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THE BIBLE

GIVES NO SANCTION TO SLAVERY.

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BY A TENNESSEAN.  
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Honest men, and even those that are Christians, are liable to interpret the Sacred Scriptures by modern customs and practices, and consequently, are prone to form erroneous opinions in respect to the teachings of the Sacred Oracles. When persons, brought up in a slaveholding country, in which men, women and children are bought and sold as slaves, read in the Old Testament of the Hebrews buying servants, they are very liable to receive the impression that Slavery existed and was sanctioned under the old dispensation. Hence, commentators generally, and most of readers have believed, that Slavery did exist by the laws of Moses, and therefore did have the Divine sanction. Not a few profess to believe that God did give his people, under the old dispensation, the privilege of holding slaves, and that he has not abolished it under the new, and that the relation of master and slave is a Scriptural relation, and, of course, not in itself wrong. Such belief, and the teachings under it, have brought great reproach upon the Christian system, and have arrayed the natural humanity of many against the Bible, and driven them into hopeless infidelity. It is, therefore, highly important to defend the Scripture from

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such interpretation, and from the consequent charge of giving sanction to slaveholding.

Before proceeding to interpret the Scriptures in relation to Slavery, it is proper to state some just rules of interpretation which should be adopted by all interpreters.

*First.* The Scriptures being inspired, their several parts can involve no contradiction. All the laws given and sentiments presented must entirely harmonize. A true interpretation will exhibit harmony, a false one will present discord and contradiction.

*Second.* Obscure and doubtful passages are to be so interpreted as to accord with what we do know the Scriptures teach. No passages rightly interpreted can contradict the known teachings of the inspired volume.

*Third.* As the practice of the Hebrew people did, to a great extent, contravene the law of God, nothing beyond what is written, is to be determined by what they did as a nation.

*Fourth.* The Scriptures must not be interpreted by any modern custom, such as buying and selling slaves.

Let us then, in view of these rules, enter upon the investigation of the sacred oracles, to see whether they do or do not give any sanction to the system of oppression that exists in our slaveholding States.

*First.* What does the Old Testament teach on this subject? What is the general sentiment of the law and the prophets, in relation to our fellow-men? Let the infallible Son of God answer. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets," *Matt.* vii, 12. The teaching then of the Old Testament, the law and the prophets, is, that we shall love our fellow-men as ourselves. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the ful-

filling of the law," *Rom. xiii, 9, 10.* Such is the interpretation of the Old Testament law. It enjoins the love that "works no ill to his neighbor." It follows then, of course, that it forbids any system of injury to our fellow-beings. It forbids us to hold men in a condition in which we would not ourselves be held; consequently, the Old Testament does forbid all such systems of oppression as now exist in the slaveholding States. Therefore all the laws and institutions of the Old Testament ought to be so interpreted as to accord with the great and leading sentiments of these ancient Scriptures, as presented by the Saviour, and not so as to harmonize with a modern system of cruelty and oppression, inconceivably more wicked than any instituted by the more barbarous nations of the earth.

It will be in order to notice a passage found in *Gen. ix, 25, 26, 27,* "And he said, cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant, God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." They that advocate the rightfulness of slaveholding, affirm that this curse included all the posterity of Ham, that it consigned all of them to slavery, and that the Africans all descended from him, and therefore are rightfully held in perpetual bondage according to the revealed will and purpose of God, and that they are by him designedly fitted for such condition; consequently, they affirm that no nation descended from Ham has ever risen to eminence among the nations of the earth. All this is mere assertion, unfounded and false. There is no evidence that any of Ham's posterity, except Canaan and his descendants, were included in this direful curse. Was not Nimrod, the founder of Babylon and Ninevah, a de-

scendant of Ham? Was not Egypt the mother of literature, arts and sciences? And was she not powerful among the nations of antiquity? Were not the Ethiopians respectable and formidable? Were not the Carthagenians the most energetic opponents of the Roman domination? Were not all these the descendants of Ham, and were they not the first to found mighty cities and empires, and to become eminent among the nations of the earth? The assertion that none of Ham's descendants have arisen to eminence and power among the nations is not true.

