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ADDRESS,
ON THE SUBJECT OF
AFRICAN SLAVERY,
DELIVERED IN FAYETTEVILLE,
SEPTEMBER 14, 1837.
(PUBLISHED BY REQUEST,)

BY JAMES N. WILLSON, D. D.

A public speaker, in many cases, has good reason to believe that nearly all his audience will agree with him in the sentiments which he intends to inculcate. He may then advance directly and freely to the discussion. It is always in some degree painful when he thinks a large proportion of his audience is strongly opposed to the doctrines which he is about to enforce. That this is so in relation to the subject of the present address, is altogether probable. The question of slavery, as you all know, has of late deeply, and even fearfully, agitated the public mind, to an extent not heretofore known on any topic that has awakened general interest. Vehement has been the ardor of those who have arranged themselves on opposite sides in this controversy. On the one side the cause has been managed by an appeal to argument only;—on the other the resort has been chiefly to the most vituperative denunciation, to the sounding of the tocsin of alarm, to the cry of incendiary and fanatic, and to brute violence.

But, whatever the opinions which any in this audience may have formed in this exciting business, or however they may be opposed to what shall be uttered this evening, it is surely not unreasonable for the speaker to invoke your indulgence, and to ask a patient and unprejudiced attention to reasonings in behalf of what he believes to be truth, and calculated to promote the best interests of the community.

culated to promote the best interests of the community at large. He may be in error. But he will give utterance to no sentiment or argument, which, after long investigation, he does not fully believe to be correct, and for which he thinks there is irrefragable testimony. And if there should be an error, as it will lean to the side of liberty, he may

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justly expect that in this land of boasted freedom it will be regarded with leniency by those who have so long enjoyed and delighted in the exercise of the rights of freemen. The speaker is, indeed, a stranger to most of you, but he trusts none have any ground to suppose that he would desire to lead any of you into error, or to awaken in your bosoms any emotion discordant with righteousness, or hostile to the good of our common country. On one point, at least, it may be presumed we are all agreed—a wish to know and to act upon what is the truth in relation to the question of slavery, as it exists at present in these United States.

All the opinions which are held on this subject, may be reduced to four classes:

I. That slavery is neither a sin against God, nor contrary to the rights of man.

II. That it is a sin against God, and adverse to human rights, but that it should not be removed otherwise than gradually.

III. That it is a sin which must be continued, accompanied with attempts to ameliorate the condition of the slave.

IV. That it is both a natural and moral evil, and ought to be abandoned immediately.

I. As to the first of these, it is not many years since scarcely any one could be found who professed to maintain that negro slavery is justifiable, either by any law of God, or by any righteous law of man. A little more than twenty years ago, the speaker travelled extensively through the slave-holding States, and almost everywhere introduced this topic into conversation with the slave-holding planters, all or very nearly all of whom he found ready promptly to admit that it was an aggravated moral and political evil, that its existence was deeply to be regretted, and that it must, at some future period, produce the most disastrous results. At that time these views may be affirmed to have been universal in the free States. The writings of Mr. Jefferson and others in the South, strongly denouncing it as an evil, furnished an index to popular Southern sentiment in relation to its iniquity. The published opinions of Franklin, Peters, and others, and their labors in the formation of Manumission

owners, and their doings in the formation of manumission Societies, were fully in accordance with the sentiments of all the northern States. Leading men in various denominations of professing Christians harmonized with these views of both Northern and Southern statesmen. Slavery was entirely abolished by the Reformed Presbyterian Church about the beginning of the present century. In the first

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edition of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, testimony was borne against it as an iniquitous practice. The framers of the Methodist Book of Discipline denounced it as grossly immoral.

But far other times have now come over us. Attempts are made, not to palliate it as an evil of small magnitude, but to vindicate it as a duty founded in the law of nature, and ratified by the sanction of the holy scriptures. Statesmen, in the halls of legislation, have become its open and avowed advocates. Churchmen, in ecclesiastical courts, met in the name of the Church's Head, have assisted in maintaining its claims to be considered just, and denounced opposition to it as uncharitable, unrighteous, and incendiary. The pulpit has entered into the advocacy of its claims to the favor both of God and man. In the Church many honorable and noble exceptions there are, of ministers of the gospel, and of ecclesiastical bodies, that with enlightened zeal magnanimously stand forth in vindication of the rights of the oppressed, against the denunciations of men in high places, and against the ungovernable fury of tumultuous rioters,

Though there has been a variety of opinion among the apologists and advocates of slavery, yet it is evident that all these are becoming merged in one—*that it is no sin!* Indeed, they must all come to this, for it is too manifestly absurd to plead for even a day's continuance of what is an acknowledged violation of the immutable law of Heaven, even when that violation is sanctioned by the authority of human legislation.

To prove that it is no sin, its advocates resort to the example of Abraham, who, they say, held slaves with the divine approbation. A little reflection, however, will satisfy us, that that distinguished patriarch was no slave-holder.—When the confederate kings of the east invaded the west of Asia, sacked Sodom and Gomorrah, and took Lot, Abraham's brother's son, Abraham armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan, and divided himself against them, he

and his servants by night, and smote them. It is impossible these trained servants could have been slaves. There were three hundred and eighteen men able to bear arms, who, together with the aged, the women and children, must have amounted to at least two thousand persons in Abraham's family, and are called his servants. So large a body of people possessed by Abraham, could not have been held in in-

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voluntary bondage by one man, in a strange land. They were of necessity dispersed over a large tract of country intending his numerous flocks. They were besides armed and trained for war. What power had he to force them to remain in his service? Evidently none at all. They had power at any time, especially when embodied and armed for this expedition, not only to emancipate themselves, but to seize or kill Abraham, and to possess themselves of all his property. They were not slaves, for they had a right to hold possessions for themselves. Aner, Eschol, and Mamre were the leaders of these trained bands, and Abraham says, "let them take their portion." Gen. xiv. 24. Besides, we hear no more of these servants after Abraham's death; Isaac did not inherit them, nor did they or their descendants go down with Jacob into the land of Egypt.

The relation in which Abraham's servants stood to him in proof: Had Abraham died without children, his property would have been inherited by "this Damascene," an old servant. "And Abraham said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eleazer of Damascus? And Abraham said, behold to me thou hast given no seed: and one born in mine house is mine heir." Could any thing be more adverse to the condition of slavery, as it exists in this country, than that, when the master dies without offspring, his slaves should inherit his estate? This ancient servant, too, had the management of all the possessions of the patriarch. "And Abraham said to his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had," &c. "And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand." Gen. xxiv. 2 and 24. With these camels, and with jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, he sent him to the distance of several hundred miles, on the highly important mission of choosing a wife for his son Isaac, from among the daughters of a foreign nation. What

slave-holder in our country has ever committed so much property and so important a negotiation to any slave?— What slave-master makes his slaves rule over all that he has? Which of them would send a slave alone with his carriage and horses, and ample treasures of jewelry, even into our own northern States, giving him in charge to select a wife, according to his own judgment, for his only son and heir? Whatever Eleazer was, he was clearly not Abraham's slave. Indeed, there is no word in the Hebrew language to designate a slave as distinguished from a servant ;

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plainly, because the condition of slavery was unknown among the Hebrews.

