are made to servants, showing how the system of domestic slavery was inwoven with the whole Jewish polity; yet not a single reproach is launched against slaveholding, which, as Solomon's precepts are eminently practical, and must be wise and true, because inspired, proves that the institution was neither wrong nor injurious to the Hebrew nation.

“He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoreth himself, and lacketh bread.”— *Proverbs, chap.* 12, *verse* 9.

“A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.”— *Chap.* 17: 2.

“A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer.

“He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.”— *Chapter* 29, *verses* 19, 21.

“Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.”— *Chap.* 30: 10.

“For a servant when he reigneth, the earth is disquieted.”— *Chapter* 30, *verses* 21, 22.

Malachi, the last of the prophets, thus bears testimony to the good influences that pervade the household where servitude is a permanent skate, like the relation of parent and child:

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“A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.”— *Malachi, chap.* 1, *v.* 6.
We have, hitherto, omitted two important passages, which prove, were there no other records concerning slavery in the Old Testament, that God designed his chosen people should be slaveholding; and also, He designed they should continue slaveholders while the nation was continued. The proof of the first is found in *Exodus, chapter 12, verses 43, 44, 45*:

“And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinances of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof;

“But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.

“A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof.”

This ordinance of the passover, providing for slaveholding by the Hebrews, was promulgated in Egypt, while they were slaves. Does it not show that God intended they should themselves hold slaves “bought with their money”—their own property—as soon as the tribes were settled in Canaan, where the servile race, descendants of Ham, were to be found?

The proof that the Jews were to continue to hold slaves is found in *Ezra, chapter 2, verses 64, 65*:

“The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,

“Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven.”

We thus find, that on the return from their captivity in Babylon, where the Jews had been held seventy years, this “chosen people” had slaves; every seventh person in the number given was a bond servant. The proportion was larger of slaves compared with the free inhabitants of Judea, at this restoration, than is now to be found between free citizens and slaves in the United States. Yet no word condemning the system of slaveholding is found on this Bible record.

There is still another proof that slavery cannot be sin of itself any more than poverty, sickness, degradation, and other penalties, physical and moral, that the crimes and vices of men bring on themselves and their posterity.

The Hebrew people, for their national sins, were, by their law, doomed to terrible evils and sufferings. One of these punishments was *servitude to heathen masters*. Surely and sorely was this sentence fulfilled. From their first bondage, about sixty years after the death of Joshua, when “the
Lord sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, and they served him 22 eight years;”* until the Hebrew polity was broken up, and the king and people of Judea carried into Babylonish servitude, (the kingdom of Israel had been enslaved previously,) the whole history of this rebellious race is filled with their sins and punishments. The ultimate result of their idolatries and disobedience to God's law was bondage to heathen masters.

* See Judges 3: 8. The Hebrews were servants of the Lord; and “the Lord sold them” into slavery. Mark the language, and the punishment for sin.

It is very apparent that this bondage or slavery, more than any other punishment, brought those rebellious Hebrews to repentance and reformation. It did them good and not evil. It was the discipline they needed. It acted precisely as just judgment on the criminal is now intended to act. The criminal must be subjected to the penalty of the statute he has violated, or he will have no respect for the majesty of law, and would never reform; and he must be placed in a condition that not only restrains him from committing the crime for which he is punished, but allows him opportunity of repentance, or he would have no hope for the future.

Is it “horribly wrong” that human law should punish men for sins and crimes by sending them into servitude in penitentiaries, penal settlements, prisons? Do we say of these abridgments of “human freedom,” often for life, that they are “damnably wrong?”

And has not God, who created man and gave him whatever of “rights and liberties” he enjoys, the just right to abridge the freedom of any portion of His creatures, or take it away entirely, if He sees that the righteousness of His holy law demands this punishment for their sins?

“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

While that sentence stands on the Bible record as the revealed judgment of the Lord God against a race of sinners: and while this sentence is corroborated by the requirements of His Moral Law, and carried into effect by the statutes He inspired for the government of His chosen people, the charge that “slavery is sin,” “the sum of all villainies,” “damnably wrong, is no other than denouncing the righteousness of God, and charging Him with injustice and sin.

