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ANCIENT SLAVERY

DISAPPROVED OF GOD.

THE SUBSTANCE OF

A LECTURE.

BY

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LECTURE.



FROM an early period certain men have claimed a right of property in their fellow men. We speak not now of the claims asserted by regal despotism, nor of the vassalage demanded by feudal power, nor of captivity, as consequent on defeat in war; but of domestic *slavery*, as originating in *involuntary* bondage, and as having, in ancient times, become a fact and a custom, under the sanction of common law.

Of late years it has been gravely asserted, by ecclesiastical teachers, that *slavery*—both ancient and modern—is an ordinance of God; and that Holy Scripture is the MAGNA CHARTA of Slavedom throughout Christendom, and through all time. But we undertake to show that this two-fold statement is *not true*, and that by its argumentative use, the Sacred Scriptures are misrepresented and defamed. Our sole object is to defend the honor of divine Revelation; and our sole concern is with the erroneous teachings of those *Ecclesiastics*, who, professedly, advocate and defend modern slavery, by an appeal to the Scriptures of Truth. They control the minds of millions in this land, and, having appealed to the Bible, their advocacy must be tested and judged by the actual teachings of the inspired Book.

I. They affirm, that, “From the days of Noah, and by means of a prophetic curse, the *Negro Tribes* were foredoomed to involuntary and perpetual bondage, as chattel slaves.”

In support of this assertion they cite the words of Noah:—“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” (Gen ix. 25.) Now it should be observed, that in making this quotation, as their authority, they declare that slavery is a *curse*; and also that, in some unexplained sense, slaveholders are of the seed of impious Hama, and brethren of Canaan, the accursed: for the words of the record are these:—“A servant of servants shall he be to HIS BRETHREN.”

Our first remark is that the passage quoted relates to national debasement and political subjugation, and not to personal and domestic bondage. All the earlier predictions of Holy Scripture were national in their conception and intent. For example: Before the twin sons of Isaac were born, a divine oracle declared, saying, "The elder shall *serve* the younger:" and in that divine oracle, the verb AH-VAD, signifying *to serve*, is the root of the word for "servant" in the Noachic curse. But it was not predicted that Esau should become the chattel slave of Jacob, but that the Edomites should be brought into political subjection to the Israelites; and in the days of David and Solomon, this divine prediction was fulfilled.

It must also be observed that the curse was not pronounced upon Ham; and therefore did not include the several branches of his posterity. It was pronounced on his youngest son, Canaan, and his other sons—Cush, Mitzraim and Phut—and their descendants, were designedly exempt. And it was to them, or some of them, that the Canaanites were to be in a state of *extreme* political subjection; as it is idiomatically declared:—"A *servant of servants* shall he be to *his brethern*:" and it is also *distinctly* shown, that the Canaanites should be subdued by the descendants both of Shem and of Japhet. (Gen. ix, 26, 27.)

The early history of the sons of Ham should be noticed:—Cush was the father of Nimrod, who founded the Assyrian Empire; Mitzraim founded the kingdom of the Pharaohs; and Phut most probably originated the Ethiopic tribes; but most certainly *Canaan did not*. The Negroes are not Canaanites: and "the land of Canaan" does not lie on the coast of Africa, but on the Asiatic shores of the Mediterranean Sea. There Canaan settled: there his posterity multiplied: and thence the fulfilment of the Noachic curse must be sought after and found.

As early as the days of Abraham its execution began. And such was the exceeding wickedness of some of those Canaanites, that God sent down upon them the "eternal fire," by which themselves and their cities were destroyed. Gen. xix, 24, 25, 2 Peter ii, 6; Jude vii.) And when the Israelites—descendants of Shem—went up out of Egypt to possess the promised land, the nations of Canaan were justly doomed of God to be destroyed from the earth, because their "iniquity was full." This sentence was in part fulfilled; but those Canaanites whose lives were spared we shall again meet with in the progress of our selected task.

But we must notice the further execution of the Noachic curse. After the cities of Canaan had been taken, first by the leaders and kings of Israel, and then by Nebuchadnezzar—the second Tyre, their last city in Asia, fell before Alexander of Mac-

edon, and was no more. But a remnant of the Canaanites seemed to have escaped the curse. They had settled on the African shore of the Mediterranean, and Carthage arose to dispute with Rome for the Empire of the world. The Punic Wars ensued; and, in the result, Scipio burned Carthage to the ground; and, by a decree of the Roman Senate, the walls thereof were rased, so that no trace of the city or people should remain. The curse uttered by Noah was the predicted penalty of the foreseen wickedness of the Canaanites; and that Noachic curse was signally fulfilled.