But what was the relation between Abraham and his servants? Nothing either more or less than that he was their patron, and that they were his clients. This relation existed among most of the oriental nations of antiquity; and was constituted by the clients putting themselves voluntarily under the protection of the patron, and his voluntarily accepting of them as his dependents. They were moved to seek his protection because he was opulent and powerful, while they were poor and defenceless. The relation existed among the ancient Romans, one class of whom are called *patroni*, patrons, another *clientes*, clients. These poor dependents labored for stipulated wages, and were styled *necessitudines*, the intimate and necessary friends of the patron.

Again, the law of servants recorded Lev. xxv. 44—46, is quoted in justification of modern slavery. "Both thy bondmen and bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, 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 your inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever: but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule over one another with rigour." Were it true that this passage, according to its just interpretation, granted to the Jews special privileges, as a nation distinct from all other commonwealths, still this grant could not be claimed by any nation under the gospel dispensation as peculiar to itself. All distinctions of special national privileges, are abolished since the resurrection of Christ: "God hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts xvii. 26. "Christ hath broken down the middle wall of partition." Eph. ii. 14. When the Apostle Peter

was about to be sent by the Holy Spirit on a mission to Cornelius, the Roman centurion, he was taught by a vision from heaven, that all special prerogatives, which for ages the Jews had enjoyed over the Gentiles, had entirely ceased. He says : " But God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts x. 28. So no one nation may now claim any superiority of right over any other nation. None can now claim the grant of making bondmen or bondmaids of the heathen that are round about them, or

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of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among them. In respect of national privileges, all nations are of one blood, all are brethren, and the citizens of one commonwealth may not rule over those of another with rigour. If this text sanctions negro slavery, as it now exists, it will also justify seizing by violence the unoffending citizens of any other nation on the earth, provided we possess the power to perpetrate these acts of violence. There is no mention made here of any African nation, as distinguished from all others. Hence, according to this view of the text, the Americans may attack, without provocation, the Indian nations, the South Americans, the Canadians, the West India Islands, the British, the Hollanders, the French, the Spaniards, and the Germans, by the divine authority given in this passage. By the same right, too, all the nations have a warrant to reduce us to the condition of slaves. Can any Bible believer assent to all this? He must assent to it all, if he believes that the text sanctions the enslaving of the African negro.

But it is utterly untrue, that this statute could ever even countenance violence so lawless. No warrant for such deeds of violence was ever or could ever be granted of God to his peculiar people. "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex [or, as it is in the margin, oppress] him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." Lev. xix. 33, 34. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Exod. xxii. 21. By the former text the Israelites were prohibited from oppressing any one of another nation who resided within their territory—there is no exception. By slavery, as now practised in this country, every slave is vexed; for it is a vexation for any man to be deprived of his liberty. By the latter text they were prohibited universally from harrassing any stranger, or oppressing him, whether dwelling in their land, or residing in any other kingdom. The argument enforcing the precept in both cases, is, that they knew by experience how distressing the condition of slavery is, for they themselves had been oppressed when strangers in the land of Egypt. And yet, in the

face of all these texts, and many others of similar import, the apologists for slavery would attempt to persuade us that the grant to make bondmen and bondmaids of the nations bordering upon the land of Israel, justified all that outrage and violence so clearly and directly forbidden by many other statutes in the Israelitish code.

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If they are right, then the people of Chambersburg might, according to this law of God, arm themselves, attack by night, plunder and burn this village of Fayetteville, murder a part of its inhabitants, enslave the remainder and their children forever, and yet be guilty of no crime against God or man. They have evidently as much right, both by the law nature and by the moral law recorded in the scriptures, to do all this, as the Americans to assail African villages, plunder, seize, and enslave the unoffending inhabitants. Were the people of Chambersburg to commit so gross an outrage, the whole land, yes, the whole civilized world would resound with the deepest tones of righteous indignation. They would in vain plead, that the municipal regulations of their village and their domestic institutions warranted their holding you in perpetual bondage. How preposterous would it be to cry out incendiary against any man or body of men, who presumed to utter any thing condemnatory of such iniquity!—Who would listen to their exclamations against any American, or even European, who would call in question their right to retain their property in you as their slaves? The whole nation, the whole world would unanimously interfere, and denounce their violence and injustice without regard to their domestic institutions. What doctor of divinity would have the hardihood to plead in the pulpit, or any where, for the legitimacy of their title to hold property in you as their slaves? What man, much more what minister of the gospel, would plead the Bible to justify them, and quote this or any other text to prove that they had a right forever to retain you as their bondmen? Would you, would any reasonable man, much less would any Bible believer listen for a moment to such an indignity, offered under pretence of argument, to the inalienable rights of man, to common sense, and to the holy scriptures? Yet men, and even ministers of religion, do all this to justify outrages of the same nature, but incomparably more aggravated, because committed on a much larger scale. more svstem atized. and of

much longer continuance. If the text justifies negro slavery, the American revolution was wrong in principle, and directly opposed to this law of Heaven. The British government would then not only have had a right to hold the colonies in subjection and tax them, but even to have gone much farther, and reduced all the colonies to a state of perpetual slavery. They could not have had a right to do all this, and we at the same time a right to resist them, even in attempts to reduce us to personal bondage. Opposition to their au-

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thority would have been rebellion against the power of God, vesting in them a right to enslave us.

In order to understand the import of this text, we must recur to the several modes in which men may be reduced to the condition of servants.

1. By a voluntary engagement to labor in the service of others for stipulated wages, either for a short time or for life. To this mode may be referred the act of parents in placing their children, by indenture, in the state of apprenticeship, until they arrive at the years of majority.

2. When, by becoming involved in debt, men are sold, or rather their time and labor disposed of by public authority, at the suit of the creditor, for the liquidation of the debt.— This was done by the divine law in Israel. But by that law this measure could not be resorted to until a trial had been made of their capacity to provide for themselves by furnishing them with money, without interest, to pay their debts. If they were still found incompetent to provide for themselves without becoming indebted, they were then sold for the interest of the creditor. “If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner: that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase; but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God. 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.” Even when thus sold, he could not be made to serve more than six years; and when liberated at the commencement of the Sabbatical year, his master, whom he had served, was bound to set him up again comfortably in the world. “And if thy brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him away from thee,

thou shalt not let him go away empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him." For these remarkably benevolent provisions on behalf of the poor, see Lev. xxv. 35—39, and Deut. xv. 12—14.

3. Men are reduced to the condition of servitude, as a punishment for crimes which they have committed against the Commonwealth. Of this we have an example in the

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case of the Gibeonites. "Let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation, as the princes had promised them. And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them saying, wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying we are very far from you, when ye dwell among us? Now, therefore, ye are cursed; and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the House of my God." Exod. ix. 21—23. Of this mode of reducing men to service we have an example in those who are condemned to hard labor in our work-houses as a punishment for crime. To this mode may be referred the placing of men in the condition of servitude when they are made prisoners of war, who, some think, may be made to serve at hard labor, by the state on which they have made a wanton aggression, until it is remunerated for losses sustained in the war. However this may be, it is certain the policy of reducing prisoners of war to the condition of servitude has been long abolished by the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity.

4. Men are made slaves, by wantonly attacking and unjustly enslaving the citizens of unoffending nations.—This, by the consent of all, and by a law of the United States, declaring it piracy, is the iniquitous mode in which the children of Africa have been subjected to bondage.