That the institution of slavery was established in the Hebrew Commonwealth, no Christian can deny; that it was continued, under all the changes of government and nationality till the end of the Old Testament, we have conclusively shown. Nor is 23 there in this long history of the moral and civil life of the people for eleven hundred years, a single record that denounces slavery as evil, or that charges the wickedness of the people to this source, or that threatens them with punishment for
sins imputed to this institution. Two instances only occur, where the law of Hebrew slavery, which was incidental and limited, had been violated; and these are severely condemned.

The first instance is related in the Book of Nehemiah, chapter 5. The second is found in Jeremiah, chapter 34, verses 8 to the end. But slavery is not condemned. On the contrary, the bondage of the heathen to their Hebrew masters is constantly brought out by the sacred writers, always without rebuke, and often in a manner that shows it to have been good for both master and servant.

This result every Christian is compelled to believe, because no man nor woman can be a Christian who rejects the divine authority of the Scriptures or imputes unrighteousness to God.

The question, then, is settled. Personal servitude, an institution of involuntary bondage, where the servant was the property of his master, could be bought and sold, and held as a “a possession forever;” as “an inheritance for your children after you”—such slavery for the heathen Canaanites was and is sanctioned by the authority of the Old Testament.

* Property is held by many tenures. This right of property in persons was the right of the master to the services of his bondmen, and held by and from the appointment of the Most Highest. The law should be productive of good to both parties.

Was this law of personal servitude condemned, reversed, set aside, by the later authority of the New Testament?

Let us examine the Gospel.

24

PART II. IS SLAVERY SANCTIONED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT?

In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, American abolitionists, who profess to believe the Bible, insist that the revocation of the Mosaic statutes concerning slavery, may be found.

Where?
The Gospel Brought “peace on earth, and good will to the children of men;” that is, it brought the announcement, the hope, the light, and the way for these glorious blessings: but not a word is said of “personal freedom,” of “human rights,” of “political privileges.”

The whole scope of our Lord's teachings was to convince men, all men, of sin, and bring all to repentance. Christ never meddled with secular authorities. He freed men from the bondage of Satan, from the chains of sin, from the prison-house of wicked delusions, where in darkness and despair they were lying bound, bruised, starving, naked, and loathsome with the festering soul and body diseases of sickness and of death, eternal, as well as temporal.

If the Saviour had been sent to open, literally, the prison doors to those placed there by human authority, why did He not free John the Baptist, who was unjustly confined?

“My kingdom is not of this world,” was His declaration. Had Jesus Christ accepted the governments of all the earth, which the devil urged upon him, then He would doubtless have rectified what was wrong; but he would not accept.

He went about preaching the Gospel of personal repentance and eternal salvation by the Son of God, doing good, all the while, to the poor, the oppressed, and afflicted; but never counseling them to demand from men the redress of their grievances.

He had disciples in all ranks, though most among the lowly. He did not alter the personal condition of a single believer. He sought only to purify the heart, exalt the hope, and set men free from sin. He never interfered with the civil government, nor with questions pertaining to the public relations of his hearers. He dealt with the individual man in his conjugal, parental, family, and neighborly feelings and interests. In each and all of 25 these He urged the law of holiness and love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

“Ah, yes!” cries the abolitionist, “that is the very matter! The slaveholder would not be a slave himself, therefore he should free all his slaves. He should do as he would be done by.”

Are you sure you have given the right interpretation? You have a hundred thousand dollars; you are rich. Here is your poor hired servant, who wants half your money. You would not be a poor hired servant. Will you give him one-half of your gold, and equalize your conditions? If he was in your place and you in his, would you desire him to give you one-half of his money? Would you think it unchristian if he did not?
The explanation of this duty to our neighbor is given by the Saviour himself, in the parable of the man that fell among thieves. * It is to help those that need, and to have pity upon the afflicted, as you would hope to be helped, if you, like them, were in trouble. It does not teach the relinquishment of our just rights, or the giving up what belongs to us. The good Samaritan did not leave his “beast” to the poor man, nor buy him any raiment, nor divide his purse with him. He simply “had compassion” on the wounded traveler, and helped him for the time, and left a pledge that he would do more if it were needed; but he had the right to expect that the wounded man would exert himself to the utmost not to be chargeable to his benefactor. That was the neighborly duty of the man who had been helped.