*Second.* It is evident that the curse pronounced against Canaan is a mere prediction, and as such is no rule of conduct; and therefore it proves nothing with respect to the rightfulness of slavery, nor is there any evidence that slavery was the thing predicted. The word servant is a general term, including all kinds of servants, without specifying any one kind, and therefore never can be made to prove anything either for or against the rightfulness of slaveholding. There is no such definite term as that of the English word slave found in the original Scriptures, consequently, the translators have never in a single instance translated any one of the original words into the definite term slave. The term slave occurs once in our translation of the Old Testament. *Jer.* ii, 14, "Is he a home born *slave*." But here it is a supplement by the translators, and not from the Hebrew, and it should have been servant and not slave. The word *slaves* occurs, *Rev.* xviii, 13, "Slaves and souls of men." The Greek is *somaton*, bodies and souls of men. It is not any one of the words translated into the term servant, and there is no word in the original Scriptures that answers definitely to the word slave. The fact that the translators have never so rendered any of the original words is sufficient proof, consequently, from the term ser-

vant, nothing can be proved with respect to the kind of servitude intended, and therefore it cannot be proved that slavery was the thing predicted by Noah's curse. The history of the fulfillment of it shows, that national subjugation was the thing predicted, and not slavery. The Hebrew men in Egypt were compelled to work in the service of the King, and in that respect were servants; but not personal property, not slaves. The Hebrews, who had been servants in Egypt, took possession of the land of Canaan and of all the Canaanites possessed, so far as they were subjugated. And the nations that were not destroyed were reduced to tributaries. In these respects, the Hebrews enjoyed the fruits of the labor of the descendants of Canaan. In this sense, Canaan in his descendants, was a servant of servants. That is, a servant of those that had been servants in Egypt. The Hebrews did not make slaves of the Canaanites. It is true, that the Gibeonites were compelled to labor in the service of the temple; but they were not made personal property, nor is there any reason to believe that they labored without wages. They had wives and children, and how could they, without wages, have supported them? From the sacred records, it appears that the Gibeonites possessed houses and lands, and held property as other free people did, and were not slaves. In consequence of the oppression of the Gibeonites by Saul, the Lord sent three years' famine upon Israel.—2 *Sam.* xxi, 1-14.

When the Hebrew nation was subdued by the descendants of Japhet, who, to a considerable extent, took possession of their houses and lands, and thus dwelt in the tents of Shem, the Canaanites were tributary to them, and in this respect Canaan was a servant to Japhet. The Canaanites have long since ceased to be a distinct people. The prediction has long since been fulfilled, and

was never intended to extend to modern times. The introduction of this prediction to sustain a modern system of slavery, exhibits a great want of argument, and the extreme folly of the advocates of oppression. Silly and absurd as is the argument for slavery, drawn from the curse of Noah, it is a fair specimen of the pro-slavery arguments in general. It will be found that none of them have any better foundation.

The case of Abraham is next in order. It is affirmed that he, the father of the faithful, held slaves, and that what he did, his children may safely do. But then, Abraham had two wives at the same time. May his children have two wives? The case of Abraham might be dismissed, by stating that he was a fallible man, liable to err in practice, like other men, and therefore, if he had held slaves, that would not prove that slaveholding is right.