Besides these four modes of putting men into the condition of servitude, we know of no other; of none other can we at present conceive. The first three have always been held to be consistent with the good order of society, with the rights of man regulated by the law of God, and have been practiced, in a greater or less degree, in most ancient and modern nations. In these ways the great mass of those who have been held to service among the nations, have been brought into the condition of servitude. All those who labor for others, in whichever of these four ways they have been so made to labor, are called by the general name of ser-

vans. AS there are three righteous modes, and these by far the most common in which the relation of master and servant is constituted, why should that one which is confessedly unjust be thought to be the only one referred to in the passage quoted, from Lev. xxv. ? The text itself gives no countenance to such an interpretation. The word translated bondmen, in the 44th verse, signifies, in its original import, laborers, and is usually translated servant. It is so rendered in the 42d and 55th verses of this chapter, as applied to the children of Israel, who are called God's ser-

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vants. "For they are my servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. For unto me the children of Israel are servants; for they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt." They are said, indeed, to be bought of the heathen that were round about them, and of the children of strangers that sojourned among them. Abraham, also, is said to have "bought with his money servants of the stranger." Gen. xvii. 12 and 23. The Hebrew word translated bought, properly signifies to procure, whether by purchase or otherwise. It is true, that when Abraham procured servants or clients from the Canaanitish master or patron, he paid a sum of money for the servants.—While service to their patron was by voluntary contract, it was at the same time profitable to him and would be so to Abraham. When the service was transferred, the advantages accruing to their former master rendered it just that he should be remunerated for the loss of them by the new master, who, for the future, was to be profited by them.—The buying mentioned in Leviticus must have been of a similar character. In whatever way they who were thus bought of the surrounding nations became bondmen or servants, we are sure it must have been righteous, otherwise the claim would never have been sanctioned by the divine legislator.

Again, when it is said they shall be your bondmen forever, the phrase forever cannot mean that the service of any one person should continue without end, for it would end with his death. It can only mean that their servants should be of the strangers that were round about them until the termination of the Jewish commonwealth. Until that time, their servants, procured of strangers, might have more labor exacted of them than the Israelitish servants, whom they were commanded to treat with greater leniency. All the peculiar privileges and prerogatives of the Jewish nation on which these distinctions are founded, are abolished under the New Testament dispensation; and the citizens of all nations

are all now bound to treat one another as the Israelites were commanded to treat their brethren. The command is now binding upon all, "ye shall not rule over one another with rigour." But even while these national distinctions existed, an Israelite was not permitted to reduce to bondage, or to hold in bondage a citizen of any nation made a bondman by the commission of an outrage upon human rights. The prohibition is express and full. "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be

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put to death." This precept is not like that in Deuteronomy xxiv. 7, limited to the stealing or selling of an Israelite. It is absolutely prohibitory, and is extended to the stealing or selling of any human being. Were it even confined, by some restriction in the statute, to Israelitish citizens, still, from the nature of the deed prohibited, it must, by fair inference, be extended to all nations. How preposterous would it be to understand the text as meaning : he shall be capitally punished who stealeth and selleth an Israelite, or holdeth him, when stolen, in bondage; but he that stealeth or selleth one of another nation, shall be held guiltless.— This would be to charge the divine law with sanctioning unjust violence in its grossest and most revolting forms. It would be the same, in effect, as if the Congress of the United States would pass an act ordaining the capital punishment of him who would steal, sell, or hold in slavery an American, and, at the same time, authorize the stealing, selling and enslaving of the citizens of all other nations— The whole world would unite in the loud and indignant condemnation of a statute so palpably iniquitous. No nation, indeed, civilized or savage, has adventured upon the enactment of a law so evidently most unjust. The law of nature has exerted over the consciences of men such force as to restrain them from even proposing the enactment of such a statute. Yet men, in their eagerness to justify oppression, charge such injustice upon the divine legislator.

In order to make the law of Leviticus in respect to servitude, an argument available in justification of negro slavery, it must be so interpreted as to endow this commonwealth with a right to steal and enslave forever the citizens of all other nations, and also all other nations with a right to enslave its citizens. What honest man will give place for a moment to so unholy an interpretation of a divine statute? But some one will perhaps say, this privilege is granted to the Church, for what absurdity is too flagrant to be admitted by those who have zealously embarked in defence of

iniquity? If the text endows the Church with such a right, then her members, if they have the power, may steal or violently seize and enslave every man, woman, and child who is not a professor of religion. But the command in Exodus not to steal, sell, or hold in bondage any man, sets aside, in direct terms, all such unhallowed misinterpretations of the law of God. This law we know remains in full force under the New Testament dispensation, applicable, of course, to all nations. The Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy,

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says, that "the law is made—for men-stealers—according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." The law respecting men-stealers, recorded Exod. xxvi., is the only one on this subject in the Old Testament. To it, evidently, the Apostle refers in the text just quoted from 1 Tim. ix. 9—11. It remains in force, therefore, under the dispensation of the glorious gospel which Paul preached. Hence, they who steal and sell a man, or hold in bondage one who is stolen, violate the ancient statute, and oppose themselves to the glorious gospel. By stealing or selling any man, the ancient Israelite violated the same law, and, therefore, when procuring bondmen from the nations that were round about him, according to the divine grant, it could not have been done by theft and piracy, as Africans are enslaved.

A grant to make or procure slaves, in the fourth of the modes enumerated above, or to enslave men in the way in which Africans are now reduced to bondage, would be equivalent to the abrogation of the whole second table of the decalogue. In the condition of slavery, as now practised, the children of slaves are not considered as the property of their parents, but of the slave-masters. Their obedience is not to be rendered to their fathers and mothers, but to the will of another. The authority of the master is not transferred to him by the parents, but is founded in mere brute force. In the apprenticeship of minors, the right of the master to rule over the apprentice, is a grant from the natural parents, who have the power to transfer to him such authority. Parents, in many of the slave-holding states, are prohibited, under severe penalties, from teaching their children the first rudiments of learning. Slave parents, having themselves no property, can make no provision for furnishing their children with food and raiment, who are thus entirely dependent on others, and not upon them. So that this and almost every other bond of connection between the parents and the child is severed by this kind of servitude. Beside all this, the sacredness of the marriage relation, which only can bind firmly all domestic ties, is almost unknown among slaves. And upon account of this, it is impossible for children to

slaves. And very commonly it is impossible for children to know who their parents are. The master and the father are often the same person. Children, according to the institution of slavery, may be, and, as a matter of fact, are torn from the embrace of their parents and sent to distant parts of the land, never more to be seen or heard of by father or mother. Thus all the household relations contemplated in

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the fifth commandment, are broken up and given to the winds.

By slavery murders are committed to an enormous and appalling extent. The bodies, the liberties, and the souls of the Africans are destroyed by millions. Mr. Matthew Carey, an industrious collector of facts, in a pamphlet published some years ago, in the city of Philadelphia, has ascertained that two hundred millions of Africans have perished through slavery, by means of the wars which it has caused on the coast of Africa, by the horrors of the middle passage, and by over-working and other cruelties on the slave plantations. Their souls, too, are murdered, as they are shut out from those temples where Christianity instructs her children in the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. They are prohibited from meeting together on the Sabbath, or at other times, to worship their Maker in the sanctuary, lest, when met together for this purpose, they should have an opportunity of consulting together, and devising schemes for their liberation. In this manner, by these cruel restrictions, no doubt deemed necessary to perpetuate their bondage, they are kept in a state of absolute paganism, and their souls doomed to perdition, being destroyed for lack of knowledge. Manacles, whips, and scourges everywhere proclaim the murder of their liberties. If the sixth commandment can be violated, if the shedding of oceans of innocent blood, if the destruction of millions of souls is a violation of this precept, slavery perpetrates all this evil.