* “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

“And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

“And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

“And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

“And which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

“And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”—Luke, chap. 10, verses 30–37.

I have dwelt at length on this parable of our Saviour, because it is the only portion of His teachings which has any bearing on the argument that slavery was abrogated by the Gospel. Servitude, or slavery, is no more abrogated than was the kingly government, or the civil institutions, or municipal rights, or official dignities. The Gospel was offered equally to all men. Whoever accepted
was released from the bonds of sin, made free in the spirit, united in the brotherhood of all true believers, was entitled to a heavenly inheritance, and had, over his redeemed soul, no master save Christ. Yet he might have been one of the poorest and most abject of all the dwellers at Jerusalem. His social position mattered not. The slave of a Pharisee, if converted by the teachings of the Saviour, would have been an heir of eternal glory in the life to come, but in this life would have remained the bond-servant of his earthly master.

No person who has read the New Testament will assert that the Saviour ever openly rebuked the masters of slaves; and these must often have been present at His teachings. He never, by precept or parable, classed slavery—the right of one man to hold another man as personal property, which the Jewish law allowed—among the sins of the rich, covetous, selfish, unrighteous men whom He condemned for the specified sins of licentiousness, cruelty, hypocrisy, and oppression.

Was not this very strange, if slavery be “the sum of all villainies?”

Ought not He, who knew the heart of man and the importance of all the just restraints of moral law, ought he not to have warned the world against this system, if it be “utterly incompatible with Christianity?”

Not only did Jesus Christ not do this, but He has left His own holy approval of the good slaveholder on record. He has drawn a picture of slavery which shows not only its lawfulness, but its righteousness, and exemplifies the manner in which it should be conducted.

There are two important parables in the Gospel of St. Matthew, which have never, as we believe, been considered in their application to earthly duties as well as to heavenly hopes. The “parable of the vineyard” is one of these. It was given to illustrate the justice and the free grace of God. It does so, and moreover, it teaches the rights and duties of property holders and “free” or hired laborers. We will give the text, because we can never study the sacred Word too carefully:

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.

“And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

“And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place,
“And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

“Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

“And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

“They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

“So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

“And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

“But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

“And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house,

“Well then these last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

“But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny?

“Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last even as unto thee.

“Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

“So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.”— St. Matthew, chap. 20, verses 1 to 17.

Does not this parable condemn the fallacy of all agrarian theories, and show the wickedness of that communist philosophy which is based on the robbery of the rich in order to endow the poor, so that human conditions may be equalized?
Jesus Christ taught the responsibility of each individual to do *justly*, no matter what was his condition. The poor hired laborer in the vineyard was as surely bound by this law to be content with his penny, for which he had agreed—the market price—as the rich householder was to pay him the penny. The conditions of justice are equal.

We are required by the Gospel to love our neighbor as ourselves; but we are not required, as this parable shows, to measure that love by our neighbor's standard of wants or demands. Because those poor hired servants way ted more than their just due, it did not follow that the rich householder was wrong in resisting their demands. True, he had the means of giving; and he was responsible to God for the manner in which he used his talents or wealth. Charity must be free, otherwise it is not mercy. He acted freely.

Here, then, is the standard for employers and hired servants: “to deal justly” always. This is the duty of both parties. The rich employer must do more; he has more; he must “love mercy;” while to “walk humbly with God” is the duty of all men.

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The other parable which we shall quote shows the rights and duties of master and bond-servant. We entreat our readers to study its teachings with attention and reverence:

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

“And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents.

“But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

“The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

“Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.
“And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

“And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debs.

“So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

“Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, 0 thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

“Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

“And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”— St. Matthew, chap. 18, verse 23 to close.

This parable, given by the Saviour to teach the duty of forgiveness among Christian brethren—as God, their king and master, forgives them—is exemplified by that of an earthly master who owned his servants—in other words, a slaveholder, having the right of selling his people. If this king, (or master, one who has sovereign power, that of ownership, is the meaning of the Greek; ) could righteously sell his servant, then to buy must have been equally, just, as well as legal.

