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THE

Old School Presbyterian Church.

ON

SLAVERY.

BY

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"An offering to bring sin to remembrance."—*Numb.* v. 5.

"Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance?"—*1 Kings* xvii. 15.

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# O. S. Presbyterian Church

## ON SLAVERY.



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An incipient agitation appears to be threatening to disturb the unruffled waters of the General Assembly (O. S.) on the subject of slavery. This, we may be permitted to infer, from the fact that the BANNER AND ADVOCATE has recently been called to the painful duty of publishing the various deliverances of that church on that dearly beloved, constitutional and patriarchal relation between master and slave. All the under-propping which the world-wide influence and fame of this church can give to the system that underlies her whole organization, is inadequate to quiet the conscientious misgivings of her people. Somehow a secret feeling pervades the minds of the good, that American slavery, hallowed or justified as it may appear in the eyes of the great, by the peculiar circumstances of the case, is, after all, irreconcilable with the Christian character and with the Christian religion. Though the learned leaders in the anti-Christian movements have explored the depths of differences between this and that—between slavery as it is, and as it was nowhere on earth—something whispers in the soul, oppression is not right,—it is not right that the church should bolster up that system which makes merchandize of man, that crushes out his manhood, that strips him of his rights, natural, social and divine,—it is not right to father upon the Saviour and his Apostles the sanction of a system which has made slaveholding countries brothels; masters, tyrants; slaves, brutes; which rends the church and sheds the blood of innocent citizens.

There is something so abhorrent to all our feelings of kindness and love, in the very word slavery, that it is a wonder the BANNER was not long since called upon to lay the whole proceedings of the General Assembly before the people, that they might read

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and think and pray over them, and take them up for a ground of fasting and humiliation, and lament before the Lord of Hosts, the God of the oppressed, that the "landmarks" of their fathers had been removed, that the church had taken sides with the oppressor and was justifying the enslavement of the poor. We hail this call as a token for good. The people are waking up. The people that could sleep under the present agitation of this subject, could securely sleep upon the top of a mast. The truth must be known. Individuals and churches and nations must choose sides; and the bitter curse of Meroz will rest upon those "that come not to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

The backsliding course of this church is so manifest on this subject, that it cannot be concealed. Once she stood in the breach made by the faithless compromising spirit of men, and boldly proclaimed the unchristian character of American slavery. Now she denounces the spirit that gave utterance to such sentiments as reckless fanaticism. Once she inscribed on the banner which God had given her to be displayed because of the truth, that to "bring a human being into slavery and detain him in that relation" was the crime of manstealing.

Now she drags her banner in the dust with the inscription erased, but in its stead, written in blood-stained colors, "slavery is right, Christ and his apostles did not condemn it." Is it any wonder that the minds of conscientious people are filled with fears, that they are calling for light, that they desire to read again what was said and done by their fathers on a subject involving interests so vital?

Why did not the BANNER, in answering the request for light, publish the deliverance of the General Assembly in 1794, and embodied in her Confession of Faith? We make no surmises, only we ask, why was that act erased from her Confession? The times had become ominous. That one act, had she not vacillated, would have settled her present position; given ease to wounded consciences, and placed her in a noble attitude as a bulwark of liberty. As it is, the task of reconciling her present, with her former acts is hopeless. The act of 1794 was in the form of notes appended to the Catechism. They were explanatory of the eighth commandment, and continued to be received for 23 years as the true doctrine of the church. Under the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, were enumerated, "theft, robbery, manstealing," etc. On the margin is the following note explaining, 1 Tim. 1:10, the proof for manstealing: "the law is made \* \* \* \* \* for manstealers." "This crime, among the Jews exposed the perpetrators of it to capital punishment, Exodus xxi. 16. And the apostle here classes them with sinners of the first rank. The word he uses in its original import comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in detaining them in it."

This deliverance should have been placed in living colors;—yes, it should have been written with the finger of that hand that wrote on Belshazzar's palace walls—on the consecrated walls within which the General Assembly passed the act of 1845.—They should have seen it,—those titular dignitaries, under whose overshadowing influence the church became pledged to slavery as an organic institution, should have seen it, and felt the joints of their loins loosed, and their knees smiting one against another. Those fathers of the Presbyterian Church interpreted and applied correctly the commandment to the gross sin of slaveholding, when they termed it “menstealing.” They declared that the Lawgiver of heaven and earth had legislated on it, and that his legislation was a finality. He had prohibited the sin, and denounced his curse upon violators of the law. He had commanded his servants, who minister at the altar, to lift up their voices like a trumpet and denounce the sin, until every yoke be broken and the oppressed be emancipated. But the General Assembly of 1845 recoil from the tremendous responsibility. They attempt to clear their skirts from blood, by rolling the burden over upon another. “Christ,” they say, “has not legislated.” “Christ and his Apostles did not condemn it.” Why! the King of Zion, in the midst of terrible thunderings and lightnings, prohibited the crime “of bringing any of the human race into slavery or detaining them in that condition,” the General Assembly themselves being judges. And now they tell us, Christ has not condemned it!! The Apostles reiterate the same awful truth, and classify the sin in the same category with offences the most notorious, punished by law human or divine. “The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient—for murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers,” etc. Christ declared that the second great commandment was, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,”—the Apostle, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.” Christ declares, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for such is the law and the prophets;”—the Apostle, “Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal.” There is no more harmony between the spirit of these citations and slavery, than there is agreement between Christ and Belial, or light and darkness. It is impossible that a law, which is holy, just and good, could sanction what is unholy, unjust and wicked,—that a lawgiver who is the perfection of justice, could countenance the “sum of all villainies,”—that the Redeemer, who came to save men from the crushing yoke of the devil, should leave them under the crushing yoke of oppressing man. No, in all ages, in every dispensation the law enjoined “break every yoke.”

Clearly did these fathers of the Presbyterian church, imbued with the love, and with the principles of civil and religious liberty, perceive that slavery and the Bible were antagonists; that Christ and his apostles could take no side with oppression. Early

in their ecclesiastical history, did they wash their garments clean from this work of the flesh and the devil. Yet it is maintained that the views of the church throughout the entire period from 1794 to 1856 are harmonious and scriptural. Strange harmony! If there be harmony in discord, then it may with truth be affirmed: no person can compare the published sentiments of the church in '94, with the act of '45 and with the general sentiments that prevail in the O. S. Assembly at present, and not be fully convinced, that she has incurred the charge—"She is wholly oppression in the midst of her."

We have examined the Act of 1794, and have found that it contains a clear and decided Testimony against slaveholding. And that it condemns it as sinful, irrespective of those circumstances, which in recent times have, conveniently enough, changed wrong into right. But, lest that decision of those good men, "full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith," might be considered the result of an unfavorable position, or influenced by the peculiar exigencies of the times, before the full development of the beauties of the system, we present from the BANNER the act of 1818. This demonstrates conclusively, that after the lapse of 23 years of sad experience, the sentiments of the church had undergone no alterations; that the system, instead of acquiring legitimacy by attendant ameliorating circumstances, had displayed more clearly its real antagonism to God and man.

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, having taken into consideration the subject of slavery, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it to the churches and people under their care.

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ, which enjoins that 'all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system; exhibits rational, accountable, and moral beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the Gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery—consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence. The evils to which the slave is always exposed, often take place in fact, and in their very worst degree and form; and where all of them do not take place—as we rejoice to say in many instances, through the influence of the principles of humanity and religion on the mind of masters, they do not—still the slave is deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries which inhumanity and avarice may suggest.

"From this view of the consequences resulting from the practice into which Christian people have most inconsistently fallen, of enslaving a portion of their brethren of mankind—for 'God hath made of one blood all nations of

men to dwell on the face of the earth'—it is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors, to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world."

\* \* \* The closing section of the recommendation is as follows:

"And if it shall ever happen that a Christian professor in our communion shall sell a slave, who is also in communion and good standing in our church, contrary to his or her will and inclination, it ought immediately to claim the particular attention of the proper church judicature; and unless there be such peculiar circumstances attending the case as can but seldom happen, it ought to be followed, without delay, by a suspension of the offender from all the privileges of the church, till he repent, and make all the reparation in his power to the injured party."—*Minutes*, 1818, p. 692.

After considering the nature of this act, we instinctively exclaim, noble men! illustrious compeers and successors of Dr. Green, Baxter and Witherspoon! "The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance:" "their works do follow them," though they are mouldering in the dust. That our readers may perceive more easily the force of the above deliberations, we present a brief analysis of the act: They declare,

1. That slavery is a gross violation of the sacred rights of human nature.
2. That it is contrary to the law of God.
3. That it is irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel.
4. That it destroys man's free agency and accountability.
5. That all its consequences are essential to its existence.
6. That it is the duty of all Christians to efface the blot of our holy religion, and obtain its complete abolition.
7. That if any member of the church should sell a brother or sister, the offender should be suspended from the church.

Comment upon this act is unnecessary. We would only dilute and destroy its strength, if we attempted to give an exposition. With all the flood of light, poured upon this system, dismal and dark as the shades of Erebus, during the past 38 years. we could not express our views of it in a more satisfactory manner. But the times have changed, and men and churches too, change with them. Too much reason is given to maintain that falsehood in morals, that man is what he is by the operation of causes over which he has no control, and therefore should not be censured for his conduct. The circumstances of the church (O. S.) have changed considerably during 62 years. New interests have arisen; new claims have been set up; new relations formed; the spirit and power of those sterling men who could "slay a lion in a pit in a

**“snowy day,” has departed.** The mantle of Elijah has fallen upon **few Elishas.** The church North and the church South must be **affiliated.** This can only be effected by a concordat based upon **the ascending groans, the heavy sighs, and bitter tears of the widow and the fatherless.** Slavery had grown like a giant, **fattened upon the bones and muscles of strangers, stolen from their native soil.** It wielded an influence of which those unsuspecting fathers had no foreshadowing. From the lofty bulwarks of **Mount Zion** they could proclaim the application of divine law to **sin, vindicate its purity and holiness, and warn transgressors.** They saw, or thought they saw, the elements of dissolution at work upon the system of American slavery. They believed the liberty achieved by the American Revolution; and, above all, **the pure principles of the gospel and the faithful application of the divine law would soon free our country, consecrated to freedom; and the church, devoted to righteousness, from this fearful evil.** In common with them, all good men and wise statesmen **deplored its existence, whilst they declared it evil, and only evil.** But now, when it has bestridden the American nation, like a **mighty Colossus, the hearts of men fail at the sight of the monster.** It tramples upon the necks of freemen at home, and **its snorting is heard across the mighty deep.** It rivets the **fraternal chains tighter at home, but disrupts the bond of brotherhood abroad.** The voice, which God has said should plead for the oppressed, is hushed in stillness like death. The bitter accents of the oppressed are stifled, and the wailings of the miserable are unheard. The faithful contendings of the servants of Christ who had not bowed the knee to this dagon, are suppressed in the courts of the Lord's house. And now, like the surface of the Dead Sea, stagnant to the bottom, the O. S. Presbyterian Church presents not a ripple. For this attainment they thanked God and took courage.

We shall now lay before our readers the act of the General Assembly in 1845, which has so signally produced, in our opinion, a complete revolution in the sentiments and teachings of the brethren. We premise that the Assembly in the statement of the question to which their attention was particularly directed, are guilty of a gross misstatement of the true point at issue. No sane man would ask the venerable Assembly to decide the silly question, whether the holding of slaves *under all circumstances*, was such a heinous offence as called for the discipline of the church? Whilst we believe that the “holding of slaves,” in the common acceptation of the term, is, to all intents and constructions, sinful, yet that part of the above question italicised, covers ground which is not common, and involves the use of the term not in common acceptation. For example, when J. G. Birney inherited slaves in Kentucky, by his father's will, and passed over into that State to execute according to law their eman-

cipation, and bring them into a free State, the question might be raised, was the "holding of slaves," during their transition state, by this individual, such a heinous offence as to merit the discipline of the church? We would say, no; the circumstances of the case are quite altered. The "holding of slaves" in the common meaning of the phrase, denotes the detention of a person as property, as a chattel personal in the hands of the owner. This is the slavery known the world over as American, defined by statutory law, and sustained, by our most eminent Biblicists as a good, wholesome, scriptural institution! Had the Assembly answered the question fairly, we would not have complained. Had they confined their answer to the proposition they might have benefited some who were placed in trying circumstances and were unable to decide the course of duty. But we hear no more of the question of circumstances. They deal with the matter of fact. They decide once for all, the whole question, swallowing like a mighty Maelstrom, circumstances, slavery and "bodies and souls of men." Instead of clearly defining the position of church members, and the circumstances which removed moral responsibility, they comprehend in their all-grasping scheme, the whole three hundred and sixty-five thousand slaveholders,—they give them "all the benefit of all the circumstances," of the question, and declare not one guilty concerning his brother. But it was not original with the Assembly's committee. All the leading features of the act had been prepared and published, previously by those whose interests were deeply involved and who had already occupied the position that slavery was scriptural.

We have read and re-read this act, hoping to find some word or phrase which might be interpreted on the side of the oppressed; but, "alas! they have no comforters." There is no intimation that slavery is wrong, or that they have any sympathy with "the stranger," except they would have them orally taught and some legal enactments altered. Even these utterances betray an overshadowing influence, which "darkened the light in the heavens thereof." Not a hint is dropped, that the blessed gospel will eventually remove this blighting evil from our sin-cursed earth, or that ever "the yoke will be broken and the oppressed be let go free." Through no influence, which the General Assembly could, exert, will ever this joyful event gladden the hearts of those whose cries enter the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. This world is a place of moral darkness. God was saying to that Assembly, "Arise, shine"—"Let your light shine before men." But they "put their light under a bushel," and now there "is no light in the house," except that which reflects from the acts of 1794 and 1818. We publish the entire act, that it may be known and read, and we subjoin an analysis of its contents for the benefit of our readers:

ACTION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF 1845.