We have detained you over a brief sketch of the history of Canaan, for the purpose of showing that the ecclesiastical patrons of slavery, in their very first argument, are untruthful in respect to genealogy, geography, prophecy and historical fact. They have undertaken to instruct a great nation touching the ways and intentions of God in ancient prophecy, and have substituted a baseless theory for the teachings of the inspired Book. "*Cursed be Canaan*" is a terrible word; but, as we have shown, it does not sustain any kind of Biblical relation to Africa's injured sons.

II. The ecclesiastical advocates of slavery have undertaken to teach the philosophy of History in the next argument which they adduce. They allege that, "As Abraham had bounden servants, therefore slavery is a patriarchal institution, ordained of God; and, being such, is, in the nature of things a *blessing* to the slave."

We must, at once, do honor to their mental greatness. They have just declared that slavery is a Noachic *curse*; and now they assure us that slavery is an Abrahamic *blessing*. Beyond a question, they are wonderful men! For, by their *prestidigitation*, they have transmuted a dark and dreadful *curse*, into a bright and beautiful *blessing*.

We admit that Abraham was involved in the custom of bounden servitude that obtained in his day; that is, in as far as the fact of having bond-servants is concerned. But for any man to argue from this fact, that *therefore* slavery was ordained of God, is most illogical and evil. Polygamy, also, was a fact in patriarchal history: but was polygamy *therefore* ordained of God? The ecclesiastical advocates of slavery would themselves shrink from an avowal that *all the facts* of patriarchal history were institutions ordained of God, and included in the Abrahamic blessing, promised and insured. And we may justly demand by what authority they have discriminated in favor of slavery, and ascribe *it*, especially, to the ordination of God.

Patriarchal times were marked by conventional defects and evils; and the patriarchs were far from being free from personal

faults. But certainly these are not recorded for the *imitation* of Christians; nor to furnish a pretext for similar conduct and ways. But the argument against which we contend would teach the contrary, and would go to excuse and justify some very crooked ways, and dark, personal sins.

Abraham went down to Egypt, contrary to the will and word of God; and there—at the peril of his own wife's honor—he received presents from Pharaoh, of which men-servants and maid-servants were a part. But God revealed to Pharaoh the duplicity which Abraham had practiced *through fear*, Sarah's honor was preserved, and the Patriarch returned to the land of promise, chastened in mind, and taking with him the servants he had received. These are historical facts. Gen. XII, 9—20.

We next meet with an historic notice of the famous clan of Abraham—intrepid in war, and devoted to the honor of their chief. With a reference to this historic notice, the ecclesiastical advocates of slavery affirm, that “Abraham held 318 men in slavery at one time.”

At the period to which they refer, the Canaanites had rebelled against their political masters, and a war of re-subjugation had ensued. The victorious kings had departed with their spoils and captives, taking with them Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Tidings of this reached Abraham, and he led forth his clan of 318 spear-men, rescued Lot, and returned to his tents. Gen. XIV.

But in Abraham's clan of intrepid spearmen, our learned adversaries have discovered 318 *poor, miserable, toil-worn chattels* such as they themselves may often have seen.

In turning to the passage, you will observe that the word “servants” does not represent any word in the original text: and the word “armed” should read “led forth” The clan of Abraham had been previously armed and trained, and were worthily trusted with their weapons of war. But here the learned critics urge, that “Those 318 men were all born in Abraham's house.” And the construction they put on the words they use, is to the effect that those 318 spear-men were all “begotten and raised in the negro quarters.” But if it would not be offensive to their critical acumen, we might remind them that the words in the original text admit of a more elevated construction. We might remind them that the word BAH-YITH means not only a *house*, but also an *establishment*, and even a *district*; and the word YAH-LAD, which ordinarily means to be *born*, means also to be *constituted, appointed or made*. And the word which is translated “trained,” is CHAH-NEECH; and its related noun ‘CHAH-NEETH’ means a *spear*; and the ideal meaning of CHAH-NACH—the root of these words—is to *initiate, to instruct, to dedicate*. These particulars are, of course, known to the learned Ecclesiastics.

though they may be slow of heart to admit, that the most probable intent of the record is, that Abraham led forth his clan of 318 spear-men, whom, in his own establishment, he had instructed and disciplined in the art of defensive war.

But these clerical pillars of slavery claim to have another argument, as derived from the history of Abraham. It is in this form:—"Slavery is highly approved of God; for an angel from Heaven arrested the fugitive slave, Hagar, and sent her immediately back to her mistress from whom she had fled." And this they plead as authority for the "Fugitive Slave Law," which they themselves admire.