Now bond-service in domestic life was an institution in the Hebrew polity, familiar from the time of Abraham, sanctioned by the moral law, incorporated into the Mosaic code, and its lawfulness or expediency had never been questioned.

Did not Jesus Christ know well the meaning of the language He used? He knew the human heart. Did He not know that His words, fairly interpreted, mean that a true believer in Christ, a Christian, in the highest sense of that holy term, may righteously hold slaves, and order their earthly destiny, subject only to that “higher law”—or rather Law Of The Most Highest, which 29 enjoins justice always, and mercy and forgiveness, as we hope for Heaven?

This king (or slaveholder) is represented as a man faultless towards his servants. He had granted this very servant (or slave) many and great privileges, even forgiving him (or cancelling) a large debt; but he had not made him free. Does not the result show us that that “wicked servant“ was not fit for
freedom? that he must be subjected to the authority of a master, or he would injure and destroy his equals —his fellow-servants?

If “slavery is a sin against God and man, founded on injustice and cruelty,” is it not passing strange that Jesus Christ should have chosen this system of master and bond-servant as representing the relation subsisting between God the Father and those who are forgiven and accepted of Him? Can we see no resemblance, no analogy? Are not believers the servants of God?—“bought with a price”—even the precious blood of His Son, whose “obedience unto death” was required to free them from slavery to sin? Does not our divine Master grant us privileges, that glorious one of being called after His name—Christians? These Christians are bound to obey His laws, or they must, assuredly, suffer punishment.

It was thus that the disciples of Christ were instructed to understand this parable. They could never have inferred that “slavery was the sin to be throttled;” they would feel that good servants were in danger of being throttled, were “taken by the throat,” when wicked servants had power.

This parable settles two important questions bearing on negro slavery in the United States, namely: that in bondage the marriage relation should be held sacred, and that families should be sold together.

“He commauded him to be sold, and his wife and children.”—Matthew, 18:25.

We learn also from this parable, as well as from other teachings of Christ and His apostles, that bond-service was a condition which brought master and servant into nearer domestic intimacy of dependence and protection, than hired service ever can do. This protection to an inferior race is a high privilege, and may be made, to both master and servant, the means of great blessings, temporal and spiritual.

As if to body forth this idea to His followers, and teach them that the lowest menial services did not degrade the soul, nor hinder the grace of God, but rather offered opportunity of spiritual improvement, Christ not only took “on Him the form of a servant,” but He performed the lowest office of a slave, when 30 “He girded Himself with a towel” and “washed the feet of His disciples.”

It should always be borne in mind that the Bible nowhere represents slavery as sinful; but as a condition resulting from sin, as did the condition of hard labor, poverty, disease, and all the evils that flesh is heir to, even death itself, result from sin. Those who are born in the condition of slaves or of slaveholders are neither of them responsible for the place they hold in the world, but only for the manner in which they fulfill its duties. This is conclusively taught by the parable of the talents.*
* “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

“Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

“And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

“But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

“After a long time the lard of those servants cometh, and reekoneth with them.

“And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I win make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

“He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed;

“And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine.

“His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed;

“Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

“Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.
“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—St. Matthew, chap. 25, verses 14 to 30.

Here again our blessed Lord represents the “kingdom of heaven” by a master and bond-servants—his “own servants;” they belonged to their lord; he could command them, reward them, punish them, as he saw fit. To one he gave five talents; to another two; to another one. Each must improve what he receives; all are accountable in proportion. Such is the equality the Gospel sets forth.

The liberty the Gospel proclaimed was freedom from the bondage of Satan; but the disciple must always bear the yoke of Christ. Nowhere does He preach or teach what is now called “personal freedom”—that is, the right to disobey laws, either of God or man, if they do not suit us. Christ’s example, the yoke His followers must wear, was always obedience to law, even unto death.

The apostles, who certainly knew how to expound the principles of the Gospel as truly as any man, be he priest or layman, can do it at this day, are all agreed on this point. “Bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ” was the proof of repentance unto salvation that Paul pressed on his Gentile converts. The condition of master and bond-servant, or slave, then prevailed throughout the world; it was an institution, like our own, inwoven into the domestic relations of society in every nation on earth, and Paul must have met with it everywhere that he taught and established churches.