(The subject having been from time to time, for a series of

years, urged upon the Assembly, it was taken up in 1845, and the following paper adopted:)

"The Committee to whom were referred the memorials on the subject of slavery, beg leave to submit the following report:—

"The memorialists may be divided into three classes, viz.:—

1. "Those which represent the system of slavery, as it exists in these United States, as a great evil, and pray this General Assembly to adopt measures for the amelioration of the condition of the slaves.

2. "Those which ask the Assembly to receive memorials on the subject of slavery, to allow a full discussion of it, and to enjoin upon the members of our church, residing in States whose laws forbid the slaves being taught to read, to seek by all lawful means the repeal of those laws.

3. "Those which represent slavery as a moral evil, a heinous sin in the sight of God, calculated to bring upon the church the curse of God, and calling for the exercise of discipline in the case of those who persist in maintaining or justifying the relation of master to slaves.

"The question which is now unhappily agitating and dividing other branches of the church, and which is pressed upon the attention of the Assembly by one of the three classes of memorialists just named, is, whether the holding of slaves is, under all circumstances, a heinous sin, calling for the discipline of the church?

"The Church of Christ is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends to the religious faith and moral conduct of her members. She cannot legislate, where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which he has not made. The question, therefore, which this Assembly is called to decide, is this:—Do the Scriptures teach that the holding of slaves, without regard to circumstances, is a sin, the renunciation of which should be made a condition of membership in the Church of Christ?

"It is impossible to answer this question in the affirmative, without contradicting some of the plainest declarations of the word of God. That slavery existed in the days of Christ and his apostles, is an admitted fact. That they did not denounce the relation itself as sinful, as inconsistent with Christianity; that whilst they were required to treat their slaves with kindness, and as rational, accountable, immortal beings, and, if Christians, as brethren in the Lord, they were not commanded to emancipate them; that slaves were required to be 'obedient to their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, with singleness of heart as unto Christ,' are facts which meet the eye of every reader of the New Testament. This Assembly cannot, therefore, denounce the holding of slaves as necessarily a heinous and scandalous sin, calculated to bring upon the church the curse of God, without charging the apostles of Christ with conniving at sin, introducing into the church such sinners, and thus bringing upon them the curse of the Almighty.

"In so saying, however, the Assembly are not to be understood as denying that there is evil connected with slavery. Much less do they approve those defective and oppressive laws by which, in some of the States, it is regulated. Nor would they, by any means, countenance the traffic in slaves for the sake of gain; the separation of husbands and wives, parents and children, for the sake of 'filthy lucre,' or for the convenience of the master, or cruel treatment of slaves, in any respect. Every Christian and philanthropist certainly should seek by all peaceable and lawful means, the repeal of unjust and oppressive laws, and the amendment of such as are defective, so as to protect the slaves from cruel treatment by wicked men, and secure to them the right to receive religious instruction.

"Nor is the Assembly to be understood as countenancing the idea that masters may regard their servants as mere property, and not as human beings, rational, accountable, immortal. The Scriptures prescribe not only the duties of servants, but of masters also, warning the latter to discharge

those duties, 'knowing that their master is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.'

"The Assembly intend simply to say, that since Christ and his inspired apostles did not make the holding of slaves a bar to communion, we, as a Court of Christ, have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate on the subject. We feel constrained, further to say, that however desirable it may be to ameliorate the condition of the slaves in the Southern and Western States, or to remove slavery from our country, these objects, we are fully persuaded, can never be secured by ecclesiastical legislation. Much less can they be attained by those indiscriminate denunciations against slaveholders, without regard to their character or circumstances, which have, to so great an extent, characterized the movements of modern abolitionists, which, so far from removing the evils complained of, tend only to perpetuate and aggravate them.

"The apostles of Christ sought to ameliorate the condition of slaves, not by denouncing and excommunicating their masters, but by teaching both masters and slaves the glorious doctrines of the gospel and enjoining upon each the discharge of their relative duties. Thus only can the Church of Christ as such, now improve the condition of the slaves in our own country.

"As to the extent of the evils involved in slavery, and the best methods of removing them, various opinions prevail; and neither the Scriptures nor our Constitution authorize this body to prescribe any particular course to be pursued by the churches under our care. The Assembly cannot but rejoice, however, to learn that the ministers and churches in the slaveholding States, are awaking to a deeper sense of their obligation to extend to the slave population generally the means of grace, and many slaveholders not professedly religious favor this object. We earnestly exhort them to abound more and more in this good work. We would exhort every believing master to remember that his master is also in heaven, and in view of all the circumstances in which he is placed, to act in the spirit of the golden rule:—'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'

"In view of the above stated principles and facts—

*Resolved.* 1st. "That the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was organized, and has since continued the bond of union in the church, upon the conceded principles that the existence of domestic slavery, under the circumstances in which it is to be found in the Southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion.

2d. "That the petitions that ask the Assembly to make the holding of slaves in itself a matter of discipline, do virtually require this judicatory to dissolve itself, and abandon the organization, under which, by the divine blessing, it has so long prospered. The tendency is evidently to separate the Northern from the Southern portion of the church; a result which every good citizen must deplore, as tending to the dissolution of the Union of our beloved country, and which every enlightened Christian will oppose as bringing about a ruined and unnecessary schism between brethren who maintain a common faith.

"The yeas and nays being ordered, were recorded." (Yeas, 168; nays, 13; excused, 4.)—*Minutes*, 1845, p. 16.

#### ANALYSIS.

1 The general fact, that the jurisdiction of the church extends to the faith and practice of her members.

2 That unless Christ has legislated, she cannot frame terms of communion.

3 That Christ and his Apostles did not denounce slavery as sinful and inconsistent with Christianity.

4. That slavery is recognized in the organization of the New Testament church.

5. That if the Assembly would denounce it as sin, they would charge Christ with conniving at sin.

6. The Assembly are persuaded there are evils connected with slavery, and some of its laws are oppressive.

7. The Assembly are opposed to the traffic in slaves for the sake of gain, and the separation of families for the sake of filthy lucre.

8. That every Christian should seek the repeal of cruel laws and the amendment of deficient ones.

9. The Assembly do not countenance the idea that slaves are mere property.

10. The Assembly mean that Christ and his Apostles did not make slaveholding a bar to Christian communion.

11. The church cannot legislate so as to ameliorate the condition of slaves or remove it from the country.

12. Abolitionists are characterized by indiscriminate denunciation of slaveholders.

13. The Apostles sought to ameliorate the condition of slaves by teaching masters and slaves the doctrine of the gospel and their relative duties.

14. This is the only way the church can improve their condition.

15. They cannot present any course according to the Scripture and the Constitution to remove the evils of slavery.

16. The General Assembly was originally organized and continues the bond of union upon the conceded principle that domestic slavery is no bar to Christian communion.

17. That to ask the General Assembly to make slaveholding a matter of discipline, is to ask the Assembly to dissolve itself and abandon its organization.

18. To dissolve the connection between the Presbyterian church, North and South, would tend to the dissolution of the United States.

We have endeavored to present to our readers a faithful analysis of the act of 1845, which defines so remarkably the position of this branch of the church on slavery. We have not leisure to prosecute a consecutive review of all parts of this decision. The act begins well, by stating in a very lucid manner, a sound scriptural principle, that the superintendence of ecclesiastical courts and officers extends only to the faith and practice of the people under their inspection. True; for "them that are without, God judgeth." The Apostle says, "Feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers,"—"Looking diligently lest any root of bitterness spring up and thereby many be defiled."—All that God requires ought to be done. All that he forbids ought never to be done. If the faith and practice of disciples

accord not with the Scriptures, they should be censured. No objections to this statement. What, then, is its utility? We shall soon see. This is the premise. The conclusion comes up afterwards. Where no law is there is no transgression. Christ has enacted no law on slavery, therefore there is no transgression. Slaveholding is not malpractice: in other words, it is consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ for one brother to hold another as a chattel; and if he runs away, to chase him through all the States. What a glorious sight! Presbyterians of the Old School holding Presbyterians of the New School as slaves, or as cattle?—Baptists chasing Methodists with dogs, guns, drums and thunder across Ohio and Pennsylvania, towards Canada! And Campbellites, or “Disciples of Christ,” by way of eminence, marshalled under Dr. Campbell, hunting the meek followers of Dr. Rice and M’Gill, like partridges upon the mountains! We feel inexpressible joy in saying that through the exalted philanthropy of men of another spirit, than those who wrote this act, these men, and women, and children-hunters, pursue their game with the same result as the Irishman did the flea, or as Saul did David.

But the Assembly announce another principle of the same importance, and that is, where “Christ has not legislated, the Church cannot.” True. We have one lawgiver, and one law for the stranger as well as for the heir that is born in the land. We have not two lawgivers and two systems of laws—one for the Old Testament, and the other for the New; for the “same Lord is over all,” and the same Bible is the rule of practice for all. We believe the rigid application of this principle would work wonders for the salvation of the church from the hands of incompetent legislators and unwise legislation. The invasion of the legislative prerogatives of Jesus Christ has abrogated some statutes of momentous importance to the purity and peace of the church. The Second commandment is an example. Roman Catholics found it exceedingly inconvenient, and applied the amputating knife to remove the obstruction. And they succeeded. Without any difficulty they have now as many Lords and Gods as will suit the most fastidious taste, in heaven and earth, and under the earth. Others saved the law in the statute book, but did the same thing in another way—by means of organs, flutes, choirs, and all manner of song and music. On these things Christ did not legislate, yet they are done with legislation or without it. Christ did not legislate, we mean in the sense of the Assembly, about promiscuous dancing, yet the Assembly, after the “straitest sect,” excind for this offence. But if a brother or sister makes another brother or sister dance at

the rope's end or under the "cat," why, then, Christ has not legislated on this subject! If a man receive stolen property and hold it as his own, they will excommunicate the offender. But if he receive and hold a stolen brother or sister as a slave, why, then, Christ has not legislated on that subject! The proposition, however, is correct. We only say these things to put these brethren in remembrance.

We come now to the great BUT, contained in the third point of the analysis—that Christ and his Apostles did not denounce the relation of master and slave as sinful, and inconsistent with Christianity. The sum of this statement is, that the relation between master and slave is not sinful, or in other words, that slavery is not sinful. This is the whole budget of their talk, "about it and about it," presented in plain English. If this be not their meaning, they could easily have written in words intelligible to all, and incapable of misinterpretation, that slavery is sinful. Then they could have answered clearly the question, which at the outset of the act, they say was proposed relative to the "circumstances." We would not willingly misrepresent the action of the Assembly. If this be not their meaning, they have had abundant opportunity during the last ten years to have corrected the statement.—We have closely and eagerly watched their doings, and nothing has occurred to throw light on the darkness of their position. The Old School is set down as pro-slavery, whole-souled. This is public sentiment, fixed and firm. And no reason has been assigned to alter public opinion.

That we have done no violence to the views of the Assembly, we shall present evidence from other sources,—from the similarity of whose language it will be seen what the act means. The *Tombebee Presbytery* says, "That slavery is not a moral evil, is evident from the fact that it is nowhere condemned by the Redeemer or his Apostles in the New Testament." The *Princeton Repertory*, 1844, says, "Neither Christ nor his Apostles ever denounced slaveholding as a crime." Again, "How did they treat it? Not by the denunciation of slavery as necessarily and universally sinful. The Apostles refer to it, not to pronounce upon it as a question of morals, but to prescribe the relative duties of masters and slaves." These extracts need not be multiplied—they sufficiently show that the predominant feeling at the time of the adoption of the act was, that slavery was right, and that its existence among a Christian people was justifiable.

We have no disposition to arouse against these brethren a spirit of odium. But they have assumed an attitude of hostility to truth and right, fearful in the sight of "the judge of all the earth," and justly condemned by enlightened human-

ity. This position, after ample time for deliberation, they have neither excused nor retracted. They glory in its conservatism. And they endeavor to leave the impression that the entire action of the church has been most harmonious in persisting to adhere to the same views. If their position be equivocal, not all the waters of the Ardana and Pharpar will wash out the incalculable mischief resulting from their action. To side with oppression, against which every attribute of Jehovah is at war, involves a tremendous responsibility. To be conservative, or equivocal on a subject of such magnitude as involves the interests, present and eternal, of millions of the human family, is treason against God and humanity. He that is not with Christ is against him. This church is either pro-slavery or anti-slavery. There is no medium. If anti-slavery, where is the evidence? It is not to be found in the act of 1845. No man with both eyes open, can point to one anti-slavery sentiment in that document, no, nor the utterance of an anti-slavery sentiment by that church officially or unofficially by her organs from that day to the present. This is the more ominous of mischief and evil when the nations of the earth are shaking themselves from the slumbers of ages beneath the galling yoke of tyrants, to assert their liberties,—that a church possessing so much numerical and intellectual influence should find the time inopportune to appear in defence of liberty. We believe that this branch of the church has proved recreant to the cause of liberty. Her name is used by the propagandists of slavery to justify their cause. She has indeed elicited the empty encomium, “conservative;” but in the day when God makes inquisition for the wrong done to the poor enslaved Africans, this title will, like the covering of the “mountain and the rocks” not hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. They are “conservative”! Conservative of what?—of right, of justice between man and man, of love, of peace, and good will? No, but of wrong, of injustice, of hatred, of oppression. She may be applauded for this, but the good, in whose hearts all feelings of humanity have not been extinguished will execrate the encomium and lament her fallen glory.