Hagar was an Egyptian damsel, who came into the family of Abraham, as it would seem, by the gift of Pharaoh—perhaps from his own *seraglio*. She was the attendant and companion of Sarah—a "maid of honor" in the patriarchal house. Sarah was childless, and desired to have a babe by proxy; and, in accordance with oriental ideas and custom, she proposed to Abraham that Hagar should become his subordinate wife. In this new relation, Hagar became proud of her prospective maternity, and she despised Sarah, who complained to Abraham, and he gave consent that Hagar's offensive ways should be repressed. The English Text says that "Sarah dealt hardly with her," and "the margin," that she "afflicted her." The Hebrew verb, AH-NAH, signifies *to answer, to return, to give back or retort*. The weapon which Sarah used was the natural weapon of womanhood, *the tongue*, of which an afflictive use can be made. In this way Sarah afflicted Hagar—and she fled: for she, too, had the natural spirit of a woman within her.

Hagar fled: but Abraham did not pursue; neither did he offer a reward for her being captured, "alive or dead." She went forth on her way, and when she rested beside a fountain of water, she was there found by "the angel of the LORD." Imagine yourselves beside that crystal fountain, beneath the palm tree shade, and listen to the celestial commissioner, while he decides on the rendition of Sarah's maid.

He begins by inquiring into the cause and object of Hagar's flight. He speaks to her in persuasive words of comfort and of hope; for he tells her of *that* which in those days was the *beau ideal* of a youthful woman's heart. He speaks of the myriads that should spring from her maternity, and assures her that the LORD had regarded her affliction, and that her own expected babe would become a free and independent and unconquerable man; and he thus inspires her heart with joyous hope, as giving effect to his command that she should return to Abraham's household, and behave towards Sarah with becoming humility and respect. (Gen. XVI. 7—14.) Such was the rendition of Hagar.

But does it possess any one feature in common with the modern idea and fact of the capture and rendition of a fugitive slave?

It is worthy of remark that the ecclesiastical advocates of slavery overlook one link in the chain of their cited evidence concerning Abraham's bounden servants. They entirely ignore the recorded penalty of improper behavior under the "patriarchal institution." That penalty was expulsion from Abraham's household.—It was a kindly, immediate and absolute emancipation. (Gen. XXI, 9—21.) But this is a species of punishment that has never been recommended by those ecclesiastical teachers, who seek to assure us that "Slavery is a *blessing* to the slave." It may be, that in the benevolence of their hearts they desire and prefer that even *refractory* slaves should be firmly held in the bosom of blessing into which they have been so mercifully brought. They may, indeed, be greatly mistaken. But who would presume to question their sincerity, or the strength and tenderness of their charitable motives and intent?

III. These learned ecclesiastics may have failed to instruct us soundly in the philosophy of History; nevertheless they have confidence in themselves as expert jurists; for they make a confident appeal to the laws of Moses and of God. They affirm that, "In the laws of Moses involuntary and bounden servitude was authorized and approved."

This statement must be weighed. But before we proceed, certain particulars must be premised:—

1. The municipal laws of Moses were enacted *exclusively* for the nation of Israel, and were *provisional* in their intent. They were the provisional laws of a Theocracy, peculiar to that nation alone.

2. It was then customary with persons, when very poor, to *voluntarily* dispose of their rights of liberty and labor, for a maintenance and a home. And, in view of this usage, certain laws were enacted, to restrain the Israelites from taking advantage of the poverty of their brethren, by inducing those poor brethren to barter away their rights of liberty and labor in perpetuity.

3. The law relating to Hebrew servitude was given as a *statute of limitation*, and involved both the principle and form of prohibitory law. The period of bounden service was limited to six years. And into this law of Hebrew servitude, a *sufferance clause* was inserted, permitting the Israelites to purchase the permanent services of certain classes of persons, *from those persons themselves*. This law of Hebrew servitude is recorded in the Book Leviticus; and in the English text, the *sufferance clause* does, we admit, wear an aspect favorable to the untruthful advocacy against which we contend. But the reason of this can be

readily shown. We need only to remind you, that in 1563 the African Slave-trade was commenced by the English nation; in 1603, James Stuart ascended the throne of England, with the title of "James I," and between the years 1604 and 1611, the English version was made by his order; and at that time, slavery and the slave-trade were in full force, under the same royal command.

A translation in accordance with the spirit and intent of the law is this:—"And any subject men-servants or permanent maid-servants that you may acquire, shall be of heathen, who are round about: of them you may buy men-servants and maid-servants. Also of the aliens that sojourn among you, of them you may buy, and of their families that are with you, which they have begotten in your land; them you may retain. And you may retain them for your children after you, to hold by succession, a retained servitude; and you may serve yourselves of them in perpetuity." Levit. xxv.