There is no evidence that Abraham was a slaveholder. The fact that Abraham sometimes bought persons with his money, does not prove that he held such persons as slaves. It is reasonable to believe that Abraham was a benevolent man, and as such would be prompted to buy captives, in order to release them from cruelty and oppression, and we may suppose, that persons under such circumstances, would readily enter into his service, and be glad to secure his protection. Such a supposition accords well with the spirit of true religion, which, it must be admitted, Abraham did possess. It is more reasonable to believe that such was the practice of Abraham, than that he held human beings as property. This seems the more probable from the fact, that when Hagar fled from Sarah, Abraham used no means to reclaim her. Another fact that bears upon this point is, that Sarah urged Abraham to cast out the bond-woman, and her son; for, said she,



“The son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son.”—*Gen. xxi, 10.* Sarah does not seem to recognize any property right in this bond-woman. She did not urge Abraham to sell her; but simply to turn her away, lest her son should be heir with Isaac. From what consideration Hagar was bound to Sarah, does not appear. The facts in the case are against the existence of the property relation. According to the property relation, Ishmael, instead of being heir with Isaac, would have been a slave, and heired by Isaac. Abraham sent Hagar and her son away as being free. He claimed no right of property in them, nor is there any reason to believe that Hagar was held as a slave. The fact then, that Abraham bought persons with his money, is no evidence that he made them slaves. In all ages of the world, benevolent men have been prompted by humanity, to give their money to release persons from cruelty and oppression. British officers have sometimes purchased American prisoners from the Indians, in order to save them being murdered with savage cruelty. We have a right to suppose that Abraham did the same thing, unless the opposite can be proved.

Again, it is a fact, that a servant born in Abraham's house might be his heir. *Gen. xv, 3,* “So, one born in my house is mine heir.” This shows that Abraham's servants were his adopted children. Kings in that age were fathers. Their subjects were real and adopted children. And that Abraham was a patriarchal king is evident from a variety of facts. 1. As such he was confederate with other kings, *Gen. xiv, 13,* “And these were confederate with Abram.” *Gen. xxi, 22-32,* “Abimelech and Phicol, the chief captains of his host, made a covenant with Abraham.” 2. As a king, he trained his subjects for war *Gen. xiv, 14,* “He armed

his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen." And as a king, he made war and conquered several kings, *Gen.* xiv, 9-15. 3. The authority Abraham conferred upon his eldest servant, and the oath he required of him, show that Abraham acted as a king, and that the servant was his prime minister; and as such he was in authority even over Isaac, who had then come to years of maturity. 4. Abraham must have been a king, and his servants voluntary subjects, because, unprotected by civil government as he was, he could not have held so many persons to involuntary service. He must have had several thousand servants. He had three hundred and eighteen grown men that had been born in his own house. If we suppose an equal number of females born in his house, we shall have six hundred and thirty-six persons, besides the parents and all the children born during the time these were coming to maturity. A thing so absolutely absurd, as that Abraham, unprotected by civil government, could hold so great a number of persons in Slavery, it seems to me, none but an advocate for Slave-holding can believe. Who would dare to arm three hundred and eighteen involuntary slaves, and march them against an enemy? What neighborhood in any of our Slave States would not tremble at seeing so many slaves under arms? How careful are the inhabitants of the Slave States to keep weapons of death out of the hands of the slaves. 5. When Abraham is represented as being rich, his servants are not mentioned. *Gen.* xiii, 2, "And Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." When he is represented as being great, his servants are mentioned as well as his cattle, and silver, and gold, *Gen.* xxiv, 35. Subjects as well as wealth add to a man's greatness, and therefore, man-servants and maid-servants are mentioned when it is said, "he is become great."

Numerous subjects add to the greatness of a king. 6. Abraham is expressly called a mighty prince, *Gen.* xxiii, 6, "Thou art a mighty prince." From the facts presented, it is evident that Abraham was a patriarchal king, and that his servants were voluntary subjects and not slaves. The government of Abraham was strictly religious. For this we have the Divine testimony, *Gen.* xviii, 19, "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Abraham and his subjects constituted but one household, one religious community, that acted according to justice and judgment. Abraham was the religious teacher and civil ruler. He was a royal priest, called and chosen of God to propagate true religion. In all the sacred records, we do not find in a mere man, a more striking example of devotion and piety, than that of Abraham's servant, who was sent, in princely state, to select a wife for Isaac. How striking the contrast, between Abraham and the *patriarchs* of the South, with their ignorant, degraded, naked and hungry slaves, forced to their tasks by the overseer's lash. Abraham held his subjects as children, among whom he propagated knowledge and religion. The Southern *patriarchs* hold their subjects as property, to be bought and sold as if beasts; consign them to ignorance, degradation and vice; and, under severe penalties, prohibit them from learning to read a sentence in the sacred volume.