Would not Paul, who was so zealous in his Master’s cause, have rebuked slavery, if it had been sin? He has brought the subject before two churches and two bishops. Let us read what he has written; and first, to the Church of the Ephesians:

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

“Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.
“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”— Ephesians, chap. 6, ver. 5–10.

These are Paul's counsels to the Colossians:

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men:

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.

“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”— Colos., chap. 3, verse 22–25; chap. 4, verse 1.

Thus Paul instructed the churches. Is there any abolition of 32 slavery in his teachings? any appeal to the slaves to “take their freedom at all hazards?” any hint to the masters that to hold a fellow Christian in bondage is a “damnable wrong?” Strange that Paul did not give one word of censure to the slaveholder, if his household was arranged on sinful principles. And still more strange that in his charge to the young bishop, Timothy, whom Paul, loving him as his own son, ought to have guided into the way of righteousness and love, the great Apostle has given commands concerning this “peculiar institution” which place it among the conditions of life that Timothy was zealously to watch over and sustain.

“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

“And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
“He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

“Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”—1 st Timothy, chap. 6, verses 1–6.

In the Epistle to Titus, bishop of the Church of the Cretians, similar directions are enforced with that earnestness which shows Paul had no scruple concerning the righteousness of the relation between master and bond-servant; that the latter, in doing his duty faithfully, was serving God; obedience to the master was Christian duty:

“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

“Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity: that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”— Titus, chap. 2: 9–15.

Nor did the teachings of Paul end here. His whole Epistle to Philemon was called forth by this subject of slavery. Paul had converted a runaway slave belonging to Philemon, a member of the Church at Ephesus. Tradition records that Philemon was a man of high birth, rich and powerful, whom St. Paul had converted 33 to the Christian faith. Onesimus, the slave of this rich Ephesian, had escaped from bondage and fled to Rome; there Paul, while a prisoner himself, converted this fugitive; and then—what?
Did Paul tell Onesimus that personal slavery was a degrading service, contrary to God's law, and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? that all slaves had the “inalienable right of liberty,” and should gain it if they had to commit all the crimes forbidden in the decalogue? What did Paul do?

He persuaded the fugitive slave, now an humble Christian, to return to his Christian master; he, Paul, writing, as he says, “with mine own hand,” a tender letter to Philemon, to beg him to forgive, receive, and treat kindly the returned servant; and Onesimus was bearer of the letter!*

* Because St. Paul has, in many places, alluded to his own “bonds,” it has been attempted to identify these expressions with the bonds of the slave. But this is utterly untenable. “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;” “Others had trials of bonds and imprisonments;” “Wherein I suffer trouble, even to bonds;” “Ye had compassion of me in my bonds;” “For which I am in bonds,” and similar expressions of his sufferings in the cause of Christ abound in the epistles; but will any true believer in the Bible say that these refer to bond-service—the holding of men in slavery—and condemn it? The apostle was alluding to his own imprisonments, unjust persecutions for his religious belief; and mark it well, ye who attempt to justify, by false witness against your southern brethren, robbery, rebellion, murder, because St. Paul asked the kindly sympathy of his Christian friends—not their interference to annoy or destroy those he complained of:—mark it well, he has commanded, by the inspiration of God: “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ.”

The doctrine of St. Peter is, if possible, more decisive on this subject of the duty of servants than that of St. Paul. The former does not lay any injunction on masters; and his epistle is general for all churches.

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:
“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”—1 Pet., 2: 18. 3

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I have given the commands and reasons of the apostles in full, because few persons will take the trouble to look out a passage in the Bible from the mere reference.

It is well to know, truly, what was taught as Gospel by the apostles. Did they teach abolition or anti-slavery in the manner now so popular among certain sects of Christians, so called?

Do those denunciators of American slavery find in the Word of God examples or doctrines to sustain and justify their violent invectives? Can they find Bible authority for this? or Bible authority, when they insist on placing polygamy and slavery on the same ground of opposition to the laws of God? or rather affirming the two conditions to have been treated in the same ambiguous manner by the inspired writers?

We affirm that such assertions are false, both to the letter and the spirit of God's laws.