And now let it be observed that "the heathen round about" were the Canaanites, who, by their exceeding criminality, had justly forfeited their liberty and lives. By the revealed decision of the divine government over the nations, they were convicts, worthy of death: and God had given to Joshua, the leader of Israel, a Sheriff's commission to destroy them from off the face of the earth. This commission had been in part, but only in part, carried into execution. Very many of the Canaanites were permitted to live and remain: but they were not confined in prison and doomed to hard labor for life, but were allowed to live at large, and to dispose of their liberty and labor as they might choose. Now it is well known, that in the freest State on earth, involuntary bonds and labor are penalties of crime: but under the laws of Moses and of God, even the convicted Canaanite criminals *were not doomed to involuntary servitude and bonds*. By the *sufferance clause*, in view, the Israelites were only permitted to purchase "*of them*" their liberty and labor, if they wished to barter away the same. And this permissive law was applicable, also, in respect to any aliens and their families, in the land of Israel, who might wish to settle therein, and, voluntarily, to dispose of their rights of liberty and labor for a permanent maintenance and a home.

The infliction of *involuntary* servitude and bonds was not permitted and sanctioned by law, in the domestic history of the Israelites. But, on the contrary, *man-stealing*, for the purpose of such bondage, was punishable with death:—"He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." (Exod. xxi, 16.) This law was enacted for the protection of the "aliens" in the land, and of the "heathen

who were round about." The crime of man-stealing, and the infliction of forced bondage, was judged a capital offence, because that, next to murder, it was the highest crime known to the laws of Moses, as against a fellow man.

Voluntary service in perpetuity was permitted: and on behalf of the servants thus acquired, certain protective laws were provided and made. For example:—Even the law of "the Sabbath"—which, at present, is confounded by many persons with the spiritual sanctities and activities of "the Lord's day"—even the law of "the Sabbath" sustained a special relation to the relief and welfare of the "servants" of the Israelites. On the return of each seventh day, they were to "do no manner of work;" but were to enjoy perfect and recuperative *rest*. And besides this, every seventh year was ordained *a year of rest*—a season of recreation and gladness in the land. Throughout the year, labor of every kind was prohibited, and spontaneous abundance was promised of God. The whole year was one great holiday proclaimed from Heaven, for the servant, in common with the master whom he served. And further:—The Israelites were not permitted to inflict bodily injury upon their servants: and such injury, if inflicted, canceled the legal claim to service which they had acquired. For example:—It was enacted, that "If a man smite the eye of his man-servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." Exod. xx1, 26, 27.

These, and such like protective laws, qualified the permissive law under review: and that permissive law itself, was subsequently *disowned* of God. The Israelites had abused the *sufferance clause*; and in the days of Isaiah the prophet, the God of Israel condemned the abuse, and revoked the law. Isaiah was commanded to convict the Israelites of their iniquities: and through him, God condemned their *pious* pretensions, while they practiced oppression and wrong. With keen and caustic irony, He poured contempt on *their pious ways*, and expressed his abhorrence of *their "fast days"*—"days of humiliation and prayer;" and condemning such sanctimonious hypocrisy, He said, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?—to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go FREE, and that you BREAK EVERY YOKE?" (Isa. LVIII, 1—6.) But this divine *revocation* the ecclesiastical advocates of slavery are most careful to pass over and ignore, knowing it to be condemnatory of their teaching and ways.

The *sufferance clause* to which they appeal, was *revoked*. But in the Statute Book of Moses, there is a law in relation to

slavery—to involuntary bondage, even such slavery as those ecclesiastical Teachers patronize and admire. That law is the “Fugitive Slave Law” of the Mosaic Code, and it has never been disowned of God. Slavery was established in the surrounding nations; and the law to which we refer reveals God’s own estimate of *involuntary* servitude, and his will concerning freedom for the oppressed. The words of the law are these:—“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, even in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him. Deut. XXIII, 15, 16.

This “Fugitive Slave Law” is founded on principles of justice and mercy, which an intelligent jurist would instantly perceive. For instance:

1. The God of Israel acknowledges in the fugitive from involuntary servitude an oppressed human being, whose desire for freedom is natural, just and right.
2. He acknowledges the inherent right of the oppressed bondman to escape from the service and power of his oppressor.
3. He gives to the escaped man a right to a refuge and a home among the freemen of Israel, from whatever quarter he may have fled:
4. He ordains, by his supreme authority, that the refugee from bondage and oppression shall be surrounded with governmental protection, in the enjoyment of life, liberty and happiness, in the land which had been promised, as a peculiar inheritance, to Abraham and his seed.

By the enactment of this law, the whole land of Israel was constituted a refuge for the oppressed bondmen of all the nations round about. And, when this became known abroad, the Fugitive Slave Law of Moses and of God formed a rainbow of promise and hope, in the view of the bounden and oppressed; on the margin of the gloom that lowered over their hearts: and in the centre of that glorious arch, the angel of liberty appeared, sent from the presence of THE ETERNAL, to smile upon, and beckon to the oppressed, speaking to their hearts of a welcome and a happy home among the sons and daughters of the free.