But lest it might be thought that the evidence on which we have affirmed, that the O. S. Presbyterian Church is pro-slavery, is insufficient, we append extracts from the correspondence of the Free Church of Scotland, and also from the letter of the O. S. transmitted to them. The letter from the Free Church bears date Oct. 28th, 1844 :

“In its own nature, slavery in all its forms is to be regarded as a system of oppression, which cannot be defended. Natural reason, sound policy, a sense of justice between man and man, as well as the whole tenor of the di-

vine word, and especially of the dispensation of the gospel, concur in condemning it; and it is the glory of Christianity, that hitherto in proportion to its advancing and prevailing influences, slavery has been mitigated, relaxed, discontinued, and finally extirpated and abolished. It is, therefore, with the deepest pain, that every rightly constituted Christian mind must contemplate the continued and tolerated existence of slavery in the United States of America. And, apart from the feeling, which cannot but be called forth by the mere fact of this practice of slavery being allowed in a country making her boast of the maintenance of equal rights, there are aggravations apparently in the American usage, particularly in the provision made for keeping up the supply of slaves, in the obstacles interposed to their moral and religious education, and in the laws applicable to the protection of the rights of masters, which must characterize American slavery as one of the most deplorable forms of that evil."

To this faithful and pungent Christian remonstrance, the General Assembly in the following year returned an answer, characterized by pusillanimity, evasions, and self-contradictions. The extract is as follows:—

"The State never interferes with us as a Church, either to cherish our doctrines or to control our privileges, and she expects in return that we meddle not with her civil and domestic regulations, one of which is slavery. Every man in the church here has political right and power. As a citizen, he has the utmost opportunity, for contending against every social, civil, moral wrong, which the institutions of his country may ordain or allow. But as a member of the Church, he belongs to a kingdom, that is not of this world, that has always been prospered in apostolic and reforming times by separation in counsel from the powers that be"—which while it fails not to witness against the sins of the land would rather \* \* \* resign even the guardianship of these powers, than permit civil and spiritual enactments either to clash or mingle together. We learn our duty not only from the peculiar circumstances of Providence in our political institutions, but from the great charter of the church itself. Here we have a religion of great principles, which it behoves us to promulgate, with all possible energy, industry, and faithfulness,—principles which will in the end overthrow every form of oppression that is incompatible with the inalienable rights of man. Beyond the assertion of these principles and their rigorous application to all existing relations of society around us, we think it not only inexpedient but unwarranted and presumptuous for any ecclesiastical court to pronounce either dogma or precept. We dare not contract the bond of union among brethren more than Christ has contracted it, nor exclude from that pale of our communion, members that merely hold a relation which Christ and his apostles did not declare \* \* \* to be incompatible with Christian fellowship. Slavery existed then as well as now, with at least equal atrocity. . . . And in our opposition to its evils, we desire to treat it as they did, rather than reduce their broad precepts to that minute kind of legislation which engenders fanaticism. \* \* \* Enclosed we send you a copy of preamble and resolutions on this subject, which we have just adopted, \* \* \* from which you will learn our determination to abide by the example of Christ and his apostles, to address ourselves in the spirit of the gospel, more than ever to the work of ameliorating evils we cannot redress, improving a relation we cannot dissolve, and disseminating among masters and slaves that pure gospel, whose heavenly influence never fails \* \* \* to purify every institution which God approves, and demolish every system that is opposed to the honor of his name and the best interests of the human race."

How much the Free Church Assembly was edified by the reading of this emasculated production we are not informed! To say

nothing of the home thrust made at the regulations of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland, and from which the Free Church, at every hazard and loss, had nobly extricated herself,—they insinuate that owing to the position of these Brethren, they were incapable of forming a correct judgment on the subject of our “domestic institution.” Their condemnation of slavery was, consequently, an “inexpedient, unwarranted, and presumptuous dogma.” It was telling them that owing to their remoteness of position, and want of contact with our domestic regulations they could not appreciate its beauty and convenience, and therefore they knew not what they said nor whereof they affirmed. That relation, which the Free Church of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church in America, in 1794 and 1818, unhesitatingly condemned, the General Assembly of 1845 and 1846, declared to be the domestic institution of our country, formerly indeed only patriarchal but now apostolically baptized—the corner stone of the republic and the bond of union of the church.

The assumption with which this extract begins, viz: that the church is not to interfere with the civil state in its domestic regulation, that is, with slavery, is equally irreconcilable with the mission of the church in the world, and with the whole history of the Bible. The church is THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. And whether the darkness be civil, political, social, domestic, or spiritual, the church of Jesus Christ must diffuse the light of the Bible upon that regulation. Directly to submit to civil regulations at war with the eternal principles of justice and equity is to establish the thrones of tyrants, and to exalt the decrees of man above the precepts of God. To plead for such a principle is what the devil wants—“let me alone.” Let the state alone, though she decree unrighteousness by law. Let wicked men, high in power, alone. Let drunken duellists, gamblers and slaveholders alone! to enact what regulations they may choose—the church must not interfere. Did not the prophets interfere, when they denounced the judgments of God against those who passed unrighteous decrees? Did not Daniel interfere, when he braved all the power of the Empire in refusing to comply with a “domestic regulation”—that is, the worship of the true God? Did not the Apostles interfere, when they refused to obey the domestic regulation of the legislature of the Jewish nation—that is, that they should not preach in the name of Jesus? Did not the Free Church of Scotland interfere, when she burst asunder the civil shackles, which for centuries had manacled her limbs? Desperate indeed must be that cause for whose maintenance a position is assumed which would fetter the church as a slave to be dragged at the chariot wheels of civil legislation.

The next position in this letter contradicts facts known to every reader of the public prints. “Every man,” they say, “in the church here has political right and power.” What

“political right and power” have those hundred thousand slaves who are members of the Presbyterian Church? Oh! they did not mean slaves—they meant white people! So then, slavery has stripped brethren in that church of political right and power. It has reduced them to “property”—they are “things,” “chattels” in the hands of their owners. Blessed institution, with which one of those brethren will not interfere with one of their little fingers! After uttering such a sentiment, which reduces them to the necessity of owning that the slave is a “thing,” they say, “As a citizen, he has the utmost opportunity for contending against every social, civil and moral wrong,” etc. Let a slave, a “brother beloved” in the church, utter a word on the subject, and from our inmost soul we commiserate his condition. We do not say that he would be chopped in pieces, beginning at the wrong end, but he would be taught the use of the “Stars and Stripes” was to tutor his discontented spirit. But we ask, Is it true that any citizen, South of Mason and Dixon’s Line, can contend against THIS social wrong? Will any man open his mouth and plead for the oppressed? No. They have expurgated their very literature, that the breathings of liberty might be suppressed. They banish every man that utters a word against the domestic institution. Not a breath is heard but that which pleads for the clanking of chains.

We have directed the attention of our readers to the assertion that “every man, as a citizen, has the utmost opportunity of contending against every moral and social wrong,” &c. One of two things is true in regard to this statement of the letter, either they did not mean that slavery was a social and moral wrong; or the statement is a gross misrepresentation of the facts of the case. No place on the earth exhibits the same degree of vigilant intensity of feeling, of systemized persecution, and base intolerance as does the Southern portion of this confederacy, on this very social and moral wrong. The hundred eyed Argus kept not more sleepless watch over his trust, than do the slaveholders over their embruted prey. All avenues by which a ray of light could tremble through profound darkness into the soul of the benighted slave on the great absorbing theme of man’s immortal birthright, is closely guarded. It is only a few weeks since, from the capital of the Republic, a Unitarian minister was expelled because he dared protest in the name of God and liberty against this social and moral wrong. Six months have not elapsed, since a noble hearted Virginian, together with his family, were exiled for advocating the election of Fremont. Another escaped the infuriated mob, from Norfolk, for voting the Republican ticket. An individual writing from Georgia says,

“they do not suffer a paper or document to be among them, that is not in accordance with their own views. The editor of the *Tribune* has been presented to a grand jury in Virginia for uttering sentiments in opposition to slavery. A book-seller was compelled to fly from Mobile, leaving an immense investment in his business to the merciless grasp of slaveholders because he had sent to order, or had in his possession some copies of “Uncle Tom” or “Fred. Douglass.” A brother, Rev. T. S. Kendall, of Oregon, for endeavoring in the most mild and pacific manner, to plead this cause with the relics of a once flourishing and widely extended Presbytery in the Carolinas, was tarred and feathered, escaping only with the skin of his teeth. It is useless to endeavor to conceal the fact, that freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of the post office, are all suppressed. No man dare reprove another without making himself a prey. No man, citizen or minister, enjoys any such opportunity as the Assembly here represent, to protest by his *vote*, by his voice or by his prayers against this great social wrong perpetrated by the positive legal enactments of slaveholding States. We are unwilling to believe that the Assembly did knowingly mistake a fact, we, therefore, concede to them the full benefit of the other horn of the dilemma, that they did not mean slavery, when they spoke of every citizen contending against social, civil, and moral wrong allowed by the institutions of the State. What then? Why—such sins as running the mail on the Sabbath, vending ardent spirits by license, stealing negroes from their masters, giving them a loaf of bread if they are running away from the happy family of some Southern Abraham or Philemon,—lotteries—selling husbands from their wives, and wives from their husbands, and little babies from their mothers, except only to build churches, found Theological Seminaries, aid the Colouization Society, or educate a young man for the ministry! That these or such like things are intended, is evident, for they say the church must be careful how she acts, as the State expects she won't interfere with civil regulations about our domestic affairs. Thus the horrid monster, slavery, appears divested of its monstrosity. It is no longer to be regarded as a “moral, civil and social wrong.” The opinions of all good and wise men are discarded and we are now to believe, that slavery is quite a harmless and inoffensive institution of “the powers that be.” All correct theories relative to “righteousness exalting a nation and sin being a reproach to any people are overthrown.” We must now believe that slavery is better than freedom and more in accordance with the will of God; that the degradation and enslavement of one race is necessary for the refinement and elevation of another. O how,

is "judgment turned away back and justice stands afar off, for truth is fallen in the streets and equity cannot enter."

The next assertion in this letter is no less strange and surprising than the one just reviewed. They seem to admit that the "church is to bear witness against the sins of the land"—yet it must be remembered that *they have never once admitted SLAVE-HOLDING TO BE SIN*. Even this admission is introduced with a BUT, which neutralizes the apparent relenting which they felt while penning the sentence. The duty of the citizen and the duty of the Christian are not compared but contrasted. The citizen may contend, BUT as a member of the church," &c. What will he do "as a member of the church?" We would suppose, that if ever, he would feel the full force of moral obligation, it would be in this position and relation, and that now "he will defend the poor and fatherless, to poor oppressed do right," that loyal to Him who has redeemed him by his blood, and in deep sympathy with the injured and oppressed, he will rigorously apply the principles of God's law to every form of social and moral wrong.—But the General Assembly "meaneth not so, neither doth their heart think so." "But as a member of the church he—the citizen—belongs to a kingdom that is not of this world." Holy man! he is surely now delivered from all concern with "politics!" He has nothing more to do with the "domestic regulations" of Cæsar, that is to say, particularly with slavery! But when the Devil takes the citizen, what will become of the church member? Or, when the Judge will say, when "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in: naked and ye clothed me not," there will be no question asked if these things were done by the citizen or the church member; nor will the poor culprit have the privilege of appealing to the letter of the General Assembly to show, that as a member of the church he had nothing to do with political regulations.

But read on—"But as a member of the church, he belongs to another kingdom, which is not of this world,—which (church) while it testifies against the sins of the land, would rather resign the guardianship of these powers than permit their enactments to clash or mingle." We have said, they no where admit slavery to be a sin in the land. No man can find that little monosyllable *sin*, in connection with slavery in this letter nor in the act of 1845. Remember that according to their dictum, Christ and his Apostles never witnessed against slavery. It was no sin then, and it is none now! Hence, this church has no idea of standing as God's witness against the darkness of slavery. Whatever this "witnessing against the sins of the land" may mean, it does not mean *slavery*.

The closing part of the sentence is just as abhorrent from all

sound morals, the morality of the Bible, as the first. The Bible is the only rule of practice for all men. It is the Devil's policy at the present day to introduce a "higher law" for statesmen, legislators, judges and citizens, than the law of the King of Kings.—What have these gods, that stand in the assembly of gods, to do with the law of the supreme God? Surely they will be judged at the last day for all the deeds done in the body as citizens by the Constitution of the United States, and of the several States! And here we have the embryo state of this sentiment, "resigning the guardianship of these powers." Why resign them? Lest they "should clash or mingle in their enactments." What?—Will God's ministers clash in their enactments? afraid to "mingle" their enactments in their respective spheres for the glory of him who "ordained them," and for the good of the people?—There need be no clashing unless the ministers of state have become subsidiary to the government of the God of this world. This, perhaps, the conscience of the Assembly told them was too true. And hence, they resigned them as incorrigible, and said, "let them alone." Does the Assembly follow this prescription, when denouncing rum-selling? Do the faithful watchmen thus guard the interests, with which they are entrusted? Ezek. xxviii. No, let the laws of the State meet and commingle with the laws of the church—with the statute book of heaven will they clash?—Would they clash, were the state and the church each in their place to declare slavery inconsistent with natural and revealed religion? that making drunkards was injurious to both? Will making good citizens, make bad church members? or good church members, bad citizens? Will the enactment of good laws by the church, harm the State? No! and never will the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, until all God's ministers, those who serve around his altar, and those who serve around the palladium of State, mingle in sweet and heavenly harmony, their enactments, for the civil and religious welfare and well being of their respective people. But suppose these "ministers of God" become so sottish, that they enact iniquity by decree,—suppose they ordain or attempt to legalize slavery, what course shall the church, "God's ministers," pursue? The same precisely, if they should legalize prostitution, gambling, making drunkards, Sabbath desecration, or any other offence against the law of God, condemn it boldly, firmly, perseveringly—lift up their voices like trumpets and show the people their transgression.—Nothing short of this will fulfil her mission, or prove her fidelity to her king. The church is the conservator of the nation's morals,—"the salt of the earth." At no time was there more need for this salt to be scattered in the whirling eddy of political and legislative corruption than when that numerous Assembly wrote and mailed this defenceless epistle.