Slavery was inflicted as a curse for sin on a certain portion of mankind.

Monogamy, the marriage of one man with one woman, was the blessing for the race that made Eden a paradise.

Slavery was never in any way, nor by any word, forbidden in God's laws; it was recognized in the law on Mount Sinai; provided for and perpetuated by the Mosaic code; never prohibited in the teachings of Jesus Christ, either in parable or precept, but justified and enforced; and it was acknowledged and made consonant with Christian duty by the apostles.

On the other hand, polygamy was utterly prohibited by the marriage law of Eden, that made the wedded pair one; it was absolutely forbidden on Mount Sinai, in the seventh commandment; most scathingly rebuked by the teachings of Jesus Christ, who reaffirmed the marriage law of Eden in a manner that shows it was never set aside, that it could not have been set aside without breaking the seventh commandment; and polygamy was authoritatively forbidden by the apostles to their
Gentile converts. The Hebrews knew that the laws of Moses were made for a people whose usages in marriage were one man with one woman,* like our own, after the example of Isaac and Rebecca.

* This is proven by the law of Moses, which required the marriage of a childless widow to her deceased husband's brother. The law supposes that a man can leave only ONE widow; which could never be counted on in a nation of polygamists.

The two systems, therefore, had not the same origin, nor can they be classed together in a single result.

If slavery, the bond-service that makes one man the property of another, be thus sanctioned by God's word, both in the Old 35 and New Testaments, is it to continue till the end of time? Is it to be in the millennium?

We cannot answer that question from the Bible, except so far as this: while men are subjected to the penalty of hard labor for bread, and women to the penalty of obedience, each wife to her own husband, we do not see why the penalty that subjected the posterity of Ham to slavery should be remitted.

“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto His brethren”—is peremptory, and as unlimited respecting time as the sentence on our first parents. In Revelation, chap. 6, ver. 15, “bondman and freeman” flee together from the wrath of God; both are sinners.

In the prophetic books, where allusions are made to the millennium, God's chosen people are represented as having servants, who perform the duties of bond-service.

“For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

“And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.”—Isaiah, chap. 14, verses 1, 2.

We thus learn that Israel, when restored at the millennium, will have the right to hold bond-servants, and that they will hold them. The holy prophet does not tell the people of God to give the strangers that follow them equal rights and privileges with themselves. Now, if thus to hold even their enemies in bondage had been “sin of itself,” “the sum of all villainies,” would it have been thus prophetically, or symbolically, if you please, accorded to God's people as a privilege? as a sign of the Lord's mercy?
The like privileges and blessings are promised to Israel, in chapters 60, verse 10, and 61, verse 5—Isaiah:

“And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee.”

“And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers.”

We might quote a multitude of other texts which show that domestic slavery was an established condition of social life, recognized throughout the whole period of Bible history, and never, in a single instance, condemned as wrong in itself, as a sin, *per se*. Therefore we do not know how any Christian can deny this proposition: *Slavery is sanctioned by the Bible.*

But how shall we reconcile this difference of condition among men with the doctrine of “equal rights” which our political teachers enunciate?

The Bible settles it all. The parable of the talents is the true 36 code of the Christian. *Equal duties for equal privileges*. St. Paul illustrates this Bible Bill of Rights in his first epistle to the Corinthians, twelfth chapter. Read it every word, and learn the justice and the mercy of God in giving us such knowledge of the truth, and such assurance of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle also instructs servants in their rights and duties in a manner that cannot, except wilfully, be misunderstood. If they are called of the Lord, their soul service must be given to God; but this does not emancipate them from their secular duties, nor change their earthly condition.

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

“Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

“Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”—1 Corinthians, chap. 7, verse 20–25.

Thus was settled the Christian polity: no meddling with the question of political or civil freedom, which belongs to human authority to regulate. It is spiritual freedom only that the Gospel brought
to light. The Bible guarantees to men liberty of conscience to worship the true God as they feel to be right. It does not give to any man, or body of men, church, or bishop, or minister, the right to compel unbelievers to embrace the true faith; therefore persecution, even though it were intended to do good for those coerced, is a sin, and liberty of conscience is the inalienable right of every human being; because God has willed it.