There is another and diverse “Fugitive Slave Law” recorded elsewhere, of which we will not presume to speak.

It has thus far been shown that the ecclesiastical patrons of Slavedom have spoken untruthfully concerning the word and commandments of the LORD: but we have not yet shown the full measure of their sin. They are professed christians, and avowedly stand under “the Christian Dispensation,” and claim to be “ambassadors for Christ,” and stewards of the mysteries

of God; and they affirm that, "The Christian Revelation affords a direct sanction to slavery; for that, it sanctioned and approved the slavery that existed throughout the ancient Roman world."

But every true christian—every one who is "born of God," and "taught of God," must know that the *genius* of Christianity is opposed to every kind and degree of injustice, impurity and wrong. Whatever *sufferances* may have had a place in the municipal and provisional laws of Moses, (Ezek. xx, 25; Matth. xix, 3—8) the doctrines and commandments of Christ do not tolerate any one act or disposition, that is not in full harmony with the moral perfections and merciful dispositions of the God-head. But the specific arguments of our ecclesiastical adversaries must be examined and weighed.

I. They allege, that "Christianity does not prohibit slavery, nor command the emancipation of slaves."

True:—the Christian Revelation does not say, in so many words, Thou shalt not hold thy fellow man as a chattel, and count him as thine ox, or thy horse. This we concede; and envy not the man who can find aid and comfort in such a concession and plea. There are other forms of moral evil which are not specifically forbidden, in the precise terms of prohibitory law: for Christianity is not an affair of mere formal and external law, which never did, and never can produce internal virtuousness and its corresponding manifestations in practical life. But, the Son of God has taught those whom he came to redeem and save, the true principles of every kind of personal and social virtue, and moral excellence; and he has said, to all his disciples, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is merciful."

II. It is urged by ecclesiastical Teachers, who advocate slavery, that, "Ancient slavery was sanctioned by the *approved* use of the Greek word *doulos*, in the writings of the Apostles."

This Greek term—translated "servant"—had the meaning of *slave*, as used by the heathen who knew not God; and the Apostles did, on certain occasions, use it to indicate a *fact*, as existing in the world; but its *approved* usage in Holy Scripture affords no countenance whatever to its heathen application. The probable *theme or root* of the word is *deō*, to *bind*. But a *free* man may be bound by the requirements of just laws, by the ties of gratitude, and by the dictates of honor; and a *slave* may be "bound with affliction and iron."

In its *approved* Christian usage, and as describing a certain relation to Christ, the term *doulos* is applied to all true christians in general, to the Apostles of Christ in particular, and, prophetically, to the glorified saints, as they shall, hereafter, stand before the throne of God. But the significancy and force of this term, in its *approved*, *heathen* usage, will be manifest, through a concise

description of slavery, as it existed in the ancient Roman world. In Taylor's "Elements of Civil Law," it is thus described:

"The common lot of slaves, in general, was, with the ancients, in many respects, very deplorable. Of their situation, take the following: They were held *pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus*—*for no men, for dead men, for beasts*; nay, they were in a much worse condition than any cattle whatsoever. They had no head in the State, no name, no tribe, no register. They were not capable of being injured; neither could they take by purchase, or by descent—had no heirs, and therefore, of course, could make no will. Exclusive of what was called their *peculium* (necessary subsistence) whatever they acquired, was their master's: they could not plead, nor be pleaded, but were excluded from all *civil concerns whatsoever*. They were not entitled to the rights of matrimony, and therefore had no relief in case of adultery; nor were they proper objects of cognition, nor affinity. They could be sold, transferred, or pawned, as goods or personal estate; for goods they were, and as such they were esteemed. They might be tortured for evidence, punished at the discretion of the master, and by his authority, might even be put to death."

You have now before your minds the significance and force of the term *doulos*, as symbolizing the idea of slavery, as it existed in the Roman world, when the incarnate Son of God walked the earth, and when his Apostles, by the Holy Spirit, established and instructed the Christian Church.

We ask you to ponder this system of ancient slavery—*this concentration of moral vileness*—and understand that it is of this "abominable thing," that the clerical advocates of slavery affirm that it was sanctioned and approved, by the holy and righteous and merciful God.

III. Another argument used by these ecclesiastical Teachers, is, that, "The apostle Paul sanctioned ancient slavery, by commanding every man to abide in the calling in which he was called."