They lost the opportunity. They threw their influence on the side of the oppressor. They have justified legalized oppression. And in vain will they skulk away behind the fig-leaf covering of "civil enactments of our domestic institution," to hide from the scathing rebuke of brethren.

But suppose they had declared slaveholding to be sin, and this had clashed with the enactments of the State, was not their duty plain: "We ought to obey God rather than men!" They have clashed a thousand times since the days of the Apostles, and the furnace has been heated a thousand times since that, for the witnesses of Jesus, but always victory, glorious victory over the gates of hell, has perched upon the church's banner.

Another point in the letter of the General Assembly may be justly termed the new rule of practice. "*We are to learn,*" say they, "*our duty not only from the peculiar circumstances of Providence in our political institutions, but from the great charter of the church.*" Truly, the Assembly have learned well their duty from this rule, so well that the old divine rule must be interpreted by it. The good old Protestant Bible is not adequate now to teach all that God requires to be done. But our political institutions must be regarded with equal reverence. God has spoken to us in these last days by his own Son, but we have never read that he spoke by our political institutions. It is true, this high Judicatory does not lead us back to the traditions of the fathers, fond as they are of oral instruction, yet we would a thousand times rather they had, instead of "political institutions," read the traditions of the Talmud or of Rome. "Political institutions," in the mouth of that Assembly, means the INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY. Nothing else. They were writing on slavery. They were hatching arguments for its defence. The letter of the Free Church of Scotland, like a barbed arrow, had struck deep and left a festering wound, which they, physicians of no value, were seeking to heal. That they have dragged in circumstances of Providence, is a mere rhetorical flourish. Providence had nothing more to do with the "political institutions" of slavery than with the thousand wives of Solomon, or the seventy-six of Young, the Mormon. They are all equally irreconcilable with the Bible, at war with the interests and morals of society, and dishonoring to the majesty of heaven. If this Assembly had said that political institutions were to be established according to the will of God, and that we are to learn our duty from the Bible, they had spoken the truth. As it now is, they have sapped the authority of the Bible, in its supremacy over men, in all the regulations of life. Unrighteous legislators have only to

establish unrighteousness by a decree; and, according to the new code of the Assembly, folding our hands in solemn form, and remembering the "circumstances of Providence," we must learn our duty from the enactment. How handsomely this suits the Fugitive Slave law! A conscientious Presbyterian could easily learn from it, that it was his duty to give chase to a sable brother or sister, fleeing from the sanctified relation, in the house of a brother deacon, elder or minister. Why, the circumstances of Providence, in that part of our political institutions, are as strongly obligatory upon the conscience as the Bible. "For," saith the Assembly, "we are to learn our duty" from this very source.

If, then, this be a source from which we are to learn our duty, the rule will apply to any people living in any nation, under any form of government, and with any kind of established or legalized political institutions. The rule will be good in Spain and Italy, in Turkey and India, in the North and in the South. Providence is as much concerned with the institutions of Spain, Italy, and India, as with the institutions of slaveholding States. There are as peculiar circumstances of Providence about the institution of the inquisition in Spain, the Mahomedan religion in Turkey, and the uxorial burnings on the marital funeral pile in India, as about the domestic regulation, the peculiar institution of the South. There is no lesson taught by the one which is not taught by the other. If the one be a rule of duty, so is the other. If the one indicates the will of God, so does the other. If we are bound to let slavery alone in the South, for the reason assigned, we are bound to let polygamy alone in Utah, the inquisition in Spain, and the service of Brahma in India, for the same reason. We hold that whatever comes to pass, is the sequence of a divine purpose, and that Providence is the execution or unfolding of the decree. But this is not a rule of duty. "Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those which are revealed belong to us." If this new code be correct, the old proverb is perfectly safe—"If you are among dogs, do as the dogs do;" if in Rome, do as Rome does; if in the South, do as they do. Slavery is a "political institution," in which there are "peculiar circumstances of Providence"—going to show that \* \* \* you are not to meddle with it, that the Church has nothing to do with it. Thus the iniquity of the system is rolled over on Providence. It was a "peculiar circumstance in Providence," that the negroes were kidnapped in Africa—brought over the Atlantic, except such as were, in Providence, lost in the passage—that the ignorant barbarians were placed in the hands of an enlightened Christian people, to rule over them with

rigor—that in this good land, they were greatly multiplied to the no small gain of their masters, and that now the system of slavery has become engrafted in the Constitution of the country and become a “political institution!” Surely now, any one who has eyes to see and a heart to perceive, might easily learn his duty from these remarkable indications of Providence—that is, that slavery is in accordance with the will of God, and that, to fight against this political institution, is to fight against God!

And the very same providential argument will prove polygamy to be right. Was there not some “peculiar circumstances in Providence,” which led Father Jacob to marry Leah and Rachel, and subsequently Zilpah and Bilhah; from all of which we may learn our duty, as well as from Joe Smith or Young. There is no end to the application of the rule. Its absurdity is so obvious, that it would not have been invented but to justify slavery, though it should stultify its authors. Having ascertained most clearly that slavery is a political institution, under the kind guardianship of Providence, who has brought about its legal establishment in an inscrutable manner, we are fully prepared to perceive that the “great charter of the Church,” the Bible, harmonizes with Providence—that is, Providence and the Bible agree, consequently those who meddle with slavery might as well take a “dog by the ears.”

What, then, does the “charter of the Church” teach on this subject? Let us hear the Assembly—“Great principles which will in the end overthrow every form of oppression, that is incompatible with the inalienable rights of man.” Now, surely the Assembly are fairly committed on the side of liberty. Do they not say, “they will rigorously apply these principles to all existing relations of society,” and “that the pure gospel will purify every institution which God approves, and demolish every system opposed to the honor of his name.” All this they say; and they say, too, that it is a political institution, in accordance with the Providential will of God—that Christ and his apostles did not declare it to be sinful, and neither do they. But, let me ask, do they say that slavery is incompatible with the inalienable rights of man? Do they say, that holding men, women and children in the condition designated by the term slavery, is a system which God disapproves? Do they say the gospel will demolish slavery? No; they never hint at this idea. The Free Church had openly denounced it in every shape in their letter. But the General Assembly use terms, which, disconnected from the spirit of their letter, are susceptible of a correct interpretation. If the Associate Synod, or the Free

Presbyterians, whose known and declared sentiments are anti-slavery, had used the above language, no one would have doubted a moment that they meant that slavery was incompatible with the inalienable rights of man, that God disapproved the system, and the gospel would demolish it. So said the Synod of Kentucky in 1796; the General Assembly in 1794 and in 1818. So said the Church of Scotland. So said the Free Presbyterians, when, after a long and arduous contention with the O. S., they, for this very cause, were compelled to secede. But in the letter of the General Assembly it meant a very different thing from slavery in the United States. In their view, God, in his holy Providence; Jesus Christ in his ministry among men; the holy apostles in their witness for godliness; the patriarchs and prophets, were all committed on the side of slavery. They could not occupy the opposite position, without madly rushing into the battle against the expressed will of God. The legitimate inference is, that slavery is not a form of oppression incompatible with the inalienable rights of man; that it is consistent with the gospel, and a relation which God approves. What those great principles are, about which the Assembly speak, we are unable to conjecture. They have no where laid them down, unless in the Confession of Faith—one of which is, that “superiors are required to protect and provide for their inferiors, all things necessary for their soul and body.” For proof, see Job xxix. 12, 18; Isaiah i. 10, 17; Eph. vi. 4; 1 Timothy v. 12. Another principle they have laid down, Q. 136, that the sixth commandment is broken “by oppression—by striking, wounding, or whatever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.” In proof of this see Isaiah iii. 15, “What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor.” Exod. i. 14; Numbers xxxv. 16, 21. And yet another, Q. 142. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment are—robbery, man-stealing, oppression. 1 Timothy i. 10; Exod. xxi. 16; Ezek. xx. 29. Here it must be remembered that the General Assembly, by man-stealing in the eighth commandment, mean “the reducing of a human being to the condition of a slave, and retaining him in that condition.”

If these be the great principles to which they allude, and which they propose rigorously to apply, we would say, go on and prosper, may God's blessing rest on you. Gladly would we believe that these are the principles to which they allude, but the evidence before us is too strong for the admission. If slavery be not oppression, then it is not meant in the law. If the Bible justifies and the God of the Bible approves it, then it is not oppression. Then, the axiomatic principle,

that, "all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," is a mere chimera, a deceptive falsehood in morals and in politics. Every charitable construction of this boastful language, in favor of freedom, and in opposition to slavery is precluded by their sweeping assertions that Christ and his apostles did not condemn slavery. How they will reconcile their positions with the law of God as set forth in the standards of the church, we know not; nor how they will reconcile the position of Jesus as the abettor of slavery, with the declarations of their own law, we know not; but one thing we do know, and that is, that no human ingenuity can free the General Assembly from the guilt of slaveholding. They dare not apply the great principles of the law of God, as exhibited in their standards, to slavery: they dare not re-affirm the acts of '94 and '18. And no public journalists in that church dare come out and openly declare slavery to be sinful, and the act of '45 to be in opposition to the law of God and the standards of the church. We have read column after column in a leading paper, since we began writing these articles, but the editor's mouth is sewed fast, he cannot—he dare not utter that short sentence—*Slavery is sinful*.

We have spent, perhaps, too much time and space in examining the letter of the General Assembly to the Free Church of Scotland. But our object has been to ascertain their true position on the subject; and our endeavor has resulted in the development of some principles in regard to morals and politics, which demand a public retraction or an explicit explanation. They have certainly shown no slight degree of ingenuity in managing their apparent non-committalism, so that friends of the slave, in their communion might have their consciences becalmed with fair words—susceptible words, as the case might require, of a sound interpretation, but whose whole bearing is to justify and perpetuate the system of American slavery. No one can read the documentary evidence in the letter and the act, and hesitate a moment in deducing the legitimate conclusion, that the Presbyterian Church (O. S.) is pro-slavery of the deepest grade and of the broadest character. It is not a slavery restricted to sable brothers and sisters of Afric's sunny clime, but a slavery, which knows no distinction of complexion—no latitude, no longitude, no crime as a cause for the inflictions of such deep and dismal sufferings as run through all generations. It is the slavery of the white man equally with the black. They make no discrimination. Christ and his apostles made none! When they sanctioned slavery, they did not say whether the Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, Malay, or American race should rule or serve! Whoever possessed the greatest power should be master, and the weakest the

slave. And the General Assembly, meekly keeping in their eye the example of the founders of their holy religion, make no distinctions. Had they they done so, the industrious, frugal and virtuous might have escaped, though possessing little power; and we might still have believed there were some feelings of humanity in man's obdurate heart. But this would have been too nice a point. Our "political institutions," so sacred in their view, made none;—and the "peculiar circumstances of Providence," made none:—nor would they. The great men and the mighty men of the Assembly could deal only in "great principles."—They could lay down the law, that one man has an absolute right to the body and soul, the time and industry of another; in other words, the great law of slavery, learned from our domestic institutions and "the character of the church," is first to rob a man of liberty,—then rob him of his wife, his children, and his posterity forever—rob his soul of saving knowledge—rob him of every dollar he may earn, and lacerate his bones and muscles to put forth the utmost exertion to earn more. This is slavery,—American slavery as it existed in 1845—as it exists in 1857.

This is the slavery, which the Assembly say, God in his providence has so happily inaugurated in the political and domestic institutions of our country, which Christ and his Apostles did not condemn, and which is the cement of the Church and the Union. We called it a system of robbery, and we will not retract that word. Every man has an absolute right to the proceeds of his own industry, be it little or much. It is robbery, when, without his voluntary consent, THAT is taken away. By violence, every slave has been dispossessed of his earnings; and more and worse, of his liberty, and of all that man holds dear in this world. The wrong, the violence done to the poor oppressed is continued by the operations of the same principle: "He who holds slaves for his own gain, to increase his wealth, or to promote his selfish ends, is as truly guilty of injustice and fraud, as if he were a common thief; and he is all the more guilty, because he robs the slave of rights far more precious than gold. A single act of robbery dooms a thief to the State prison; a system of robbery is justified and defended, and is no bar to honor and respectability in the world." True, the law makes it right; but the law is not the less wicked and abominable, which attempts to pervert the immutable principles of rectitude and justice. If a banditti were to make a code of laws for the perpetration and perpetuation of robbery, it would never be admitted as a justification of the crime. The fact that slavery has become a political institution by the operation of statutory law, only demonstrates the low grade of morals which pervades the masses of the people "who love to have it so," and that they have lost all correct preceptions of right. But of the General Assembly, a body of learned and intelligent men, what shall we say? Did they throw all their in-

fluence and weight of character into the scale of freedom, of justice and of right? Did they nobly stand erect in that hour of trial, when their brothers and sisters, in the bonds of oppression, with streaming eyes and uplifted hands, implored their sympathy, saying, "Am not I a man and a brother?" Did they hear the suppliant voice of Jesus in the haggard, hopeless look, the crushed and macerated body of his own members, when they, though silent, spoke in that assembly? No, no; they dried up those bitter tears with the cold, chilling reference to our political institutions. They palsied those suppliant arms, by "the circumstances of Providence," and silenced those secret groanings of the prisoner, which now enter the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, by the sanction which Christ and his apostles gave to the condition of the slave.

And will those sighs ascend in vain?  
 Will those prayers no help obtain?  
 Will those groanings ne'er be heard?  
 Will no answer come from God?

"For poor oppressed, and for the sighs of needy, rise will I,  
 Saith God, and him in safety set, from such as him defy."