The pro-slavery argument, founded upon the Mosaic institutions, now claims notice. This is deemed by far the most plausible argument.

It is, that God instituted slavery in his Church under the old dispensation, and did not forbid it under the new. If it was a privilege to hold slaves under the former dis-

dispensation, it is equally so under the present. The new dispensation was not intended to lessen, but to enlarge the privileges of God's people. In support of this position, the advocates of this *precious privilege* of turning human beings into mere animals, and using them as appendages to their own being, introduce *Lev. xxv, 44, 45, 46,* "Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you : of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land : and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen forever ; but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule over one another with rigor." It must be admitted that the Lord did institute the servitude here intended, and it seems evident that he did approve it. It must also be conceded, that the Lord, being the true owner, had a right to consign the heathen to Slavery as a punishment for crime, as civil governments send men to the penitentiary in consequence of the violation of the law. But if the Lord did, as a punishment, consign a particular people to slavery, that would not justify the enslavement of any other people.

The institution of slavery among the Israelites, could not give such right in any other case. If then, we were compelled to admit, that God instituted slavery in Israel, that could not justly be brought to justify American Slavery. If the Israelites held slaves, they had a warrant from the true owner. When the American slaveholder produces such a warrant for slaveholding, all will admit his claims.

It cannot be proved that the servitude instituted was slavery. It has been said that Moses found slavery among the Israelites, and could not safely abolish it at once, and therefore, he made such regulations as would gradually extinguish it. But it is absurd to suppose, that Moses, acting by Divine authority, and in view of the lightnings and thunderings of Mount Sinai, could not safely abolish slavery, had it existed in Israel. It should be remembered that the Israelites had just come from a land in which they had been compelled to make brick without straw, and of course, had no slaves. If slavery existed in Israel, it was by Divine institution, after the exit from Egypt. To suppose that God instituted slavery among his people, is to suppose that he did that which none but a madman would do in Ohio or Pennsylvania. Would any but a madman introduce slavery into a free State? God brought his people out of Egypt in order to propagate religion, and is it reasonable to believe, that he would institute among them a system utterly subversive of the end for which he established them in Canaan? Who does not know, that slavery subverts religion, by producing the most degrading vices? Who can look upon the soul-destroying influences of American slavery, and believe that God instituted a similar system in his Church? It is then, most unreasonable to believe, that the Lord did institute slavery among his people. Let us now see whether the passage presented does prove the institution of such system. Nothing can be proved by the terms bond-men and bond-maids. These terms do not express the kind of bondage intended. In the Greek translation, the words are *pais*, a boy, and *pauliski*, a girl. Both the boy and girl who shall be to you shall be of the heathens who are round about you. *Ap auton klesasthi doulon kar*

*doulou*; of them ye shall obtain a male servant and a female servant. The Greek terms, like those of the Hebrew and the English, do not determine the kind of servants to be obtained. They do not definitely mean Slaves; and therefore nothing can be proved from the terms, because they are general and applicable to all kinds of servants. It cannot be proved from the circumstances that slaves were intended. The fact that they were bought or obtained, does not prove that the persons so obtained were slaves. This may be true of servants that are not slaves. Such servants formerly existed in this country. They were bought with money, and might be left as an inheritance to children in case the parents died before the term of service expired, and yet they were not slaves; they held property, and made contracts as freemen, and yet they were bound to service, and in that sense were bond-men, but not the property of another. The service was voluntary and for wages. Many in this way, paid their passage from Europe in former times. Apprentices are bond-men, and in some cases receive stripes, yet they are not slaves. A slave, in our sense of the term, is one that is held as property; a mere rational *thing*, used for the owner's benefit. That God ever placed his rational creatures in such condition, is hard to believe.