The seventh commandment is shamelessly and most grossly violated in all the states where African slavery is known to exist. The pollution is general, both among the masters and among the slaves. On this loathsome topic it is not necessary to enlarge—it is known by the whole world. Against immediate emancipation it is often plead that it would lead to an amalgamation of the black and white races. Nothing is more false or unphilosophical. By setting the colored people free, and giving them access to the lights of literary and religious instruction, marriage would soon be regarded

and religious instruction, marriage would soon be regarded and practised among them as a sacred institution. Among the free colored people of the northern States intermarriages between the whites and blacks scarcely ever occur. In the slaveholding States, the process of amalgamating the two races advances with gigantic strides in all the loathsomeness of the most abominable illegitimacy.

The most aggravated kind of theft undoubtedly is the stealing of a man—a theft, as we have seen, punishable by

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the divine law with death. Is he who steals a horse or a hat guilty of violating the eighth commandment, while yet he who steals a man is innocent of the crime of theft? It is this commandment which is violated by piracy. And the Congress of the United States has declared, by law, that he who captures a man on the coast of Africa, or sells him to any ship-master, or receives him on board any ship, or transports him across the Atlantic, or sells him on our shores, is a pirate, and shall suffer death. By this act, the government of the country has declared, in the face of all nations, that all slavery in this land originated in piratical outrage, and that its authors are worthy of death. It is true, they sanction, by law, the title to hold the property acquired by this grossest kind of theft and violence. In so doing they are chargeable with the same effrontery of injustice with the Senate of Lacedamon, in the case of Phoebidus, their general. They sent that captain, in the command of an army, to wage war with the Clynthians. When he arrived at the city of Thebes, which was in confederacy with the Lacedamonians, he and his troops were by treachery admitted into the citadel, and seized the city. When this perfidious transaction was represented to the General Assembly of Sparta, it condemned the conduct of the general, and degraded him from office, but it continued to hold the city. The perfidy of the commander was condemned, while they did not scruple to reap the iniquitous profits of his treachery. All the world, all history, have united in the condemnation of this unjust act of the Lacedamonians. Our country has done the same thing, substantially, in condemning the slave-trade, and still continuing to hold in bondage the victims of this iniquitous traffic. But still, the retaining of the slaves in bondage as really as the act of enslaving them, is a violation of the eighth commandment: "Or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. Exod. xxi. 16. He who buys a horse, or retains him in his possession, knowing him to be stolen, is held to be an accessory to the theft. Every man

who buys an African slave, or holds him in bondage, knows him to be stolen property, and that his right to him can be no more valid than that of the pirate who stole him away from his own land.

The trade is commenced and carried on, through all its ramifications, under false pretences. The pirate sails under a false flag, he enters his slaves, on his bill of lading, under the name of *blocks of ebony*, and so, by a systematic course of deception, endeavors to elude the vigilance of the law of

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nations. Slaves are generally called liars. How could it be otherwise? The relation in which they stand to their masters, their constant and vehement desire for liberty, and the necessity of concealing this from their oppressors, tempt them to cultivate, from their earliest years, habits of dissimulation. They are nurtured and educated in a school of falsehood. Again, the determination of the masters to hold them in bondage, connected with a regard to their own reputation, prompts them and their apologists to the fabrication of false and fallacious arguments to appease their own guilty consciences, and to justify, or at least to palliate their deeds of iniquity. Thus, slavery is generated in deception, and a system of solemn lying in its vindication, is its legitimate sequel.

That it violates the tenth commandment is unquestionable. That precept forbids the coveting of any thing that is our neighbor's; whereas, slavery covets, and actually takes possession of all that is his. The slave-holder "pants for the dust on the heads of the poor." It covets his labor, his house, his wife, his children, and even his person; and, actuated by this enormous cupidity, seizes and holds them all, then wipes its mouth and says I am clean.

These evils are not merely incidental to slavery, and separable from its existence. They either enter into its very essence, or naturally flow from it as its appropriate results. In our own country, in South America, and in the West India Islands, slavery has been chargeable with all these evils as long as it has existed. From year to year they have been increasing in enormity and aggravation. No sensible man believes that they will cease to exist and to grow as long as the cause which produces these effects continues in operation.

Now, can any man believe, who believes the holy scriptures as given by the inspiration of God, that these scriptures authorize a system like this? It is impossible. The service to which the children of Israel were permitted to hold persons of the nations who were round about them, must have been entirely different from the slavery which exists among us. We are sure negro slavery originates in

iniquity, and we are as certain that the servitude among the Israelites originated in righteousness, otherwise it would never have been sanctioned by "the Judge of all the earth, who will do right."

But an attempt is made to press the New Testament, as well as the old, into the service of the slave-holder, to aid

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him in the work of oppression. A triumphant vindication of slavery is supposed to be contained in 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. "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." This text is paraded with great show of confidence by the friends of slavery, as if it settled the whole question by Apostolical authority. Four things in the passage are plead as bearing on the controversy.

1st. Christian servants are said to be "under the yoke." The term servants decides nothing in relation to the question; for, as we have shown before, there are three ways in which men may be legitimately reduced to the condition of servitude. There is not a shadow of evidence that these servants became such in the way in which Africans have become slaves in our country, but, on the contrary, good reason to believe that they were held to service by a righteous tenure. It is true, that in the Roman empire many were reduced to bondage unrighteously. But why, without any good reason, should the early Christians be charged with participating in this evil? The term servants, applied to those who labored for them, is not sufficient evidence, indeed it is no evidence at all against them. Christ is called God's servant: "Behold my servant whom I have chosen." Matth. xii. 16. Angels are called servants: "I am thy fellow servant." Rev. xix. 10. The Apostles were called servants: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle." Rom. i. 1. In all these, and many similar cases, the same Greek word is used which, in the passage from Timothy is rendered servants. They are so called because they voluntarily entered into the service of God. Nor does it help the cause of oppression that these servants are said to be under the yoke. Christ says, "take my yoke upon you." Matth. xi. 29. The Apostles are called "yoke-fellows: "I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow." Phil. iv. 3.-- The term yoke-fellow is equivalent to the phrase fellow-laborers, used in the latter clause of the verse: "With Clement also and other my fellow-laborers whose names are

might also add other my fellow-slaves whose names are in the book of life." The phrase, "under the yoke," is altogether equivalent to the phrases employed to express the relation subsisting between the disciples of Christ and their master. This is a relation into which they both voluntarily enter. There is indeed a yoke of bondage unrighteously imposed on the necks of men. This yoke all Christians are

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commanded to break : " Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" Isa. lviii. 6.

2d. These servants are commanded to count their masters " worthy of all honor." This honor is evidently to be rendered to them because their station as masters is more elevated than that of the servants under them. Those who serve them are to do so, " not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God," and " whatever they do, to do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men." Col. iii. 22—23. This obedience and honor are due from the servants to the masters, because the latter are clothed with God's authority, constituting this domestic relation, and endowing them with a right to rule. But if the relation between these servants and masters had originated in theft, robbery, and violence, as American slavery does, God could not have been its author. He could not be said to have given to the masters a right of property in the persons or labor of the servants, any more than he could be said to give a thief a right to the horse which he has stolen.