We must now examine the position of the General Assembly in the act of 1845. They boldly unfurl their banner with this inscription—slavery not sinful, "Christ and his apostles did not condemn it." They lead us back to the times in which Christ lived, and institute a comparison between slavery then and slavery now, and conclude that both stand uncondemned in the statute book of heaven. If this position be true, we are fighting against the will of God, when we utter a word against slavery. We might as well denounce the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, as utterly repugnant to reason and natural law, and irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ. The spirit of the gospel, instead of averting the relations appointed by God, will establish, purify, and render them more sacred and inviolable. All the efforts made by Mormons, Shakers, Misanthropes, Popish priests, and Free Lovers, have never succeeded in shaking the sacredness of the relation of husband and wife. It stands intact in all the purity of its Paradisaical ordination. The reason is, it is God's ordinance, sanctioned by holy prophets, and confirmed by the Great Prophet of the Church. Has slavery stood impregnable to all the efforts of the humane? to the effects of the Christian religion? Has it not been overthrown by the application of the great principles of the Bible? All intelligent slaveholders admit, that the prevalence of the gospel will eradicate the system. But it is the will of God that the gospel should be preached among the nations; and it is his will that slavery should exist. Now, is it possible, that the purpose of God in one particular will annul his purpose in another?

Is the ordinance of the gospel opposed to the ordinance of slavery? Has Jesus sanctioned the gospel? Has he also sanctioned slavery? But the former will destroy the latter. The gospel will destroy nothing that is good, that is, from God. Slavery therefore, is not good—it is not from God. Wherever the gospel has prevailed, it has brought to an end, evils, deep rooted and dominant. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 12; Rom. i. 18, 32. But no application of its principles has ever abolished what God approves,

We have no difficulty in ascertaining the scripturalness of the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant. They are founded on nature's law. They are revealed in the Bible. But this relation of slave, like the gods of Israel that came newly up, claims not only a superiority over all other relations, human and divine, but also the sovereign right to tear them asunder, and scatter to the four winds of heaven all who enjoy their benign influence. True, indeed, it is old, old as Satan, old as sin; but its age has given it no higher claim to moral rectitude than its congenital compeers. What, then, is slavery? What is that relation around which are gathered, for its security and perpetuation, the sacred sanctions of the Divine Lawgiver, the ever-watching care of an overruling Providence, and the time-honored venerability of political institutions and legal enactments? In our endeavors to answer this question, we must recur to the leading features of the system, as it existed in former ages, and as it exists at the present. Among the Romans, slavery prevailed to such an extent, that it is supposed, nearly one-half of the entire population were slaves. Masters had an absolute power over their slaves. They might scourge or put them to death at pleasure. They were not esteemed as persons, but as things, and might be transferred from one owner to another like any other effects. They could not appear in courts of justice, nor inherit anything. Whatever was acquired by the slave was acquired for the master. They were not permitted to marry, as the servile relation was considered an impediment to marriage. They were punished by the lash loaded with lead, with chain scourges, and with tortures. They were burnt alive; they were crucified; they were branded; they were suspended by the feet; they were shut up in the workhouse; they carried a billet of wood around their necks; they were apprehended if they escaped from their masters; their allowance was four to five pecks of grain per month.

Among the Grecians, the condition of slaves, and the laws regulating the relation and the power of masters, were similar to those among the Romans. These we need not detail.

The system of slavery receives further developments from the bondage of Israel in the land of Egypt. There are many particulars in which the American system exceeds the Egyptian in atrocity and relentless inhumanity. The Israelites were not dis-

persed among the families of the Egyptians. They had exclusive possession of the land of Goshen. They owned flocks and herds; had their own form of government; possessed arms, and had an abundant supply of food. They were not sold for debt or gain, nor were they regarded as chattels. But they were grievously oppressed with hard bondage. The first of the nation who went down into Egypt was kidnapped and sold for a slave by his own brethren. Gen. xxvii. 25, 28; Psalm cv. 17, 18. The subjugation of Israel was altogether involuntary. It was the result of superior power on the side of the Egyptians. They were made to serve with rigor, under which they groaned. Exod. i. 8, 11, 14. They received no remuneration for their toil. They were under taskmasters, and were compelled to work under every disadvantage. Exodus i. 11; chapter v. 8, 11. As they multiplied, it became expedient to adopt the severest measures to repress their growth, lest they should unite with an invading foe and secure their liberties. Exodus i. 7, 9, 10. These are some of the leading features in that ancient system, everywhere denounced in the Scriptures as cruel, hard and oppressive. So grievous was it in the eyes of the Judge of all the earth that nothing could atone for the injury inflicted upon Israel but the desolation of the land, and the overthrow of Pharaoh and all his hosts in the sea. It was mild in its enactments when compared with the Roman, after which the American system has been copied. And if we may be permitted to "discern the signs of the times," the hanging of a few abolitionists, the burning and quartering a few negroes, and the dispersion of a few worshipping conventicles or a few convivial women, will not suppress for ever the heart-burnings of American slaves for liberty. Those insurrectionary movements in almost every Slave State are only shadows of coming events. The curse has followed oppression in all nations. Severe measures may for a time delay the fearful catastrophe, but it will come. Egypt is a beacon on a mountain to warn the nations that a course of oppression is the way to destruction.

The American system of slavery is the embodiment of all that is cruel, tyrannical and mean in the Egyptian, Roman and Grecian. It seems that our patriarchal and apostolical slaveholders instead of copying the examples of patriarchs and apostles, in rearing their magnificent structure, have drawn largely from the decrees of that "good old slaveholder" Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and from that good old digest of slave laws, the pandects of Justinian. The example of the father of the faithful has had far less to do with slavery than Cladius Nero; and the precepts of the founder of our holy religion, than the mandates of Mahomet. "The cardinal principle of slavery, that the slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among things, obtains as undoubted law in all the Slave States."—*Stroud's Digest*. The law of South

Carolina is, "Slaves shall be held, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, and administrators and assignees to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever." The Louisiana code says, "A slave is one, who is in the power of his master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labor. He can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything, but what belongs to the master." Slaves are transmitted by inheritance, and sold at public auction. They have no rights as men—as human beings, and no relations. They can hold no property; give no evidence in courts, civil or ecclesiastical. They have no character different from that of a horse or mule. Their person belongs to the master as much as the ox or the donkey,—their services, their time, their muscular strength, their skill, and their toil. Their entire condition is involuntary. It is the result of kidnapping on their native soil, and piracy on the high seas, and in the land of their grievous bondage. "All meetings or assemblages of slaves, or free negroes, or mulattoes mixing and associating with such slaves at any meeting-house, or houses, or any other place, etc., in the night, or at any school or schools for teaching them reading or writing, either in the day or the night, under whatsoever pretext, shall be deemed an unlawful assembly."—*Virginia Code*. Whoever teaches a slave to write is liable to a penalty of one hundred pounds. No assembly for public worship, which would make an insurrection possible, or which would make them acquainted with their own strength is allowed. If any number be found assembled, without the presence of some of the dignitaries—the whites—they are liable to receive twenty lashes.

Such is American slavery—Slaveholders themselves being its judges. Such are its essential and inseparable principles. It combines all the leading features of the Roman, Grecian and Egyptian, except two or three. The one is, they are not killed to fatten fish, nor are they crucified, nor are their children destroyed as soon as born. The reason of the last is, they are too valuable in market. A mere principle of gain, though all humanity be wanting, directs to their preservation. The more valuable the animal is, the higher price it will command in market. A man would be considered destitute of common sense, who would take as more care of a sheep than he would of a dog; of an ox than a sheep; of a horse than an ox; of a man than a horse.

Wherever slavery has existed, it has possessed this common and inherent element, that the slave's manhood is ignored: he is degraded from the rank of a man to a chattel: he is no longer a human being, but a thing—an animal that walks erect and talks like a man. He is property under the absolute control of another, in all his actions, relations and acquisitions.

Stroud expresses in his digest the whole matter when he says, "the cardinal principle of slavery is that the slave is not to be reckoned among sentient beings, but things." A sentient being is one who has the faculty of perception, that is, who can acquire a knowledge of external objects by means of the external senses. Now, we, who are reckoned sentient beings, have five senses, and by these we become acquainted with outward things, such as trees, houses, the heaven above and the earth beneath; but the slave is not such a being; he cannot acquire knowledge in this way. If we admit that he can, then we must admit his manhood, his accountability, his moral agency, and his undoubted claim to his inalienable rights. But this would destroy the vitality of slavery. The being, therefore, in which it deals in the market is first denuded of his manhood, made a thing, an animal, an article of property, and then for safe-keeping and other convenient purposes, placed under the absolute and irresponsible power of some Anglo-Saxon, or son of St. Patrick. The answer to the question, what is a slave? is reduced to a single perceptible point: he is an animal domesticated, housed, provided for because he is longer lived, possessed of greater endurance of toil, more productive physically, and of greater marketable value than any other animal. And slavery is the science of reducing and holding men in that condition.

And this is that slavery, which the General Assembly have endorsed as divinely instituted, which, they say, Christ and his apostles did not denounce, and which is recognized in the New Testament. We ask, is it possible that a system which has ever borne the marks of God's disapprobation, in the fiery judgment sent upon Egypt; in the fearful servile conflicts and downfall of Roman power; in the barren soil; in the political convulsions; in apprehended dangers and insurrectionary movements throughout the whole slave region in the United States has been approved of God?

Can it be possible that God who "has made of one blood all nations," made one nation to drag another down from the great brotherhood of man, to a level with the beast of the earth? Can it be that the kind, merciful, benevolent and condescending Saviour, has sanctioned a system whose beginning and continuation has been fraught with savage ferocity, unkindness and injustice? Is it so, that a God of love and pity approbates a system, matured and organized for crushing out his own image, by embruting his intellectual creatures? Is it possible, that it is consistent with the Heavenly Spirit of that gospel, which proclaims "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to man?" We are persuaded that the unhesitating answer of every enlightened

conscience, will be no, never. "That be far from God to do after this manner; that the righteous should be, as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

"Was that lordly form inspired by thee,  
To wear eternal chains and bow the knee?  
Was man ordained the slave of man to toil,  
Yoked with the brute, and fettered to the soil,  
Weighed in a tyrant's balance with his gold?  
No! Nature stamped us in a heavenly mould."

It seems that slavery proceeds upon the monstrous assumption that the right belongs to the man, who can exercise the power most successfully to reduce another under absolute and irresponsible control. If one man, or five men, on the coast of Africa, or in the State of Pennsylvania, the locality is of no consequence, can seize and bind and lash into submission a human being, he becomes from that very act a slave. And if the majority of squatters, or the sovereign people of the commonwealth, approve the deed of darkness, they enact the unfortunate being to be property;" and, therefore, he is property: "for that is property which the law makes property." The system now becomes our "domestic regulation," in providence, from which, according to the General Assembly, we are to learn our duty. This is its operation. It is the simplest contrivance imaginable. It only requires two steps to complete the whole whole process of metamorphosing a man into a beast, an immortal into property. If a man, with a lasso, catches a wild horse, and has power to hold and tame him, he becomes his animal—his property. And if a land pirate catches a wild negro on the burning coasts of Congo, and has power to hold and subjugate him, he becomes his property: his right to hold and sell, and use him to all intents and purposes, is indisputable. His posterity, moreover, to the latest generations follow the condition of their high ancestry. The man lost his identity as man, and is now ranked among insentient things. He can no longer say, "I am a man." To this principle slavery owes its beginning and its continuance. This is that political and practical tyranny, which has become a sacred "institution" of our country, to whose nod we must bow, and at whose shrine we must worship.

2. Slavery proceeds upon another assumption no less wicked and hateful, that one man has a perfect right to control the mental, moral and physical being of another as he pleases. The man being now made a slave, by the operation of legal statutes, must work, Egyptian like, under the lash of the taskmaster, politely named overseer—not for his own personal advantage, nor to accumulate, by the proceeds of his toil, the means of nourishing a generous old age, but all for the comfort and luxury of another, whom the law of might has invested with plenipotentiary

power over his mortal body. But the control of the slave's physical constitution is deemed inadequate to secure the greatest amount of productiveness. As long as the mind, "the stature of the man," is left free, he may surmount his local and physical disabilities, and still be happy. But he would be insecure property. An animal that can think and read, and require illimitable expansions of intellect, will, by the very impulses of nature, seek the enjoyment of freedom. Hence, slavery imposes its shackles on the mind. It first declares he has none, and then, by law, prohibits its development, and obstructs the waking up of thought and reflection. Ignorance is the mother of slavery among slaveholders, as it is of devotion among Catholics.

3. Another assumption still more wicked than those just mentioned, is, that the slaveholder has the right to nullify the obligations which the law of God imposes. The gospel is commanded to be preached to every creature under heaven, and they are bound to hear it, believe it, and become disciples. Slavery obstructs the way to the enjoyment of its blessings by slaves. They cannot assemble peaceably to hear the word, without being subject to that brutal treatment which belongs to the whole system. The consciences of slaveholders are so deeply convicted of the ineffacable wrong perpetrated on the slaves, that their waking and sleeping thoughts are filled with spectred images of re-tribution and vengeance. Every precaution is taken to prevent their assembling together for any purpose. And, besides, such is the low grade of morals to which the slaves are reduced by the fraud, violence, and abuse to which they are exposed, that the majority of them are incapacitated for the enjoyment of gospel ordinances. This only adds to the accumulated guilt of those who keep them in bondage. They are too ignorant and degraded to enjoy their liberty, and therefore they must be deprived of its blessings. They are unsafe members of the community, and therefore they must not be taught, except that precious morsel, orally doled out, "slaves, be subject to your masters." How long will it be until a better state of things takes place?" The last fifty years have produced no relaxation in the deadly grip with which slaves are held. No attempt has been made to ameliorate their condition. None of those laws, which disgrace the American name in the eyes of the Christian world, has been repealed. No movement has been made to educate their minds, or train them for the sweets of liberty. Every breath is hushed in death, or in exile, that breathes for emancipation. This wickedness is waxing worse and worse. And though surrounded by all the guards that human wisdom can devise, it will terminate, either in peaceable emancipation by slaveholders, or by the irresistible power of the oppressed.