Any slaveholder who should deprive his servants of this liberty would commit sin. And the Bible lays on the master the duty of giving religious instruction and religious privileges to his servants. To keep holy the Sabbath day, and know his duty to God and his neighbor, are indispensable requirements for human well-being in every station of life.

We come, then, to these three propositions:

Slavery is not a sin:

It does not violate the law of God as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; but conforms to it.

Slavery is not a crime:

It does not violate the Constitution of the United States, the highest law of our republic; but conforms to it.

Slavery is not a wrong:

It does not violate the law of nature, which has assigned to one race of the human family certain gifts of mind and moral endowments superior in degree, power, and usefulness to those of another race; thus creating natural differences and inequalities, inherent in race compared with race, that cannot, by human art or means, be overcome. And that the superior must control and direct the inferior race, in order to bring out and secure the highest good of humanity, is as necessary and just as that the higher faculties of man's nature should control and harmonize his lower appetites and propensities in order to reach his noblest elevation of character and condition, of moral improvement, and material prosperity.

The philosophy of Christianity, drawn from the parable of the talents, and every doctrine of Jesus Christ, teaches equality of responsibility, but not equality of condition. Brotherhood and charity—which is love—must work out the perfecting of the Christian character. Nor was this perfection to entitle the good man to worldly success, prosperity, ease, health, or freedom.
Was Lazarus, because he was a good man and in want of all things, entitled to demand a share in the riches of Dives? Who does not feel that this beggar at the gate, over whom angels watched, was immeasurably exalted above the rich man, arrayed in purple and fine linen—for whom the devil waited? Yet while Lazarus lived he must remain poor.

Thus the pious slave may, in the sight of God, be immeasurably exalted above his profligate master; yet the former must continue faithfully to do the duties of the condition “wherein he was called.”

The divine Saviour always measures the standard of man's worth by the heavenly inheritance, not by earthly station. Obedience, faith, humility, love, these were the requisites for his followers; nor did their services, however faithfully performed, ever entitle them to demand salvation. That was the free gift of God.

“But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

“And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

“Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”—St. Luke, chap. 17, verses 7-10.

Christ does not teach that master and servant are equal; but that both are equally subject to God. He has the right to appoint the lot of all; He has made men to differ; but His righteousness is clear as the sun at noonday, because all these differences are taken into account when He settles with His servants.

Equality of condition is not, then, the law of revelation. Is 38 it the law of nature? Look at the fruitful apple-tree. How many blasted buds and abortive blossoms, how much withered, worm-eaten fruit fall from the tree, before, on the topmost bough, perhaps, or, oftener, out from among the thick leaves of one of the lower branches, the full-formed apple appears, in perfect development of beauty and flavor, shining like gold and coral as it crowns its mother tree with the perfection of its kind.

Is it not thus that the history of the human tree symbolizes a race? Take the British oak planted in India. How many strong, brave men, in the bud, blossom, and ripening of their earthly ambition,
have been trampled down, crushed out, withered by disease, wasted by disappointment, destroyed and laid in the dust, before the lion banner of Great Britain, waving above the top of India's tallest palm, dominated the land from the ocean to the Himalaya! On that banner one name only—Havelock—flashes out with the perfect light of Christian glory, confirming the right of the British people to their eastern empire; because, by the light of Havelock's glory, we read a higher destiny for the dark-skinned tribes of Shem and Ham, through the agency of their white masters.

Christianity, planted in India, is the tree of life whose fruit will equally heal all sin-sick souls that rest beneath its shadow of faith and love, making all who believe equal inheritors of the heavenly hope; but it will not, it cannot, equalize the earthly conditions of men.

“God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”*

* Ethnology, as well as Scripture, testifies that Ham peopled Egypt. The native name Egypt is Chami, the black. The race of Ham includes Egypt and all the black tribes beyond. In the north Caucasian regions the race of Japheth spread widely; and in central Asia the race of Shem. These general positions have been proved by the ethnologists, Pritchard and Bunsen, and are confirmed by the most reliable archæologists, as well as by the leading physiologists of the world, Morton, Cuvier, and Blumenbach.