3d. These masters are said to be " believers and brethren." From this it is inferred that slave-holders, such as those of our own country and times, were admitted, without rebuke or reproof, to enjoy the privileges of membership in the Church of Christ. The argument from this clause proceeds on the unwarrantable assumption, that the servants mentioned here, and in other parts of the New Testament, were made such by lawless and piratical violence. But the supposition on which this gloss of the apologists of slavery proceeds, offers an indignity to the character of these early Christians and to that of the Apostles and Evangelists who administered the discipline of the Church. The imputation is slanderous, being unsupported by any testimony. In the first chapter of this epistle, the Apostle affirms that the law of Exodus xxi. 16, made against the man-stealer, was still in full force according to the glorious gospel committed to his trust. By that law the man-stealer, as well as he who

held in bondage the stolen man, deserved to be punished with death, as a murderer. And "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John iii. 15. Yet these masters are said to be "believers, faithful and beloved," while, by another part of this epistle, they, according to this perverse interpretation, are affirmed to deserve the death of murderers. Now this, in one word, is to affirm that those guilty of the

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blackest crimes, and deserving the severest punishment, were not only admitted to the privileges of the Church, but applauded by the Holy Spirit as believing and beloved brethren, worthy of all honor.

4. A command is given, "to do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." Their being believers and Church members is here adduced as an additional reason why they should be served with fidelity, and accounted worthy of all honor. To make this a reason for slavery, proceeds upon the principle that their faith and religious profession were not only a cloak for their sin, but also a justification of their iniquity. It represents a relation, originally unholy, as sanctified and rendered honorable by the profession of Christianity. This is the very essence of Popery; but the clause itself furnishes evidence that the relation of master and servant, here referred to, was for the mutual advantage of the parties. The masters are said to be "partakers of the benefit" resulting from the labor of the servants. All the profits of the labor did not belong to the one party, as is the case in American slave-holding. The servants labored for their own interest, and had a right to a just and equal compensation for their labors, to which undoubtedly they were entitled by a contract entered into, and binding on those whom they served. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven." Col. iv 1. Here the right of the servants to hold property, and to a fair and full compensation for their service, is as clearly recognized as elsewhere it is made their duty to serve their masters honestly and faithfully. The doctrine of this passage, thus analyzed and compared with other portions of scripture, is, that all who, in a lawful manner, have become bound to render service to others, shall honor those whom they serve, be faithful in the discharge of their duty, and give none occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. That Christianity does not break up the natural and lawful relations of man to man; but, on the contrary, enforces them under solemn sanctions. At

the same time, it gives no countenance to the violation of the rights of man, or to the oppression of the weak by the strong.

In vindication of slavery, the relation of Onesimus to Philemon is adduced. The whole argument from the epistle to Philemon is founded upon the fact, that Onesimus is said to have been "his servant." In this view, it is of the same import with the argument drawn from the sixth chan-

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ter of first Timothy. The advocates of slavery say that Onesimus was a slave, which is taking for granted, however, what, in order to render it availing, never has been, and never can be proved. That he was bound to serve Philemon, by some lawful obligation, is very evident. He may have been, from his childhood, nurtured and educated by that minister of the gospel, and bound in equity to continue in his service until a remuneration would be made for the expences incurred in his education. Or, after arriving at years of discretion, he may have entered into a voluntary contract to serve Philemon a limited period, or even his whole life, for a just and stipulated compensation. Again, he may have been transferred to Philemon from some one who had either educated him, or to whom he was bound by a legitimate obligation. But that he had been made a slave, lawlessly and piratically, by a dearly beloved Christian minister, distinguished for his faith and love toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints, is an unreasonable and violent assumption. It is hardly less so, to maintain that he bought him, and held him under a title derived from one who had unrighteously deprived him of his liberty. By the divine law, to which we have already referred, Philemon, so far from deserving commendation, would have merited death. After the conversion of this servant at Rome, under Paul's ministry, the Apostle sends him back to his master, to continue in a lawful service, provided he was required so to do by Philemon. Yet, on many accounts, it may have been desirable for him to be free from his master, and Paul plainly thought that his liberation would be advantageous to him. Though Philemon, according to contract, and in law, might have retained him, yet, on the ground of charity, liberality, and Christian kindness, it may have been his duty to set him free. That it was so, is plainly intimated in the eighth verse: "Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which is convenient." The original word, here rendered convenient, is expressive of what a good man is bound in conscience to perform, as agreeable to the law of God and becoming his own Christian character. All things considered, it certainly was his duty for Paul save

things considered, it certainly was his duty, for Paul says he might be bold to enjoin it on the authority of Christ. The service to which Onesimus was bound, was not such bondage as precludes the servant from enjoying the rights of property. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account." This plainly implies that the property of Onesimus did not belong to his master, as

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the possessions of the African slave are all considered to be the property of the slave-master, in consequence of his claiming a title to the person of his bondman. Had the tenure by which Onesimus was held to serve his master, been unjust in its origin, Paul would not have sent back the servant. In such cases the command is express: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that 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 which lacketh him best." Deut. xxiii. 15, 16. It is generally believed that Onesimus was received into favor, that he was set free and became a distinguished companion of Tychicus in executing a commission of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians. Paul, in his epistle to the Christians at Colosse, makes honorable mention of him as a faithful and beloved brother who was one of them. Col. iv. 9. Now, what is there in all this which gives the least countenance to the stealing, making merchandize of, and holding in perpetual and hard bondage, millions of unoffending Africans? If all this contains a warrant for enslaving forcibly innocent men, it is the enslaving of white men, and not black men, that is authorized. For no one would plead that Onesimus was a negro, or that the servants of the early Christians in the Roman empire were colored Africans. It is just as good a warrant for Americans to seize and enslave Irishmen, Englishmen, Scotchmen and Frenchmen, as to force into bondage the citizens of any other nation, civilized or savage. That is, it contains no warrant at all for any such outrage upon the rights of man. After all, American slavery is what common sense, common conscience, and the law of God adjudge it to be—a sin against God, and an outrageous violation of all natural right. If it be conceded, as we think it has been proved, that slavery is sinful in its nature, as now practised, then the whole controversy on this great question of absorbing interest, must be considered as nearly settled.

II. A second opinion which has been maintained on this subject, is, that though it is sinful, yet it ought not to be

abandoned at once. It is affirmed that the slaves are incapable of enjoying the rights of freemen—that they cannot, if emancipated, live quietly and happily among us—that their condition, while continuing in slavery, should be improved—and that no one ought to be emancipated until provision is made for his immediate transportation to the shores of Africa. These were the positions occupied by the apologists of