The Apostle Paul does lay down a general rule to the effect that christians should, contentedly, abide in the avocation in which they were called by the grace of God: but he makes an exception to the rule, and that exception is *slavery*. The passage referred to, reads thus:—"Let every man abide in the same calling in which he is called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: (let it not be to thee a matter of anxious, distracting thought) but if thou mayest be free, use it rather. (*If thou art able to become free, avail thyself of liberty, rather than remain in bonds.*) For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freed-man: (the Lord does not sanction his bonds) likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE; BE NOT YE THE SER-

VANTS OF MEN. (I Cor. VII, 20—23.) Here, slavery is the exception to the rule laid down: and herein all christians are commanded never to be *consenting parties* to the usurpation of men, who assert a right of property in their fellow men—assert a right to hold their fellow men “*for no men, for dead men, for beasts.*”

Besides this, the Apostle repeats the rule laid down, with a most significant qualification:—“Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide WITH GOD.” (verse 24.) And we ask you to look again into that manifold form of moral vileness—ancient slavery—and answer for yourselves the question: Was it possible that a true christian, a saint of the Lord, could intentionally and deliberately abide therein as a slaveholder, and therein realize the approving presence and companionship of the holy and blessed God? And does not the above passage show that all christians are bound never to consent to the wicked doctrine that, even men redeemed by the blood of Christ, and made the temples of the Holy Ghost, may be rightfully held *for no men, for dead men, for beasts?* But this exceedingly wicked doctrine is included when ecclesiastical Teachers affirm, that ancient slavery was sanctioned by the Holy Spirit, in the apostles, and so, is approved in the Scriptures of Truth.

The manner in which the apostles sought to purify the Christian Church from the evil of slavery, is worthy of the grace and wisdom of God. They found it, as an existant fact, in the history of many whom divine grace had called and saved; and they did not proceed against it in the way of ecclesiastical censure; nor of formal prohibition and coersive force. They knew that true christians are “born of God,” and so possess a new and holy and heavenly nature; and to this “divine nature” they addressed their appeals and commands—founding all Christian exhortation and precepts on the fact of present salvation in Christ. The manner in which they dealt with slavery as an existant fact, we will proceed to show:

In two of the epistles of Paul, certain commands are given to servants and to masters, who were alike called and saved by the grace of God, and were united in the one fellowship of the Christian Church. We speak of this, keeping in mind the argument supposed to be involved in the fact that slaveholders were saved, and were received into the communion of the Church. And our reply to any such thought, is that the Son of God came to “save his people *from their sins.*” He first grants them salvation, and then causes them to experience and exemplify its purifying and elevating power.

The two epistles of Paul to which we refer, were written to churches of recent origin and standing, in the confession of

Christ. And from the fact that no such distinct commands are found in any other epistles to the churches, it would appear that slavery had ceased to be tolerated in churches of longer standing and growth.

The first instance to which we refer is in the, so called, "epistle to the Ephesians," but which was not written to the church in Ephesus,* which was primarily composed of *Jews* who believed, and where Paul had labored during two years. The epistle in question was written to a church composed entirely of *Gentiles*, whom Paul had not yet seen, but of whose faith and love he had heard.

The commands to the servants are these:—"Servants, be obedient to the masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, AS UNTO CHRIST; not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as TO THE LORD, and not unto men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether bond or free."

In this way Paul seeks to elevate the minds of the servants; and, wisely, banishes the idea of the master (*the slaveholder*) from their view, presenting to them CHRIST instead. And now, observe how the commands given to the servants, directly govern those given to the masters:—"And ye masters, DO THE SAME THINGS TO THEM, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

The masters are thus commanded to cultivate the same principles of Christian obedience, and to observe the same rules of conduct as were enjoined upon the servants:—"DO THE SAME THINGS TO THEM." The masters are thus commanded to behave themselves with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as UNTO CHRIST, doing the will of God, as being themselves the SERVANTS OF CHRIST; acting, in all respects, with good will AS TO THE LORD. In a word, they were to behave to the servants AS UNTO CHRIST. In the active presence of such principles of godliness, slavery could no longer exist.

The other passage in which the same principles are inculcated is in the epistle to the church in Colosse, which also was of recent origin, and needed the same purifying process through the truth. The commands to the servants are substantially the same; but in that to the masters there is a notable variation: "Ye masters give unto the servants that which is JUST AND

* Dr. Paley has collated the evidence which proves that the epistle was not written to the church in Ephesus. There is good reason for concluding that it was written to the church in Laodicea, and is the epistle to which Paul refers in Col. iv. 16.