Dr. Barth, in his “African Discoveries,” states expressly, that he has sufficient evidences that negroes are descendants of Ham. In character they assimilate with the Canaanites of old.

Would the British Government be justified by the Christians of England, or by the voice of humanity, should it throw off the responsibility of ruling that great eastern empire, and leave the poor, miserable, ignorant, degraded heathen natives to their own inventions?

Would American masters, as Christians, deal righteously with humanity, and obey the laws of God, should they throw off the responsibilities of their negro servants, and leave them to their own devices?

Color has always been significant of character and condition. The white or light-skinned races are superior to the darker colored. Thus was Japheth distinguished above his brethren; and Jacob, who was fair, was ordained to rule over his red brother, Esau. The race of Jacob are to this day distinguished, from the other descendants of Shem, by the lighter skin, which makes the Jew Japhetic in color. This is a natural distinction; the darker the color the lower is the standard of mind and
moral perception, and more degraded the condition. Exceptions may be found; but the rule has always existed, so far as we can learn, in the past. It holds good this day over the whole world.

The abstract philosophy of human rights may denounce these differences of condition as unjust, but where is the remedy? “Can the Ethiopian change his skin?” “Can those who are accustomed to do evil learn (of themselves) to do well?”

Men must learn and acknowledge that God’s wisdom is above human philosophy; that the finite cannot measure the infinite; that the law of the Creator will regulate created beings in spite of all “declarations of independence,” “equality, and inalienable rights” made by men.

This subjection of all mankind to the laws of God is shown to be righteous, because He requires no more of each race or individual than the just use of what He gives. The servant, to whom is entrusted but one talent or five, is never made responsible for the use of ten. The black African and the brown Asiatic, descendants of Shem and Ham, are not required to equal the white European and American descendants of Japheth in knowledge of the true God, or in power of disseminating the truth as it is in Jesus, because these talents have never been entrusted to them.

The descendants of Japheth, who have this knowledge and this power, are responsible to God, and must hold the mastery given them for the common good, as leaders and teachers, using their ten talents for the improvement and happiness of their brethren of inferior condition, in equal proportion with their own advancement in civilization and Christianity. Then the Word of God will have power over the hearts of all men, and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

The axiom of human equality, as urged by those who would place all races and nations of men on a level of natural rights, independent of the will of God, if it could be carried out, would it not beggar the world, and bring down the life of man to his lowest instincts and appetites? Stagnant waters always become corrupt, and the creatures they nourish are ugly, imperfect, monstrous. Perfect equality in nature would be destructive of all that is beautiful and beneficent in the visible creation. The sea would have no tides; the earth no changes of season; the sky no sun, moon, and planetary systems, “where one star differeth from another star in glory.”

So, too, with mankind. If perfect equality of rights and uniformity of conditions could be established, all would be moveless mediocrity or repulsive repetition; an eternal treadmill of custom, where no advancement could be made; an endless tunnel of mind, where the locomotive of thought would be compelled to travel on and on through the dead level of the dark ages forever.
Thanks be to God, who has not left the destiny of men to be settled by theories of philosophical or political abstractionists. God has given us His revealed will to guide our imperfect reason, and we know from this inspired Word that the “Most Highest ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”

Jesus Christ declares—“The poor ye shall always have with you, and when ye will ye may do them good.”

The apostle says—“We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” All power comes from God: the differences of human character and condition are means of discipline and opportunities of duty, which the fallen nature of man requires in its upward struggle after the good.

But are there no points of resemblance in the three divisions of the human family, no stages of equality where the brotherhoods, “made of one blood,” rest on common ground in their desires and in their destinies, however much they may differ in complexion, in character, and in condition?

Yes, many, and these of paramount importance, far exceeding the highest earthly interests of which human philosophy takes cognizance, and seeks to equalize.

We might say that all are born and all die, alike helpless and powerless; but the circumstances attending these events are widely different, as all conditions in this world vary in form and consequences.

It is when we come to the relations of man with his Creator that human conditions are equalized. All souls belong to God, and all are immortal. All mankind are sinners before Him, and need a Saviour. All are offered salvation through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. All will be raised from the dead at the last day, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

All will be judged, “every man according to their works.”— Rev., chap. 20, ver. 13.