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slavery for some time before and after the commencement of the present Abolition controversy. But to admit that it is a moral, political, and physical evil, and yet that the practice of it may and ought to be continued for an indefinite time to come, is so directly opposite to all the maxims of morality, that this ground has been in a great measure abandoned. The whole subject of dispute has been, or will speedily be, brought within a very narrow compass. If slaveholders and their abettors cannot succeed in proving it to be no sin, they begin to be sensible that nothing but defeat in the field of argument awaits them. God has never put his moral subjects into such a state that they must continue in sin for the advancement of their own interest or that of others. If the positions, occupied by those who advocate gradual emancipation, are tenable, then slavery must be continued forever in this land. For if they cannot enjoy the rights of freemen now, on account of their ignorance and degradation, no sensible man can believe that they will ever be better prepared for it than they now are. For some time after our revolution, generally in the slave-holding States, no restraints were imposed upon their education. But it was found by experience, as it always must be while human nature continues what it is, that the more knowledge the slave acquired the more restless he became, and the more vehement his aspirations after liberty. Not only the great majority of the masters systematically withheld from their slaves the means of instruction, but the arm of the law was interposed to prevent masters who might be more benevolently disposed, from all attempts to diffuse the blessings of education among the slave population. These restrictions have been gradually multiplying, and assuming a more severe and stern aspect every year for nearly half a century. The facilities for their religious instruction have been and are continually diminishing. We believe it is impossible to hold in bondage so great a mass of human beings and allow them, at the same time, access to means of literary, intellectual, moral and religious cultivation. They must be

undiminished, or their eyes put out, lest they should see, cover, and make attempts to regain their lost rights. But we need not reason about possibilities and impossibilities; as what never has occurred in any age or nation, we may be pretty well assured will never happen hereafter. And, at all events, it is unwise to base any system on what has never been known to exist. The fact is undeniable, that the slaves are becoming more and more ignorant and debased. We know

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this by ocular demonstration, by the specimens we have of the slaves who, in late years, have run away from their masters and come among us, compared with those of former years. We know it by the laws against their education, as they are recorded in the statute books of slave-holding States. We know it from the reports of travellers, and the candid admissions of many slave-holders themselves. If we wait, then, for the reformation of this evil, until slave-holders admit that they are prepared for freedom, we may and must wait forever. Slave-holders know, and really intend all this. And therefore they contend that slavery, which they call their domestic institution, is agreeable to the law of nature, which is the law of God, and that it ought to be continued to the end of the world. They are aware, indeed, that to prove it by solid, or even plausible arguments, is an undertaking at least extremely difficult. Hence their eagerness to foreclose all discussion, and their resort to the brute violence of infuriated mobs, and the more grave and solemn severities of criminal laws.

It is affirmed, that were they emancipated and allowed to live among us in a state of freedom, their condition, instead of being improved by the change, would be made much more wretched. Were this even true, it would not furnish a justification for a continuance in what is acknowledged to be sinful. The damnation of those who do evil that good may come, God declares by the Apostle to be just. It is, however, utterly untrue, as all experience proves. It may be true that the condition of a few colored people in the south, who have obtained their freedom and live among a great mass of slaves, is not ameliorated by their emancipation. They are objects of jealousy to the slave-masters, and efforts are made to annoy them, and to sink and keep them in a more degraded state than those who are still held in bondage. But in the free States, notwithstanding all the unholy prejudices that operate against them, taken as a body, they are incomparably superior in knowledge, property, religion and comfort, to their brethren who are slaves in the south. The number of colored free people in the north is

not one-tenth of the slave population, and yet there are among them more than twice as many who have learned the arts of reading and writing; they have more than double the number of churches and church members. One free colored man, in Philadelphia, might be named, who possesses more property than all the slaves in the Union. The cheerfulness of these free people, their active movements in

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labor, and the comparative neatness of their dress, all demonstrate the multiplication of their comforts, which result from the enjoyment of freedom. All this improvement they have made, and are continuing to make, though laboring under many disabilities which are unjustly imposed upon them. The facts show that the argument drawn in favor of holding them in bondage until they can be removed to Africa, drawn from the supposed impossibility of their living in comfort among us as freemen, is altogether fallacious.— Indeed, the argument is based on the unwarrantable assumption, that the making of a man free does not tend to elevate his character, increase his usefulness, and make him more happy. While the African continues a human being, liberty will be better for him than bondage.

But, after all, if the slaves are not to be emancipated any faster than effectual provision is made for their transportation to the shores of Africa, they must continue in bondage to the latest generation. With all the prodigious efforts of individuals, societies, and States, to promote the work of Colonization—efforts continued for more than twenty years—only a few thousands have, to the present hour, been removed from the country. The annual increase of the colored population is more than seventy-five thousand. The rate at which they have been heretofore transported would require more than two hundred years to carry away the increase of one year. No satisfactory answer has ever been given to this objection against the Colonization Scheme, as a means for extinguishing the evil of slavery. It has indeed been plead that Missionary efforts for the conversion of the heathen have been employed for a longer period than the existence of the Colonization Society, and that comparatively few converts have been made. To this we answer, that without referring to the manner in which these missions are conducted, or the agents employed in them, we have the command of God to preach the gospel to all nations, and a promise that in all it shall prevail. We have no command for Colonization, nor any promise that it shall succeed. Besides, did Missionary Societies, induced by the

spirit of their enterprize, contend that it is no harm to continue in paganism, and that in preaching the gospel they should not all be called upon to repent immediately, abandon pagan idolatry, and embrace, at once, Christianity, would not every intelligent Christian immediately abandon the whole Missionary enterprize? We do not believe that any sensible man cherishes the hope, that a remedy will be found

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for the evil of slavery, by removing the whole mass of the African population from the United States, and planting them in colonies on the African continent. If it is expected that slave-masters will gratuitously emancipate their slaves, on what, in their conversation, their speeches, their publications, their doings, and their legislation, is the expectation founded? These all indicate their intention to continue it without end. If it be intended to purchase their freedom, when will all those who now claim them as property be willing to sell them, and engage in the task of hard daily labor in the cultivation of their rice and cotton fields? And could they be supposed willing to do so, whence would the funds be derived to purchase five or six hundred millions of dollars worth of property, now vested in two and a half millions of slaves? There never was a scheme more visionary. It is astonishing that any sensible man should ever have been deluded by a project holding out so little reasonable prospect for its accomplishment. When, in the whole history of the human family, has there been any thing analogous to the transportation of three millions of men across an ocean three thousand miles wide, and liquidating the expenses by bills drawn from the exchequer of charity. It may be affirmed to be literally impossible.

Again, the great body of the colored people, who have the deepest interests at stake in all this business, have always manifested, and do still manifest, an inextinguishable and growing aversion to the whole scheme of carrying them away from the land of their nativity, and settling them in savage African climes. Colonization proposes to make use of no constraint, and to take away only those who voluntarily consent to be transported. When is it likely that consent will be obtained? Never—no, never. This repugnance of the colored people to a removal is known to all intelligent colonizationists. Hence all their arguing to prove the impossibility of elevating the rank of black men while they continue among white men. Hence, as the friends of colonization perceive, that on their scheme slavery must continue for an indefinite number of years to come, and probably

forever, they are compelled, by the position which they occupy, to become not only the apologists, but the advocates of slavery in existing circumstances, as no violation of the rights of man or the laws of God.

The advocacy of slavery as a righteous institution, is not chargeable upon all the friends of the Colonization Society. Perhaps at one time, in its early history, the greater part of

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its adherents, in the free States, showed it favor and embraced it, in the belief that its tendencies and results would be the final removal, or at least great amelioration of the oppressions of slavery. Many, probably, still cling to it, partly through a fear of inconsistency, and partly from a lingering hope that these beneficent results may yet be attained. To all such we would refer the consideration of the three following evils that are prominent in the complexion of all its operations: 1st. It fosters unholy and unreasonable prejudices against the whole colored race, as naturally, as necessarily an inferior caste. This it does in its attempts to prove, that when among us, they must always continue in the lowest depths of intellectual and moral degradation. 2d. Their reasonings, in order to establish this position, tend to paralyse all efforts for their improvement by education, as both fruitless and hopeless. That must be a bad system, the support of which places obstacles in the way of improving millions of our race, who, it is evident, must reside in our borders. 3d. It tends to the perpetuation of slavery, by endeavoring to enlist the sympathies of the public in behalf of a scheme which is based upon the continuance of sin, as not only allowable, but even necessary. And when driven from this position, takes possession of another for the defence of this great evil, as a righteous institution, according to the laws of God, and calculated to promote the welfare of society.