It assumes, also, to nullify the relations of husband and wife. The old Roman law still holds, that the "servile condition is an

impediment to the marriage state." With few exceptions, the relation of slaves is disregarded. The slave code knows no such relations. The omnipotent prerogative of the man, clothed with a little brief authority, whenever his coffers need to be replenished, or his creditors demand satisfaction, or his benevolence has secured an additional impetus, snaps asunder, like Sampson, the cords that bind together the tenderest affections of the human heart. Death, relentless and remorseless death only equals this feature of our domestic institution. The institution appointed and sanctioned by the Creator, decreed, "that what God had joined together, let no man put asunder." Our domestic institution reverses the appointment of heaven. Did Christ sanction this element of the system? It is derived from the remote ages of heathen slavery, and has become engrafted among the legal statutes of Christianized slaveholding States. The slave can no more contract a marriage than a dumb brute. The policy of the enactment is apparent. The slave might contract a relation to the no small loss of the master. To prevent all this trouble and loss, the law interposes (and what may not the majesty of law do?) and delivers over the slave, body and soul, to the power of the master, to "all intents and purposes and constructions whatsoever." The whole matter is soon and safely adjusted. The husband is the property of the master; his wife—his by the law of nature—his by the undoubted law of God—his by every precept and principle of the gospel, is by the law of the State the property of the master: the master breeds this kind of property, as Jacob did the ring-streaked and speckled, and for a similar purpose.

The same benignant and fostering care is extended over the children. As soon as the child is born, the slave law clasps its infant body in its merciful embrace, and consigns it for safety to perpetual bondage. The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and these children's teeth, too, must be set on edge. The fathers have drunk the bitterest dregs of the cup of human misery and woe, and the children must also drink the deadly draught. The fathers have been chastised with whips, but the children with scorpions. God has enjoined parents to "train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" "to provide for his own, especially for those of his own house;" and children are required to "obey their parents; to honor their father and mother." But slavery interposes its impious and arrogant power, and strips the parent of responsibility and honor, and the child of moral obligation. The same high and unwarranted interference is practised in every relation and duty. The law declares that "the slave is in the power of the master to all constructions whatsoever." The Creator of the universe neither claims nor exercises prerogatives of the same high grade over his intelligent creatures.

But surely the General Assembly did not mean to countenance these evils. Oh, no! not they, the generous and benevolent souls; they would not countenance what was wrong about this

harmless relation. They say they are fully persuaded there are evils connected with slavery; that some of its laws ought to be changed; for example, they do not approve of selling slaves for mere gain, or separating families for the sake of filthy lucre. Very well; but these brethren must recollect, that slavery, with these very ingredients, existed in the Saviour's day. It was then what it is now; and these very evils, which they deplore, neither Christ nor his apostles denounced. In this they are certainly "righteous overmuch." But, let us grant, they are deeply affected with the deplorable condition of the poor slaves, of whom they hold some two hundred and fifty thousand, and many of these brothers and sisters in the Lord. Now, I ask, what are these brethren doing for their benefit? When they fast to the Lord, do they break every yoke? Isaiah lviii. But they say, the yoke should not be broken; that Christ has sanctioned it; and, of course, that 58th chapter of Isaiah is repealed. Well; but do they pray for the slaves in their condition as slaves? Do they petition "the powers that be" to lighten the heavy yoke, to legalize their marriages, to prevent the separation of families, to establish schools for their benefit, to prohibit selling them for mere purposes of gain and filthy lucre, except to build or endow a theological school or some other holy purpose? Do they lift up their voices against these notorious wrongs and outrages? There are no bounds to their indignation against rum-selling and drinking, gambling and dancing; but if "the righteous be sold for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;" "if the face of the poor be ground," there is no voice heard. But we forget, these brethren have resigned the guardianship of the civil powers—given them over to work all manner of wickedness without reproof. And, besides, to remonstrate or petition either God or man touching our domestic regulation, would be stepping into the sphere of politics. Hence the O. S. express their feelings by "deploring." See James ii. 14, 16.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to recapitulate the principles involved in the condition of a slave. They are clearly defined in all the laws regulating slavery. But of what we have said, this is the same. An American slave is a human being, who, contrary to his will and by the force of superior power, has been reduced to the condition of an insentient animal, held and treated as property having a marketable value; incapable, in virtue of his degraded condition, of enjoying any of the relations of life, as a husband, wife, father, mother, child; debarred from all mental improvements, all civil rights, all acquisitions of property, all appeal to any tribunal, save that of God, for justice; subject to no law or rule of conduct, but the arbitrary will of the master who owns him, and who has the power over him to "all intents, purposes and constructions whatsoever." This is a slave in Christian America, defined by her codes of law, and carried out in every day's practice, before the gaze of the Christian world. This is that

condition which the General Assembly softly calls "our domestic regulation," "our political institution," providentially imported and established in this favored land. Respecting this condition, they boldly affirm, that Christ and his apostles did not denounce the relation as sinful; and that, for them to denounce it, would be saying that Christ and his apostles connived at sin. Their reasoning appears periphrastic. They disliked, under the influence of their conservatism, to come out and boldly say, that slavery was right. But the fact that it is not denounced by the Lawgiver, they assume as evidence that it is not sinful; and, behind this assertion, they shelter themselves in mere negatives. Logically stated, their argument is—whatever is sin, Christ and his apostles denounced. But they did not denounce slavery; therefore, it is not sin. Let us test this mode of argumentation; thus, whatever is sin, Christ and his apostles denounced. But they did not denounce rum-selling, dancing, horse-racing, cock-fighting, lotteries, gambling, worship of the virgin, kneeling to the host, etc., and, therefore, they are not sins. It is evident that the very same issue may be raised respecting any of these notorious offences which the General Assembly raise respecting slavery. If we denounce these things, shall we be guilty of charging the Saviour with conniving at sin? You will at once say, by no means. All these things are opposed to the power and spirit of the gospel. But can you find these abominations denounced in the New Testament? No; but you have arrived at the conclusion from the purity and holiness of the master—from the perfection and breadth of the law, from the heavenly character of the gospel, from its transforming power upon the whole man—that all these things are contrary to the "glorious gospel of the blessed God our Saviour." We have arrived in the same way at a similar conclusion respecting the condition of our fellow-creatures in bondage. It needs only to be seen to be abhorred. And if there had not been a word spoken or written on the subject in all the Bible, there is light enough in our darkened world to condemn it; there is conscience enough in every man's bosom to declaim against the iniquity as foul injustice.

Our main business will now be to show that the position of the General Assembly is contrary to their own action in former years, contrary to their own constitution, and contrary to the Scriptures. If these things can be shown it will need no particular proof that Christ denounced slavery, and that slaveholders in ordinary cases should belong to that kingdom, which is of this world.

In order to have a clear understanding of the position of the General Assembly, it will be necessary to notice the act of 1845. This deliverance was produced, they say, by three sets of memorialists; the first representing slavery as an evil,

and praying the Assembly to adopt means to ameliorate the condition of slaves; the second, asking that the subject be discussed; and the third, declaring that slavery was a moral evil, a heinous sin, and calling for the exercise of discipline. The act purports to be an answer to these memorials. But the memorialists say nothing about the question, which the Assembly ostensibly argue, viz.: whether slaveholding is under all circumstances a heinous sin, calling for the exercise of discipline? This was a "conservative" question, making a side issue with all the memorialists: all the memorialists take for granted that slavery was a moral wrong. But in doing this they leave the question which they had mooted, and show or assert that neither Christ nor his apostles said or did anything in opposition to slavery. Now, this cannot be accounted for on the supposition that slavery was wrong, for they would not connive at what was wrong! Thus the memorialists and the whole church are taught that slavery itself is right. And for a similar reason it might be shown that rum-selling itself, or gambling itself, or any other crime itself was not wrong. We now present an extract from the act of 1845. The italics are ours.

"That slavery existed in the days of Christ and his apostles is an admitted fact. *That they did not denounce the relation of itself as sinful, as inconsistent with Christianity; that slaveholders were admitted to membership in the churches organized by the apostles; that whilst they were required to treat their slaves with kindness, and as rational, accountable, immortal beings, and, if Christians, as brethren in the Lord—they were not commanded to emancipate them.* \* \* \* The Assembly cannot, therefore, *denounce the holding of slaves as necessarily a heinous and scandalous sin,* \* \* \* *without charging the apostles of Christ with conniving at such sin, introducing into the church such sinners."*

We shall now present extracts from the different acts of Synods and General Assemblies, with such remarks as are deemed necessary to ascertain the main points. Extract from the address of the Synod of Kentucky, about the year 1796; reprinted, Louisville, 1844, p. 10.

"If the Bible sanctioned slavery, it sanctioned the kind of slavery which then existed in the countries where the apostles preached and wrote their epistles. This was the system to which the apostles are supposed to have given their approbation, which they are supposed to have allowed their followers to support and sanction by their example. *Mark this well; it was the Greek and Roman slavery* which God is said to have treated as a thing whose existence he did not condemn as a system, which his saints might, without sin, assist in perpetrating. \* \* \* There was no species of misery which the system of Greek and Roman slavery did not inflict upon its unhappy victims. Masters were permitted by the laws to torture their slaves, to starve them, to beat them to death, to throw them into their fish-ponds to give an epicurean flavor to the mulletts and carps. For the breaking of a dish, or the spilling of gravy, a slave could be put to death. If a master was murdered, and the murderer was not known, all the slaves of his household were seized and put upon the rack. Their limbs were mangled and broken, and their lives often crushed out of their bodies, to extort from them a confession. *Brothers, could any man insult the God of heaven worse than by declaring that he does not disapprove of such a system?* Moloch, besmeared with blood of hu-

man sacrifices and parents' tears, might permit his followers to countenance such a system, and assist in upholding it; but who will say that the Father of Mercies gives such a permission to his children. Before we can admit so monstrous a doctrine, we must reverse all our ideas of the attributes of God. *If any man can fairly show that the Bible countenances such slavery as existed in the days of the apostles, he would construct a more powerful argument against the divine origin of our religion than infidelity has ever yet invented.* A religion that sanctions a system of atrocious cruelty can never have come down from heaven."

We now present an extract from the Synods of New York and Philadelphia, A. D., 1787. The church took her position at this early date in favor of universal freedom. This was shortly after the American Revolution, when the principles of civil liberty had pervaded all classes. Hence they speak of "the rights of human nature as too well understood to admit of debate." What those principles were may be easily known from the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed with unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We omit the addenda as useless tails to these acts. In common with many honest minds, they supposed the slaves could be better prepared in that condition for freedom than when emancipated. Britain tried the experiment in the apprenticeship of her slaves in the West Indies, but it was found impracticable. Emancipation, immediate and unconditional on the soil, was the only remedy. To this remedy she resorted, and 800,000 were liberated on the memorable 8th of August, A. D., 1838.

The following was brought in by the Committee of Overtures: "The Creator of the world having made of one flesh all the children of men, it becomes them, as members of the same family, to consult and promote each other's happiness. It is more especially the duty of those who maintain the rights of humanity, and who acknowledge and teach the obligations of Christianity, to use such means as are in their power to extend the blessings of equal freedom to every part of the human race.

"From a full conviction of these truths, and sensible that the rights of human nature are too well understood to admit of debate—*Overtured*, that the Synod of New York and Philadelphia recommend, in the warmest terms, to every member of their body, and to all the churches and families under their care, to do every thing in their power consistent with the rights of civil society, to promote the abolition of slavery, and the instruction of negroes whether bond or free.

"The Synod, taking into consideration the overture concerning slavery transmitted by the committee of overtures, came to the following judgment:

"The Synod of New York and Philadelphia do highly approve of the general principles in favor of universal liberty that prevail in America, and the interest which many of the States have taken in promoting the abolition of slavery."

In 1794, the General Assembly appointed a committee to prepare notes to the Constitution and catechism. This book, with these notes, was endorsed by the Presbyterian Church, as containing its doctrines, government, and discipline. In answer to the question—"What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?" they say, "The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment are, besides the neglect of the duties required, theft, robbery, man-stealing, etc." On this last word

they have the following note:—1 Tim. i. 10. "The law is made for whoremongers, for those that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers." This crime among the Jews exposed the perpetrators of it to capital punishment. Exodus xxi, 16. And the Apostle here classes them with sinners of the first rank. The word he uses, in its original import comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in detaining them in it.

In 1815, we have the following deliverance, showing that the same spirit of freedom was predominant which had existed in 1787, '94, '96 :

"The General Assembly have repeatedly declared their cordial approbation of those principles of civil and religious liberty which appear to be recognized by the Federal and State Governments in these United States. They have expressed their regret, that the slavery of the Africans and of their descendants still continues in so many places, and even among those within the pale of the church; and have urged the Presbyteries under their care to adopt such measures as will secure at least to the rising generation of slaves, within the bounds of the church, a religious education; that they may be prepared for the exercise and enjoyment of liberty, when God, in his Providence, may open a door for their emancipation."

Again—

"They consider the buying and selling of slaves by way of traffic, and all undue severity in the management of them, as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel. And they recommend it to the Presbyteries and Sessions under their care, to make use of all prudent measures to prevent such shameful and unrighteous conduct."