EQUAL; knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

In this way Paul instructed the masters that they were no longer to avail themselves of the Roman law and custom which defined the *peculium* of a servant or that which merely sufficed as a subsistence; neither were they to exact the labor of the servants as a prescriptive right; nor were they at all to reap the fruits of unremunerated service. But they were to pay the value of the work performed; for, in this way only could they render to the servants that which is just. But they were to do more than this: they were also to render to the servants that which is EQUAL. That which is JUST, relates to the value of the *service* performed; but that which is EQUAL, relates to the *persons* of those who served; and whose social rights as men and as christians, were no longer to be ignored, but whom the masters were to treat with equity and honor; for in this way only could they render that which is EQUAL, as well as that which is JUST: and, in this way only could they render a duteous obedience and homage to the will of their Master in heaven, who had said "All things whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so them."

We now ask you to ponder these instructive and corrective injunctions, as given to men, found and saved by the grace of God, while in the position of slaveholders, according to the laws and customs of the Roman world. Think of those men as saved and sanctified by the grace and the Spirit of God; as being "sons of God, and temples of the Holy Ghost." Think of them as having received these principles of God and of godliness into their understanding and heart, and answer for yourselves the question:—"Was it possible that they could any longer sustain or countenance the system of slavery, in the midst of which they had been reared? Was it possible that they could any longer hold and treat their fellow men, and fellow christians, as chattel slaves? Was it possible that they could ever again call together their fellow men, and fellow christians, and count them, according to Roman law and custom, "pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus—for no men, for dead men, for beasts?" But if they could not, then was slavery cast out of their hearts as a heathen abomination, and by their christian conscience it was utterly condemned.

This divine method of purifying the church from slavery, was unspeakably more efficacious than the formal enactment of a prohibitory law. The emancipation of the servants was not commanded in so many formal words, but their freedom and welfare were most effectually secured. The domestic establishment might still consist of the same persons; but the former relation of slaveholder and slave, must, of necessity, have been

annulled. To this conclusion we are led by the evidence adduced.

IV. But if our conclusion does not agree with *recorded fact*, it cannot be maintained: and the ecclesiastical advocates of slavery allege, as a *recorded fact*, that the apostle Paul sent back the fugitive slave, Onesimus, into the bonds of slavery, as then established throughout the Roman world."

This statement must be tested, by means of the evidence supplied in Paul's epistles—particularly his epistle to Philemon, in which the alleged *fact* is said to be shown.

The particulars of the case are manifestly these:—According to the laws and customs of the Roman world, Philemon had been the master, and Onesimus the slave. Onesimus was also Philemon's brother "in the flesh;" that is, by the same father, but not by the same mother. The mother of Onesimus was a slave at the time of his birth. This can be readily understood. Now it would appear that the father of these two sons had died, and that Philemon had succeeded to his late father's estate. The chattels real and chattels personal, had become his by common law; and Onesimus, having been born of a slave mother, was included in the chattels personal of the estate.

Onesimus fled from the house of Philemon, and from the city of Colosse, and arrived at Rome. There he was converted to God through the testimony of Paul: and Paul being then a prisoner, on account of the Gospel, Onesimus became a solace to him in his bonds.

At that time, the Apostle was about to send epistles to the Churches in Colosse and Laodicea, one great object of which—as we have shown—was to purify those Churches from the sin and defilement of slavery. And, according to the wisdom given him of God, Paul judged it right to send Onesimus with Tychicus, as joint-bearers of his epistle to the Church in Colosse, where Philemon dwelt, and whence Onesimus had fled. They were to act together as Commissioners Apostolic—representing Paul, and making known that which had been accomplished in the Church in Rome. But Paul directed Onesimus to return, in the first instance, to the house of Philemon, and deliver to him the personal epistle, in which is the chief evidence that Onesimus was *not* returned as a fugitive slave to his master and his former bonds.

In his epistle to Philemon, Paul intimates that he might have rightfully retained Onesimus, as one whom Christ had made free, and in a service which Philemon himself would have rendered, had he been at Rome. He also shows that, by virtue of his *authority* as an Apostle of Christ, he might have *commanded* Philemon to emancipate Onesimus: but by such an act of "authority," the obedience of Philemon would be caused to seem

more like an act of necessity, than of spontaneous obedience to the principles of Christ. This, the Apostle was most desirous to avoid. He therefore preferred to use the language of affectionate entreaty: and his persuasive request for the favorable reception of Onesimus, as a *freeman* and fellow saint is thus expressed:—"For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever—NOT NOW AS A SERVANT, BUT ABOVE A SERVANT, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, RECEIVE HIM AS MYSELF.

In this wise and efficacious way, the Apostle Paul besought Philemon to receive Onesimus with favor and honor, as a *fellow freeman, and as his brother* "in the flesh and in the Lord;" yea, as he would receive the embodiment of Paul's inward and most tender affection; even as he would receive and treat Paul himself. (Phile. 12—17.) And it is marvelous, how men, professing to be students and expositors of the Holy Scripture, can possibly call this "the rendition of Onesimus into the bonds of slavery, by the act and authority of the Apostle Paul." Let any man ponder this affair in the light of internal evidence, and believe that the epistle to Philemon was effective unto the end which Paul sought to obtain; and if, afterwards, he can discern any mark or trace of slavery remaining on Onesimus, then must he also be able to discern the *black* vestment of sorrow, in a mantle as *white* as snow.