III. It has been maintained that slavery is a sin which must be permitted to continue forever in the nation, that no opposition may be made to it, and that efforts to ameliorate the condition of the slave should constitute the limits of all interference with the evil. As the southern, or slave-holding States, only, are chargeable with the iniquity, the people of the northern, or free States, it is said, ought not to interfere, by making any attempts to effect its removal. This is, perhaps, the only instance in which such ground has been assumed, in relation to any real or supposed moral evil. It has always been understood that we may freely discuss, in private conversation, in public addresses, and by the press, all

vate conversation, in public addresses, and by the press, all the tyranny of the constitutions and administration of the old despotisms of Europe and Asia. Pagan idolatries are, and always have been, subjects of free discussion in all Christian countries. Bible and Missionary Societies have been instituted and put into active operation for their abolition. Now, in addition to all the reasons justifying the exposition of these political and moral evils in foreign countries, there are

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many arguments which prove, not only that we may, but that we are imperatively bound to apply with zeal and vigor all lawful means for the reformation of this great ecclesiastical and national immorality.

1. There are four great ecclesiastical denominations which extend their ramifications through the northern and southern States—the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Methodist, and the Episcopal bodies. In all these, there are numerous congregations, ministers, and people, who hold slaves, and so are chargeable with this sin. The Holy Spirit rebuked it in the church of Thyatira, as an offence against God, that open and flagrant sin was permitted among its members: “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou *sufferest* that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication,” &c. Rev. ii. 20. The whole church was guilty of the evil, because members were suffered to commit it openly. If slavery is a sin, as in this part of the argument is admitted, the judicatories of those large denominations, and, consequently, all their people, participate in it, because it is permitted among them without rebuke. “Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbor, but shalt rebuke him,”—much more rebuke a brother of the same ecclesiastical communion. Has a church no right to interfere for the removal of those evils that provoke the displeasure of Almighty God against the whole body? “Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent.” Rev. ii. 22. Yet shall there be no means employed to bring the sinners to repentance? If it is so in relation to this evil, it will apply equally to all others; and all efforts to preserve the purity of the church, or to reform existing evils, must cease forever. The nature and tendency of the doctrine which we here oppose, is to abolish all religious associations among men, and destroy all morality, all religion. This undoubtedly is what many of the advocates of slavery do most desire, and that at which all the riotous assemblages of the times do aim.

2. The Federal Constitution. by the three-fifths principle.

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the engagement to deliver up fugitive slaves, and other provisions, however contrary to its general aims and tendencies, establishes the principle, and guarantees the practice of slavery. It has always been so understood in the nation. Congress has legislated on the subject for the District of Columbia and for the Territories. They have enacted a law for the delivery of slaves who have escaped from op-

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pression into the free States. The Executive of the United Government has employed the military force of the commonwealth to suppress risings of the slaves to regain their liberty. All these legislative acts and executive doings are not only according to the letter and the spirit of the pro-slavery provisions of the constitution, but have always been held to be so by almost the unanimous consent of the citizens. He who swears to support the constitution, swears to support slavery as long as it exists. In this view of the subject, it is as much the right and the duty of the people of the free States to discuss the subject and seek after a reform, as the people of the slave-holding States. All other provisions of the constitution have been held to be proper subjects of discussion, with a very few exceptions, in order to effect alterations and amendments, and why should it not be so on the subject of slavery ?

3. The prosperity of the nation in agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, is intimately connected with the freedom of all the inhabitants. Two millions of men are held in bondage, and thereby degraded and incapacitated for accumulating the stock of national wealth by productive labor.—Slave-masters tell us that one free laborer will perform as much work in the same time as two slaves. If this is true, and there is no reason to doubt it, then the holding of two millions of men in slavery, is, in relation to property, merely, as great an evil as it would be to support one million in absolute idleness. But this is not all—the masters are mere consumers, as they live in idleness. There are undoubtedly one million of idle white men who are fed by the labor of slaves. Add to all this the improvidence and wastefulness of the slaves who have no interest in the practice of economy, and the prodigality of the masters in pampering the lusts generated by idle habits. All this cannot fall much short of the product of a million more. It is true that these losses fall immediately and directly on the south, and account for the decrepitude of their schools, manufactures, agriculture, and commerce, and the present distress of the country. But do not the citizens of the north feel their bane-

ful effects? Let the late and present commercial distress, and the tribulations which their failures have brought on all classes of society, bear witness. They commenced in the south, and slavery was, after all, the chief element in their production. Shall the citizens of the northern States be bound to support slavery, and to suffer heavily by its evil consequences, and yet not be permitted to touch the subject

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in discussion? That even a doubt could have arisen on this subject, shews the great degeneracy of the times, and how little regard, even to human rights, there is among many citizens in this land of boasted freedom. Indeed, the history of all times demonstrates that a nation which disregards the rights of God, and refuses to honor him, will not long respect the rights of man, his creature. How monstrous is the proposition: "Slavery is a sin against God, but it may be practised to the end of the world, and no man has a right to attempt its reformation!" What must be the degradation of moral sentiment, where it becomes necessary to enter on an argument for its refutation!

4. The United States is one nation. Achan was one man in the nation of Israel; he committed a trespass in the accursed thing, and the whole nation suffered. Shall thirteen out of twenty States commit a trespass in a more accursed thing than the stealing of a golden wedge and a garment, in the stealing of millions of men, and the whole nation not suffer? If slavery is a sin—a flagrant sin—a national sin—an ecclesiastical sin—will not all the land suffer when God, according to his promise, "shall arise to plead the cause of the poor and needy?" Hard conditions, indeed, would the panders of oppression impose on us. Sin must be practised without rebuke, we must partake in it, must sustain it, and suffer for it, without one effort to find relief against all these evils. As the people of the United States are one nation, and the Africans are born in the land, the colored race are their fellow citizens—yes, their fellow citizens, in spite of all sinful constitutions, laws, and practices to disfranchise them. They are men, they are here, and God has made of one blood the white man and the black man. By a right derived from the God of heaven, and which all human power cannot destroy, they are the fellow citizens of white men. They are bound by this consideration to plead their cause, and seek their restoration to the enjoyment of those rights which are theirs, and of which violence seeks to deprive them.

5. The morals of society in the northern States are cor-

rupted by slavery in the south. Very many northern people hold slaves. They reside, indeed, in the free States, but there is no provision in the laws of the free States, or in the laws of the United States, to prevent their owning slave property in the south, any more than their possessing there land or other goods and chattels. Even ministers of the gospel, as they are called, marry slave-holding wives, and

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while they and their wives reside among us, their bondmen are under the lash of the negro driver on the southern plantations. Many sons of the citizens of the free States, educated in religious families, emigrate to the south, embark in trade in slave-holding cities and villages, and marry wives who possess farms stocked with slaves, or purchase them, and soon sink into habits of gaming, profane swearing and harlotry. How, in these and various other ways, the blight of slave-holding immorality has spread over the northern States, is best known to those who have most carefully watched the progress of moral debasement among our citizens. Who, with all this before his eyes, will still say this sin must be allowed to retain, unmolested, its lodgment in the commonwealth?