The fact that it is said, "They shall be your bond-men for ever," does not prove that they were slaves. The same persons could not be held forever. The meaning is, that they might forever in this way keep up a succession of servants. In this way, they might forever serve themselves of the heathen. That slavery was instituted in Israel, cannot be proved from this passage. The proslavery interpretation of it is not true. If the passage is obscure and difficult, it ought to be so interpreted as to

harmonize with other laws and institutions, and especially with the teaching and sentiment of the Old Testament: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Now, according to the law, I am considering the servants were to be bought, not taken in war, not forced to service, as is the case with slaves. The Israelites made so many conquests, that they could easily, without purchase, have supplied themselves with slaves, if that had been allowed. If they had not regarded the principles of justice, they could easily have forced into slavery the strangers that dwelt among them. From these circumstances, it is reasonable to believe, that they purchased such poor heathen and sojourners, as chose to sell themselves to service for a term of years, and that the difference between these and Hebrew servants was, that they might contract for a longer term, and might, by scourging, be coerced to fill their contract, while the Hebrew servants could not be so treated. They must be treated as hired servants. The bought servant became an adopted son during the time of service, as such, was circumcised and admitted to the passover, and became an Israelite by profession, and took the rank of his master's family. The hired Gentile servant was not admitted to the passover: "A hired servant shall not eat thereof;" and therefore, he enjoyed less privilege than the bought servant. That persons did thus sell themselves is clearly stated in the context, *Lev. xxv, 47, 48*, "And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger, he may be redeemed." Thus, by this state-

ment of the manner in which persons sold themselves to service, we are enabled to understand the law of servitude, and to determine the kind of servants that existed in Israel. They were such persons as sold themselves to service, and were compensated for their services. There was nothing wrong in procuring servants in this way. This view of the servitude in Israel is doubtless the true one. In Israel there were no slave markets, and no cases of persons selling slaves under the Hebrew laws, nor of any person buying a slave from a third person. As a punishment, and to make restitution, persons were sold for theft, but not as slaves. The sale of persons for debt sometimes occurred, in times of declension in piety, and consequent oppression, *2 Kings*, iv, 5. But this was not authorized by the Divine law. The oppressive creditor came to take the two sons of a widow for bond-men. Such oppression as this, there is no reason to believe that God approved. These were Hebrews, whom God had said should not be sold as bond-men.

The fact, that the servant is said to be the master's money, is not against the interpretation I have given. The reference is to *Exod.* xxi, 20, 21, If the servant died under his master's hand, the master should be punished as a murderer; but if the servant continued a day or two, the master should not be punished, "for he is his money." The meaning is, that inasmuch as the master had paid his money for the services of the servant, it was to be presumed that he did not kill him; but that the servant died of some disease. A man would not be likely to throw away his money by killing a servant he had bought. Nothing can be more detestable than the proslavery interpretation, that because the servant was his master's property, therefore it was not murder to kill him.



This is truly making a man a mere rational *thing*, which the owner may kill if he chooses.

The interpretation now given, is confirmed by other laws and recorded facts, *Deut.* x, 18, 19, "The Lord loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." To make a man a slave is inconsistent with the love here enjoined. *Exod.* xxii, 21, "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." What could more vex and oppress the stranger than to make him a slave. Nothing could be more inconsistent with these laws than slavery. *Deut.* xxiv, 14, 15, "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee." This shows how strictly the Lord guarded the rights of the poor, both Hebrews and Gentiles; but according to pro-slavery interpretation, if this poor man had been so unfortunate as to have been stolen and sold as a slave, then one might take his labor and his liberty life-long, without compensation. According to this, it appears that when a man is so unfortunate as to be made a slave, he is placed beyond even the protection and compassion of his Creator. How unreasonable to believe that the Lord would protect the poor hireling from being robbed of a single day's labor, and yet suffer one, poorer still, to be robbed with impunity, life-long. *Deut.* xxiii, 15, 16, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of