We now revert for a moment to the epistles to the churches in Colosse and Laodicea.

The immediate object of Paul's epistle to Philemon being accomplished, Tychicus and Onesimus were presented to the church in Colosse, as Commissioners Apostolic, the bearers of Paul's epistles; in which capacity they were accredited in these words:—"All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord; whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose that he might know your state, and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known to you all things that are done here." Col. IV, 7—9.

Onesimus stood in the midst of the church in Colosse—not as a returned fugitive slave—but as an accredited commissioner from the apostle Paul. Philemon being prominent in the church and present on the occasion, would be an object of exceeding interest; and his dutiful and godly conduct towards his brother Onesimus, would be an example of exceeding power, for purifying the church from the sin and defilement of slavery. And

Paul, being intent on the great objects he had at heart, directed that when his epistle had been read in the Colossian church, it should be caused to be read also in the church at Laodicea; and that the Colossian church should read the epistle that would be forwarded to them from Laodicea. These two epistles are, in many respects, complementary, each to the other: and Paul evidently intended, among other objects, that these (together with his epistle to Philemon, and the manumission and honorable mission of Onesimus) should act and react, until those churches were purified from the heathen custom and fact of slavery—having cast out from among them “that abominable thing.”

The ecclesiastical admirers of ancient and modern slavery tell us falsely of the rendition of Onesimus, into the bonds of degradation and iron: (and in this way they defame the apostle Paul) but we tell them truly of his emancipation and honor, by the holy will of God.

Here we might rest our case. There is, however, an additional form of fancied argument, which ought not, perhaps, to be passed over in silence, though it is but an instance of *petitio principii*, at the most. We refer to the statement that, “In the days of the apostles, slavery existed throughout the Roman Empire, but the apostles did not agitate and labor to have it rooted out.”

This statement is true; but the inference sought to be drawn from it is exceedingly false. It is inferentially assumed that, whatever the apostles did not labor to have exterminated from the face of the earth, they sanctioned and approved in the name of the Lord. We need not insist on the sinfulness of such a thought: but a few remarks may be of use:—

When the Son of God became incarnate, he did not come to “judge the world;” neither did he *then* come to legislate for the nations of the earth. He came in the way of grace and mercy, to save sinners—to save men out of the world: and his commandments, statutes and ordinances were given for the observance of his own disciples, *as such*. And, in accordance with his own mission, and work of personal redemption and salvation, his apostles were sent forth. They were sent as the accredited messengers of grace and truth, and to be the subordinate founders and purifiers of the christian church. But the apostles of Christ were *not politicians*; neither had they any commission to be, or seek to be, reformers of national customs and laws. They were true to their mission of mercy: and, within their appointed sphere, they labored with fidelity and zeal. So intent were they on the moral purification of the church, that they were able to say to christians, “We have labored to present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ” But, the apostles had no commis-

sion, or authority, to legislate for the world; nor to act as correctors of public manners and morals in the world. And, *they* knew how to prosecute the ends of their own proper calling, as "ambassadors for Christ," and to keep within their divinely appointed sphere. Hence we find the apostle Paul say, "What have I to do with them that are without?"—and again: "Them that are without, God judgeth." But the writings of the apostles show that, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." And the apostle James (*in the way of apostrophe*) warns and denounces *all* men who have grown rich and powerful by means of the unpaid labor of other men. He says, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days. BEHOLD THE HIRE OF THE LABORERS WHO HAVE REAPED DOWN YOUR FIELDS, WHICH IS OF YOU KEPT BACK BY FRAUD, CRIETH: AND THE CRIES OF THEM WHO HAVE REAPED ARE ENTERED INTO THE EARS OF THE LORD OF HOSTS." James v, 1—4.

Here is apostolic testimony, which declares that God is the avenger of the oppressed laborer; and that He will tread the oppressor in the dust.

We undertook to defend the honor of the Holy Scriptures against the misrepresentation made by ecclesiastical Teachers, who approve and defend the slavery of both ancient and modern times: and the result is now before your minds.

Those whose advocacy and arguments we have examined, had appealed to "Moses and the prophets;" and being tested by the Scriptures of Israel, they are found to have spoken untruthfully concerning the mind and will and ways of God. They had appealed to the Christian Revelation, and, being tried by the inspired writings of the apostles, they are found to have betrayed the sacred honor of the Christian Faith.





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