We have already adverted to the act of 1818, in which the Assembly presented their views on the subject of slavery in the most decided language. In speaking of this act, the editor of the BANNER declares that it is a misrepresentation of its language to say that it meant slavery. "The Assembly did not say slavery: it said the voluntary enslaving. So, then, we are to understand this noble testimony as directed against kidnapping and the slave trade. Were these ever called in question in the Assembly? Perhaps this was a new phase of the subject? But will the editor look at the first sentence of the act.—"the General Assembly having taken into consideration the subject of slavery, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it."—Then follows the act, in which they first condemn in the most unqualified manner, the "bringing of any of the human race into slavery," by voluntary enslaving them; in the second place, they condemn, in the most decided and absolute manner, the whole system of slavery itself as evil, nothing but evil; and, in the third place, that this blot on our holy religion should be as speedily as possible effaced by the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom and the world." Up to this period, the vile subterfuge was undiscovered, that the sin was in the abuse of slavery and not in the use, that slavery itself was scriptural. They had not yet learned this lesson. But when the Assembly of 1845 sat down a new generation had arisen, which knew not the mighty and noble attainments of their ancestors. The dis-

covery had been happily made during the long period from 1818 to 1845, when the minds of men were engrossed with political topics, and whilst slavery was taking deep root and filling the land. The unsophisticated fathers of the Presbyterian Church had never once thought that slavery was right, but to buy or sell a man for mere purposes of gain, or otherwise abuse him, was wrong. They declared that "slavery," and "all the evils or abuses, as they connect themselves with its very existence," were "a gross violation of the law of God, and totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel. That we have not misinterpreted the act of 1818 will appear from the following resolution of a church South, renouncing fellowship with the General Assembly on account of the act.

Resolved—

"That as the Great Head of the Church has recognized the relation of master and slave, we conscientiously believe that slavery is not a sin against God, as declared by the General Assembly."

The Biblical Repertory advocated the ground occupied by the Assembly in 1845—that "slaveholding, in itself considered, is not a crime; that slaveholding is not necessarily sinful; that slaveholding in itself is condemned cannot be proved." This act will be found on pages 8 and 9.

So plain and palpable are the facts stated in the recorded decisions of the Presbyterian Church, that every one can deduce his own conclusions in reference to her present position. If the ground now occupied by this church be identical with that occupied during all the preceding years of her existence, why did she not manifest the same independent integrity, and fearlessly reaffirm her former attainments? None of the former Assemblies used the same kind of language, or attempted to draw the same kind of distinctions. The "form of sound words" and "sound speech that cannot be condemned," are equally requisite in exhibiting and "walking in the truth." If the words used by the Assembly in all her deliverances from 1787 to 1818, were sound and clearly expressed the views of the church on slavery, there was no necessity for the employment of microscopic niceties to distinguish between slavery itself and slavery as it is. The question was never presented to the church as a question on abstractions, but as a question on facts—facts existing. It related to a dominant practice in the church and in the land. Was slavery right, or was it wrong? The trumpet was now put to the mouths of Zion's watchmen, upon her high towers, and they were expected to give no uncertain sound. During forty years no other sound had been heard, but one uniform reverberation from "tower to tower." "It is irreconcilable with the spirit of the gospel, it is the sum of wickedness to reduce a man to bondage, and to hold him in that condition." Now, to say the least of it, the sound is uncertain. It requires all the acumen of the ablest editors, the bold assertions of ecclesiastical assemblies, and a great amount of credulity, to give a uniform exposition to these adverse and contradictory declarations. No

man can read the act of '45 without discovering an evident shrinking from that boldness which had characterized former assemblies, a uttering of the faithful testimony of the church on this subject and a striking behind distinctions equally puerile and equivocal.

But we have said that the position of the General Assembly is inconsistent with her Constitution. The former acts of the General Assembly, which we have copied, all occupy a place in her judicial deeds; and, as such, are exponents of her principles as much as the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms. They are equally obligatory upon all her members as subordinate rules of faith and practice. The consequence of her former deed was, that the church was decidedly anti-slavery. But the transition for the year '45 was sudden and remarkable; multitudes are now opposed to slavery, but will defend it, as it exists, from the Bible. And if they do not defend, they will not oppose. "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber; yea they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand."

1. In proof of our position, we refer to Confession, chapter 23. "In managing whereof (the office of magistracy) they ought especially to maintain \* \* justice \* \* according to the wholesome laws of the commonwealth." Psalms lxxxii. 3, 4. The declaration and proof are unexceptionable. The dispensing of justice is the duty required; the wholesome laws of the commonwealth are the rules; and the poor, fatherless, afflicted are the objects. A "wholesome law" is one that conduces to public happiness, virtue, and peace. Now, we ask, are those laws which have ever annihilated the virtue, happiness, and peace of three millions of God's intelligent creation, wholesome laws? Are laws wholesome, just, and good which rob a man of his manhood, human nature of its humanity; which rob a man of his inalienable rights, of his wife, his children, his earnings; which rob women of their virtue and chastity; which rob the mind of its intelligence, and God of his glory? The poor and needy are crushed by these laws. Justice is mockery in its application to them. The first thing assumed in the case of the degraded slave, is that he is guilty, and must prove his innocence; whilst the first principle of common law is, that every man is innocent until proved guilty. Laws are "wholesome" only in so far as they accord with the eternal principles of justice. Slavery is at war with every principle of rectitude, established by God for the government of the universe. The doctrine of the Confession is strictly scriptural, and, like the words of the prophets, "hews down" this upas tree which has been shaking its deadly leaves in the church and nations. And when the General Assembly resolved that slavery was uncondemned in the Bible, they said that justice stood condemned, that God's throne was not established upon justice and judgment; and that justice should not be administered according to "wholesome laws." They knew

well that slavery was a violation of natural right, and that no human law could justify its invasion. They knew that the "poor and needy" were defrauded of their rights in the very fact of their enslavement. They knew that justice demanded as its first requisition that those rights, which had been unjustly and violently taken away, be restored; and they might have known, had they not discarded the *Psalm Book*, that the only way in which justice could be maintained was to practice the direction contained in the proof, viz: "*Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*"

2. A second proof may be seen, Larger Catechism, Q. 129., "What is required of superiors toward their inferiors?" Ans., It is required that they love, pray for, counsel, admonish them; \* \* \* protecting and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body." Proof, Job xxix. 12, 18; Isaiah i. 10. 17; 1 Tim. v. 8. For the sake of brevity we do not quote these passages. Jefferson declares that "the whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, and the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other." Lest our testimony might not be believed, we present some extracts from the address of the Synod of Kentucky:—

"Slavery depraves and degrades the slave by removing from him the strongest natural checks to human corruption. It deranges and ruins the moral machinery, cuts the sinews of the soul, extracts from human nature the salt that purifies and preserves it, and leaves it a corrupting mass of appetite and passion. It dooms him to hopeless ignorance. How horrible must that system be which, in the opinion of its strongest advocates, demands, as a necessary condition of its existence, that knowledge be shut out from the minds of those who live under it; that they should be reduced as near as possible to the level of the brutes, or living machines, and that the powers of their souls should be crushed. It deprives him in a great measure of the privileges of the Gospel. They have no access to the Scriptures, to a regular Gospel ministry, and to the domestic means of grace. They suffer all that can be inflicted by wanton caprice, by grasping avarice, by brutal lust, by malignant spite, and by insane anger. Their happiness is the sport of every whim, the prey of every passion. Slavery produces general licentiousness among the slaves. Marriage, as a civil ordinance, they do not enjoy. Our laws do not recognize this relation as existing among them. They take up with each other, and live together as long as suits their mutual convenience and inclination. This wretched system of concubinage inevitably produces revolting licentiousness."

Such is the testimony of the O. S. Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky, expressing their calm and deliberate judgment of a system of moral wrong and outrage, to which they were eye-witnesses, and whose blighting and demoralizing influences they lamented. Uninfluenced by the ghostly conservatism of their descendants, they declared what they knew to be the system itself and its workings. And will any one say, that there is any place for the exercise of "love" where the whole intercourse is characterized by "boisterous passion;" where there is a deep consciousness of permanent and irreparable wrong inflicted and endured? That any prayers will be offered on behalf of the oppressed to the God of

mercy, when, in the obdurate heart of the "superior," there is no mercy nor justice? There is no love for the poor slave—"for love worketh no ill"—no protection of their rights and their persons; no provisions made for the comfort of their bodies or their families, and, most wicked of all, none for their souls. Yet all this violation of his own law Jesus Christ winked at, condemned not, but recognized! Either these declarations of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church are not in accordance with the Scriptures, or slavery is not. If they are, slavery stands condemned upon their own testimony, and the position of the church is anti-constitutional and disorganizing.

3. The duties required in the sixth commandment are inconsistent with the position of the General Assembly; these are "protecting and defending the innocent." Q. 135. Proof, Prov. iii. 1, 8, 9; Job xxxi. 19, 20; Isaiah lviii. 7.

Jefferson, in his draft of the Declaration of Independence, declares of the King of Great Britain, that "he has waged a cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the power of a distant people, who never *offended* him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur a miserable death in their transportation." By this "execrable commerce," more than eight millions of Africa's sable children have been torn from her lacerated and bleeding bosom to gratify the unhallowed cupidity of slaveholders. And what have they done to incur such terrible visitations of the "wrath of man"? Is there not an assignable cause? Is there not some accumulated guilt resting on their devoted heads, that no eye, save that of the Holy One, should pity, and no arm, save that of Omnipotence, should be extended to bring them relief? In the name of the sacred cause of liberty which their pious ancestors defended, we ask the General Assembly, what have your brothers and sisters in bondage done, that you should plead for the oppressor? that you should stand up the unblushing advocates of a system which dooms the innocent followers of the Lamb to hopeless misery and toil? that you should invoke, in aid of the cruel wrong, the benign name of the compassionate Redeemer? Are these men, and women, and babes, on whom the name of Jesus has been named, guilty above all others, that nothing will wipe away their foul transgression but ages and generations of abject and degrading vassalage?

4. We refer to Q. 139 and 142, and the sins forbidden under these heads, as "prohibition of lawful marriages," "robbery, man-stealing, receiving anything that is stolen, oppression, extortion, withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him." Proof, Isa. iii. 15; Psalms lxii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 10; Prov. xxix. 24; Ezek. xxii. 12, 29; James v. 4. Never did the pencil of Raphael, the prince of painters, portray the outlines of the human system with more accuracy than the prophet has pictured the character of the people of this land. The people of the land have used oppression

and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy, yea they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And yet there was no man, in the majority of that General Assembly, to stand in the gap and make up the hedge, that the indignation of the Lord should not be poured out upon the land. They have endorsed those very abominations which God abhors and denounces. They have embosomed the perpetrators of these enormities and crimes, for "which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment." Slavery, according to the unexpurgated edition of the Confession of Faith, is "*man-stealing*;" and the slaveholder is a "partner with the thief," receiving stolen property, and with the boldness of an unqualified villain, though he knows the rightful owner he refuses restoration. Would you endorse the Christian character of the man who would steal your horse, or the man who receives and holds and refuses restoration. And what would you think of a church court that should enact that horse-stealing itself was not denounced by Christ and his Apostles; and that the holders of such horses were, from the beginning, worthy members of the church? Has God established laws for the protection of your rights of property in horses, but left the rights of man subject to the tyranny of might? If a church member withholds unjustly a dollar, he is expelled; but if he withholds all the rights, all the proceeds of the toil and sweat of the slave brother or sister, he is doing just as they did in the days of the apostles.

The principle which underlies all the relations of the universe of intelligent beings, is, that "God has made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth." There is, therefore, but one race of human beings inhabiting this footstool of Omnipotence. All are descendants of the same progenitors, all are invested by their benevolent Creator with the same natural rights. They may differ in complexion, and physical conformation, in rank, wealth, intelligence, and other adventitious circumstances, but in point of right all are equal. Every man has a perfect right, under the great seal of heaven, to himself, to the use of his limbs, to unrestricted locomotion, to the use of his intellect, and all the means of happiness, placed within his reach, restricted only by the fact, that none of these is to be used to injure the same rights enjoyed by others.

These are primary truths in morals which cannot be contradicted, unless by the absurd supposition, that some men were born slaves, and others masters; some kings and emperors, and others menial subjects. This is the position assumed by the advocates of slavery, a position irreconcilable with reason and revelation. Reason finds no possible nor assignable foundation in the nature of man, nor in the fitness of things, for the condition of one man as a slave and another as a master. If it did, then the same principle would apply to any man in any condition. That is, there is no reason why A should be the slave of B, which will not be a reason that B should be the slave of A. And, therefore, to

say, that Jesus Christ or his apostles, by their silence or in any way, did countenance this condition, which reverses the dictates of sound reason and common sense, is to blaspheme their character as teachers of sound morals. It is to make the oracles of truth pander to a vile falsehood, having its origin in the malignant passions of the unsanctified heart. There is not a more odious tyranny practised upon earth than the tyranny of slaveholding. Other tyrants are placed under some checks, but here there are none. The power of the master is irresponsible; the subjection of the slave illimitable. Yet this system, at war with the inherent rights of men, with the prerogatives of God; at war with the love, peace, and happiness of the human family, this General Assembly affirm stands uncondemned by the "Teacher sent from God." Their own Synods repeatedly denounce it: the General Assembly condemned it with one voice, as the essence of sin and misery. Their Confession of Faith and Catechisms denounce it, as inherently and ineffably unjust, as "oppression, robbery, manstealing, extortion, withholding from others what belongs to them, and as a violation of the duties which superiors owe to their inferiors." The plain inference from the act of '45 is, that they considered "their fathers did not speak words of truth and soberness." How Christ and apostles condemned slavery in 1818, but did not in 1845, we have no means of ascertaining!

We proposed to show that the position that Christ and apostles have not denounced slavery is unscriptural, or not consistent with fact. To do this formally would require us to show that all the preceding acts of the Assembly, and her Constitution, were scriptural. If liberty be scriptural, its antagonist, slavery, cannot be. If "manstealing," *i. e.*, "the reducing of human beings and holding them in that condition," the General Assembly of '94 being judges, be unscriptural, our position is proved. *They have conceded that the apostles, speaking by the spirit of their master, denounced it.* But, poor fellows, they were in a bad fix. They must sail between Scylla and Charybdis. The South was snubbing them up behind, and the North before, and both were threatening to "cut the staff, even bands and break the brotherhood." In this situation, they invoked the mighty power of "conservatism," and adjusted the whole matter so that it might please God, men, and the—devil. They drew a very fine sight on slavery, and they found that "itself" was not so bad after all, and that whilst the Church and the Saviour and the apostles, and their own Constitution, all condemned "slavery," they did not denounce "slavery itself." Happy discovery! they had hit on the plan, the distinction was made, the bill passed, and the Church and the Union were saved. And now the Presbyterian Church stands a monument of preserving "conservatism," on the glorious distinction thus evolved—"slavery itself," uncondemned. But we proceed with our proposed proof.