IV. But one other view, so far as is known, is taken of this subject: that slavery is a deeply aggravated sin, and should be abandoned immediately. That it is iniquitous, has, I trust, been amply proved by the arguments adduced in this address. It has no countenance in the oracles of truth, is denounced in them as deserving the severest punishment, is contrary to the whole tenor and spirit of the gospel, which sounds the trumpet of jubilee and proclaims emancipation from all thralldom, and is condemned by the voice of conscience, speaking in the strongest accents of reprobation. This voice of conscience must not, will not, cannot be smothered; it will continue to speak in tones of thunder amidst all the rage of the elements. Is it not one of those truths which ought to be held axiomatic, that all sin, especially such a sin, should be broken off at once—that the law of God imperatively demands immediate and entire reformation? “Thou shalt not,” no, not for a moment, commit sin, is the language of the law. To deny this, is to refuse assent to the whole moral obligation of the law. Any reason that will justify disregard of the precept for an hour, will justify it forever. The Divine Lawgiver has given no such right to any creature to disregard and contemn the authority of his holy, just, and good commandments. “Let them that stole, steal no more.”

.. All theft, by this precept, must be abandoned instantly.—

However unwilling slave-masters and their apologists are to hear the practice of slavery designated as theft, they must hear it, and bear the reproach. It is theft in its deepest, darkest, and most odious colors—it is a continuous robbery of the souls and bodies of men. If he that commits minor thefts, even in trifling amounts of property, is commanded to

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"steal no more," how much more emphatic the prohibition when the theft is committed on the persons of millions of men who are our brethren of the same flesh and blood! Were a father to discover that his son had lived, for a series of years, on property stolen from his neighbors, and should say to him, "My son, it is no good report I hear of you, that you have for many years lived by the basest and most dishonest peculation, and that you bring infamy upon yourself and upon all our family, and thus provoke the wrath of God. You must not do so, you must forsake this sin by repentance, you must seek its pardon through the blood of Christ, and reform." Were his son to reply to all this in the spirit of gradual emancipation, he would say, "Father, I have lived so long by theft, that if I at once abandon it, I and my family will be reduced to beggary. You surely do not mean that I shall at once and forever entirely forsake the means which I have so long used for supporting my household." What should we think of the father who, to all this, would answer,—"No, my son. You have been in the habit, I hear, of stealing, yearly, to the amount of one thousand dollars. For the coming year you ought not to steal more than nine hundred, the following year eight hundred, and at this rate annually diminish the amount of your thefts, until, at the end of ten years, you shall have ceased from this evil altogether, and become an honest man." We would regard this as not only utterly preposterous, and absurd, but as ridiculous. Still more preposterous, absurd and ridiculous, is the whole scheme of gradual emancipation. It is as if the father should say, "steal no more for the purpose of luxury, but what is necessary for the support of your family you may and ought to steal forever."

2. It is impossible to accomplish emancipation in any other way than immediately. Where the slaves are few in number, compared with the population, as they were in the States of Pennsylvania and New York, they can be set free by a gradual process, continued for years. But where slaves are held in great masses, as they are in the southern States, the condition of those who become free is degraded and mi-

serable; they are objects of suspicion and alarm, as it is supposed the example of their freedom creates discontent among the slaves, and that they will be employed in devising and executing schemes for exciting insurrections. In order to avoid these evils, the Colonization Society was originated, for the purpose of transferring to distant shores all free people of color. But after twenty years of vigorous effort, not

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more than about one-fiftieth of those who are free have been removed from the country. As the number of colored people, bond and free, amounts to about three millions, and as this class of population increases so fast as to be doubled in less than twenty-five years, there will be in the country, within seventy-five years, twenty-four millions of the African race, a greater part of whom will be slaves, if slavery continues. Who can think of such a state of things without the most fearful and well grounded apprehensions? How rapid and tremendous is the accumulation of national iniquity, of human misery and national danger? To stop this alarming career of sin and misery, the only reasonable, the only possible means, is to to emancipate, at once, all the slaves. If the evil is now thought to be unmanageable, and even almost overwhelming, what will it be in a few years?

3. In immediate emancipation there is safety; all other schemes are fraught with danger. The slaves, continued in bondage without hope of release, will be goaded to desperation by the hopelessness of their misery. For about five years they have been in a very quiescent state—there have been few insurrections, and no plots have been discovered. To the efforts which they know that abolitionists are making, and the hopes of deliverance which, on this quarter, are cherished, are to be ascribed this remarkable repose.—Colonization is little less abhorrent to them than slavery itself. Dash all the hopes which have been nurtured by the doings of Anti-slavery Societies, and the south will soon become an Aceldama, a field of blood. If the very hope of emancipation at present allows the planters to sleep safe in their beds, how much greater would be the security did the slaves all enjoy the reality of freedom. By setting them free, every motive to violence, turbulence, and outrage, would be taken away, and some of the most powerful incentives furnished, to live quiet, peaceable and industrious lives. In the providence of God, we are not left to abstract reasonings, however powerful, on this subject. The experiment of immediate emancipation, and under circumstances not so auspicious as in our own land, has been made, and its re-

sults fairly and fully tested, in Antigua, one of the West India Islands. Alarms have ceased, patrols of armed men have been disbanded, peace reigns, industry is quickened, the value of property has risen, schools have been established among the colored people, and churches have been organized. All this has been accomplished by the immediate removal of the incubus of slavery. Thus, in the midst of

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the West India Islands, in our neighborhood, Heaven has kindled a flaming beacon to shed its light upon the southern States to guide and cheer them onward in the path of duty.

4. All men are required to repent of sin. God calls upon all men every where to repent. There is no true repentance without reformation. No maxim is more indisputable than that there should be national repentance for national sin—a repentance including in it immediate reformation. The repentance of an individual sinner, determined to continue in sin, is insincere and hypocritical. To such a penitent no pardon is dispensed. When this nation is brought to sincere repentance for the sin which it has committed against God and man, by cruelly enslaving and holding in bondage the Africans, we shall hear no more of gradual emancipation.

5. The sin of the nation and the sin of the slave-master accumulate every moment while slavery continues.

About two hundred human beings are stolen and enslaved every day in the United States; for that is about the number of infants that are born daily of slave-mothers. If it be piracy and deserving of death to steal a child on the continent of Africa, it is piracy and deserves death to steal and enslave a new-born infant in the United States. If the law of Congress is just in commanding the immediate and total cessation of the slave-trade, there ought to be an immediate and total cessation of the same traffic in our own country, and of the stealing and enslaving of children as soon as they are born. More than a hundred slaves die daily. After death it is impossible to do them that justice which ought to have been done to them when living, by restoring them to those rights which had been violently taken away.

6. The souls of thousands of slaves every year pass into the realms of misery. Their perdition is chargeable on the sin of slavery, which most mercilessly deprives them of all means of knowing the way of salvation through a crucified Saviour. Are the means of grace to be withheld from the millions of slaves until they are transported to Africa, and there learn to know the truth? Then millions more, in future as in past times, must die under the yoke of man and the

sure as in past times, must die under the yoke of men and the bondage of Satan. Emancipate all the slaves at once and forever, open to them the portals of knowledge, and open wide for them the doors of the temple of the Lord, and they will enter into them and praise the Lord. We have the promise of God that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God." "O Lord, arise and plead the cause of the poor and needy. Let not the oppressed return with shame."