I. Remark—There is an obvious fallacy attempted in the terms of this position, as if the word of God contained in the Old Testament is not to be regarded in settling this controversy. They speak of the New Testament as

though holy men of God, who spoke in old time, did not speak by the Spirit of Christ; as though a moral act might be sin under the old Testament, which charged character under the New. We solemnly protest against the introduction of *this distinction* into the "only rule of faith and practice." It is not necessary, so far as our faith or our practice is concerned, that the New Testament utter a single declaration, directly or indirectly, concerning anything as duty or sin, provided the Old Testament is sufficiently clear and decisive. The same is true of the Old Testament. What God forbids, whether under the Old Testament or the New, is at no time to be done. Logical inferences are as good proof as direct declarations. Christ speaking in the Old Testament has the very same authority with Christ speaking in the days of his flesh, or by the mouths of his holy prophets of the New Testament. We appeal, therefore, to Christ speaking in the Old Testament, and arraign slavery at this judgment bar. For the sake of brevity we shall merely refer our readers to the passages:

(1.) Jesus Christ declares his hatred of all manner of oppression. Exodus xi. 9; Psalm xii. 5; lxxii. 10; Prov. iii. 32; Jer. vi. 6, 7; xxii. 17; Ezek. xxii. 7, 20.

(2.) He has denounced his judgments against oppressors:—Job. xxvii. 13, 23; Prov. xxii. 16, 22, 23; Isaiah xxx. 12, 13; Zek. xviii. 12, 13.

(3.) He has given special promises to the oppressed. Psalm ix. 9; x. 12; lxxii. 4; ciii. 6; Isaiah xix. 20.

(4.) He has commanded the emancipation of the oppressed. Isaiah i. 17; lviii. 6, 7, 8; Jer. xxi. 12; xxii. 34. It is useless to employ the subterfuge that slavery is not named. No; but here, in burning characters of divine light, is presented unmistakably the evil. Slavery is the concentration of oppression; the focus in which all the dismal gloomy rays of woe and misery, from down-trodden humanity, meet. Egypt and Assyria, those ancient and hereditary foes of Zion and of Israel's God, had their slaves and their slave markets, as well as classic Greece or Rome, or Young America. The eye of the Holy One sees all oppression alike, from his glorious throne in the heavens, and denounces his fierce wrath against it. Are we prepared to believe, that this same Divine person, when "made flesh and dwelling among us," changed his mind, and now approves what before he condemned? "He is of one mind, who can turn him?"

II. Remark. The General Assembly assume that there is no condition in which the inferior can stand related to the superior recognized in the New Testament but that of slave. They say "slaves were required to be obedient to their masters." Of course they contend, that servant means slave, and master means slaveholder; and that when any duty is enjoined upon a servant, it is a slave, or upon a master, it is a slaveholder. With them these terms are correlative and convertible. This is the substratum of their whole argument, grammatically solecistic and theologically erroneous. The relation of master and servant will continue while society exists. It is to be found everywhere. But the relation of master and slave is not necessary anywhere. It is a gangrene on the body, civil and ecclesiastic; an incubus on society; a curse to the people who support it, and a blasting blight to the sin-cursed soil. If the legitimate relation of master and servant be not clearly defined in those passages, which the General Assembly and slaveholders claim as the Herculean pillars of their system, then there is no such relation recognized in the New Testament. We have nothing left us but slave and slaveholder. The assumption of the General Assembly, in substituting slave for servant in those passages, sits handsomely enough on those who have assumed the godlike honor of preserving the union of the States. It is a dignified new translation of Scripture, suited exactly to the purpose. Without the assumption, it is impossible to sustain their position. Now, as Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture, we respectfully suggest the substitution of this convenient term slave, for servant, in the 122 passages in which it occurs. We have no disposition to prosecute an argument of this kind. Its absurdity is too obvious; yet such is the legitimate issue to which it leads. If this Southern alchemy were applied to the Old Testament, they

could have discovered in every man-servant and maid-servant, a man-slave and a maid slave; and in every master a slaveholder. Such a view of the divine oracles is simply wicked.

We shall now present briefly, the facts in the teachings of Christ and his apostles relative to slavery. The great principle which pervades the teaching of the Scriptures in reference to human rights, is this:—God has created every man with a perfect equality of right, physical and mental; and has conferred on each the power to use all the advantages he possesses to promote his own happiness, provided he does not interfere with the rights of others. Now, slaveholders claim that God has conferred all these rights on themselves and denied them to others. That is, they are a better stock, better blood; and, consequently, have a right to divest as many of their fellow creatures of their *ideal* rights as they please, and absolutely control their powers, relations, and happiness as subordinate to their own. This is the slavery itself which, they say, the New Testament recognizes.

1. In opposition to this, we adduce the sacred precept of the law as established by Christ in the New Testament. Mat. xxii. 39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Our neighbor is every one on whom we may confer a favor, to whom we may do good. Luke x. 25-37. If we are actuated by a sincere love of our neighbor, we will do him all the good in our power; we will do him no evil,—“for love worketh no ill to our neighbor.” We will be as tender of violating his rights, and of hindering him in the prosecution and enjoyment of his means of happiness, as we are in the possession and prosecution of our own. No intelligent being, having a full understanding of the nature of the case, could be induced voluntarily to part with his own rights and means of happiness, to place himself under the absolute control of another. But if a man loves himself in this manner, is he not obligated, by the Saviour’s precept, to love his neighbor in the same way? The man who is influenced by this principle will not steal his neighbor’s property; and will the law permit him to steal his person, his liberty, his means of happiness?

But slavery does perpetrate these very outrages; it is, therefore, a direct violation of the law.

2. We adduce the golden rule, Mat. vii. 12, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.” The duty is universal,—“All things.” The rule obligates all men in their intercourse with each other. A consciousness of individual and personal rights in our own case, will induce the same feelings in the case of others. Have we rights others have the same. Have we the means of happiness conferred on us?—others enjoy the same. Are we watchful in guarding ours? others do the same in protecting theirs. Would we escape the wrongful invasion of our rights by others, we must invade no man’s rights. Do slaveholders show the same regard to the liberties and happiness of the slave that they claim for themselves? Yet the rule obligates us “to do to others” the same we would have them do to us. The application—ah! there’s the rub!—would cure most of these fine-spun theologians of their pro-slaveryism.

3. Christ required all men to search the Scriptures. Job v. 39. The reason is, they “contain eternal life.” He denounces the heaviest woes against those who take away the key of knowledge from the human mind. Luke xi. 52. Solomon declares, “for the soul to be without knowledge is not good.” The political and theological hucksters say *it is good*, for in no way can they keep the slaves in absolute subjection but by keeping them in the greatest possible darkness. Their laws are expressly formed for the purpose of excluding the entrance of light into their souls. They fine the man one hundred pounds, or imprison and expel him from the State, who will teach a slave to write or

read. Slaves dare not assemble by night or day, at any school for teaching them, reading and writing. But God requires them to search the Scriptures for themselves. There is to be no intermediate mouth between these wells of salvation and theirs, or mine, through which the waters pass whereby I am to be cleansed and saved. I am to draw for myself, and every man for himself. It may be defiled in its passage. It may gather death in its channels. If God has established this relation, then he has exonerated slaves from the ordinary means of salvation. All these divinely appointed relations receive their highest encouragement and sanction from the sacred oracles. All resort to them for instruction, for correction, for reproof, and for furniture for every good work.

All are encouraged by the promises of the word for duty; all are consoled under the varied ills of life. No husband, by reading the Scriptures, is made uneasy under the ties that bind him to his wife. No wife, by perusing the Scriptures, feels that she is in bondage under the law to her husband. Relations are sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. This proves their divine institution. But the divinely instituted relation of slaveholder and slave, excludes the Bible from the slave as a dangerous book. It might unsettle his mind, render him uneasy, inspire doubts, and finally lead him to run away from domestic happiness. Is this a relation of God which demands the exclusion of the book of life? Did Christ recognize a relation, whose bands and cords would be disrupted by obeying his voice? "Search the Scriptures."

4. Our Lord recognizes the moral responsibility of every intelligent being. *Mat. xii. 36; xviii. 23. Luke xvi. 2.* Particularly, each one is held responsible to God for the right employment of their liberties, civil and religious; their times, sacred and common; their gifts, opportunities, means, and grace. *Mat. xxv. 14—26.* But slavery usurps these talents, hinders their improvement, blunts their moral sense, and interposes the will of the master, as the ultimate rule of obedience. It is, therefore, not of God. Every man is responsible to God for the possession of a good moral character. But slavery debases the moral character of the slave, compels him to live in licentiousness, teaches him to "confound moral distinctions, fosters in him lying, deceit, hypocrisy, dishonesty, and a willingness to yield himself up to minister to the appetites of the master." It is, therefore, not of God.

5. The whole spirit of the gospel is opposed to slavery in principle and practice. This is generally conceded, except by an "antagonist fanaticism of a fragment" of ultra southern slaveholders. "Slavery," says the *Biblical Repository*, "like despotism, supposes the actual inferiority, and consequent dependence of those held in bondage; neither can be permanent. Slavery cannot by possibility be perpetuated." "The consequence of acting on the principles of the gospel, of following the example and obeying the precepts of Christ, would be \* \* \* the peaceable and speedy extinction of slavery." If a fair application of the principles of the gospel will abolish this institution, does the Bible sanction it? Has Jesus Christ recognized it? Has the gospel ever extinguished anything good?—any relation appointed by the law of heaven? The relations of husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, brother and sister, teacher and pupil, all stand as God has ordained. The gospel confirms them all, and qualifies all to discharge every implied and reciprocal duty. But this relation, surreptitiously foisted into the category, recognized by the Saviour, justified by the apostles! accursed of God, hated by all good men, loved by all bad men, antagonist to every thing holy and virtuous, is sustained, and yet will be extinguished by the gospel! How much more consistent and Christian-like, would it be to own "that slavery is always wrong, essentially, eternally, incurably wrong;" and, therefore, the glorious gospel of the blessed Saviour, will remove every last shred of the curse from the earth.

But the apostles are, no less decisive in their opposition to this abominable practice.

1. They insist on the great law of love. *Romans xiii. 8, 10.* The law of

love is violated by doing the things prohibited in the several specifications under it. To show that slavery commits these violations, we quote from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. The sixth commandment is broken "by oppression;" the seventh, "by prohibiting lawful marriages;" the eighth, "by robbery, man-stealing, fraudulent dealing;" the ninth, "by anything that tends to injure the name of a neighbor;" the tenth, "by inordinate motions and affections to anything belonging to a neighbor." Now, we ask, will a man who loves his neighbor rob him, oppress him, steal and sell him, use him as a chattel, use his labors without wages, deny him all his rights, shut him up in the region and shadow of death? No; but he will seek his good away, as he does his own. No Roman, nor after him, American slaveholder, if he has any conscience, could read this pointed language of the Apostle, without feeling, that he was perpetrating a series of degrading injuries, which must, in the issue, induce fearful retribution. Yes, these are the men, whom this same Apostle admitted to very worthy membership in the primitive church! Tell it not in Gath! The Corinthians must be washed from all their fornication, drunkenness, extortion, excess—I Cor. vi. 9—ere they can be admitted to the kingdom, but these Romans and Americans may violate every precept of the law of love, and they are the stamina of the Church, of Theological Seminaries, and of missions to the heathen over the mighty deep.

2. The Apostles condemn slavery most pointedly—I Tim. i. 10: "The law is made for man-stealers." We need no other commentary on this language than the notes of the General Assembly, appended to her Constitution. This was long, long ago. "The word," say they, "the Apostle uses, in its original import, comprehended all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or detaining them in it." The essential idea in the term is that of converting a freeman into a slave. God has made all men free. Man converts him into a slave. And no matter when or how, the apostle decides the question forever, it is MANSTEALING. Do the apostles not condemn slavery?

3. The apostles never enjoins a single duty upon the slave to the slaveholder, nor upon the slaveholder to the slave. This is the point at issue. The Assembly assume that the term servant means slave, and master means slaveholder. This, we have before shown, is a violent assumption grounded upon our supposed credulity. This innovation is merely for effect. It was to please "the brotherhood." Every body knows that the terms slave and servant are not convertible. The one cannot be substituted for the other. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, constantly applies these very passages on which the Assembly rely for proof, to the legitimate scriptural relation of master and servant. In not one solitary instance, does it apply a single passage to a relation founded on "man-stealing." This settles the controversy on this point. The General Assembly had better make up the issue with their own standards, before introducing apostles to their help.

Slavery is wrong in principle and practice. And, therefore, no duty is enjoined upon human beings in that condition. We might as well say, that when the Apostle enjoins duties upon husbands and wives, he lays the same obligations upon polygamists, as to say, when he enjoins duties upon masters and servants, he does so upon slaveholders and slaves. No moral obligation can be imposed upon man in an immoral condition; as, for example, upon a gambler, a banditti, a robber. The duty in all such cases is clear—break up the relation, quit the sin, dissolve the confederacy; "your agreement with hell shall not stand." The Bible knows no such relation. It is beyond the province of God's moral government and moral subjects. For all other relations he has appointed specific duties; but for this, *not one*. His injunction, like that to Pharaoh, is, "Let my people go"—"Break every yoke, let the oppressed go free." When the divine pleasure is executed, and the slave stands forth in the panoply of man, the divine law obligates him to perform all the duties of his varied relations. As MEN and not property, as *accountable beings*, not brutes, as *servants*, they are under the law of obedience, and the master, not the slaveholder, is required to give them "what is just and equal."