thy gates where it liketh him best : thou shalt not oppress him." The servitude in Israel was right, because according to the Divine law, and therefore, it is unreasonable to apply this law to servants in Israel. The servants among the heathen were slaves, that had been either stolen or taken as captives in war, and therefore, unjustly held. To deliver such to their masters would be both unjust and cruel, because it would be not only delivering the slave to unjust bondage, but also to cruel treatment. It would be man-stealing of the worst form, and consequently, the nation of Israel was prohibited from delivering up the slaves of the surrounding nations, no difference how powerful they might be, or how great might be the peril resulting. This law shows strikingly God's abhorrence of slaveholding, and his sympathy with the fugitive slave. He would sooner jeopardize a nation's peace than have a single fugitive slave delivered to his master. This law involves a fundamental moral principle ; that is, "the love that worketh no ill to his neighbor," and "is the fulfilling of the law," and therefore, is of perpetual obligation. Consequently, the late fugitive law of Congress, is high-handed rebellion against God, and must not be obeyed even at the peril of life. It is practical atheism ; it is the establishment of an American inquisition, with inquisitors in every county, to persecute, fine and imprison the most humane and pious citizens for obeying God, and the dictates of humanity and conscience.

*Exod. xxi, 16,* "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." The design of stealing a man, is that of making gain by enslaving him ; and therefore, the meaning of this law is, he that makes a man a slave, sells or holds him as such, shall surely be put to death. God

annexed the same penalty to making a man a slave, that he did to murdering a man. Is it not unreasonable to believe, that God would make it death to reduce a man to slavery, and yet allow his people to hold him as such when enslaved? If his people bought slaves of the heathen, they were persons that had either been stolen or taken captives in war, which is in fact the same thing as stealing them, and to buy such and hold them as slaves would have been no better than to steal them at once, and save the purchase money.

It is easy to see that the pro-slavery interpretation throws the laws and institutions of the Old Testament into absolute confusion. It makes law to conflict with law, and sentiment with sentiment, in contradiction wild, and confused as original chaos. It is no wonder that in such view of the Sacred Oracles, the world is becoming full of infidels. The Lord, by the law of Jubilee, guarded the system of servitude in Israel against becoming a system of slavery. *Lev. xxv, 10*, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and shall proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof." No contract for service could extend beyond the year of Jubilee. This was a type of the gospel which was to be proclaimed to every creature; and, of course, the proclamation of Jubilee was to every rational creature in the land of Israel. Consequently, slavery could not exist in Israel as a Divine institution. The teaching of the prophets was directly against all oppression. No other sin is so often mentioned and rebuked as that of oppression. By them God commanded every yoke of oppression to be broken. *Isaiah lviii, 6*, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" When the Jews held their brethren to

service beyond contract, God sent Jeremiah to demand their release. At first obedience was rendered, and the oppressed were liberated, and then were again reduced to service, and for that the nation was doomed "to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine," and to dispersion among all nations. *Jer.* xxxiv, 8-22. No other sin has God more signally punished than that of the oppression of holding men in bondage. And the facts presented in Jeremiah and Isaiah, show that bondage beyond contract is one kind of oppression forbidden by the prophets, and it is expressly said, "Thou shalt not vex a stranger, neither shalt thou oppress him." If it is oppression to hold a Jew in bondage beyond his contract, it is equally oppression to hold a Gentile in bondage beyond his contract, and hence God commands the breaking of every yoke, whether it be upon the neck of the Jew or of the Gentile.

Thus it is just as clear as the sunbeams in the heavens, that slavery is prohibited by the law and the prophets. The servitude of the Old Testament was by voluntary contract, and for just compensation. It inferred no degradation. *1 Chron.* ii, 34, 35, "Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife." The servant in Israel being an adopted son, took the rank of his master's family, and like an apprentice with us, might marry his master's daughter. Hence, at the anointing of Saul, when Samuel made a feast, he "took Saul, and his servant, and brought them into the parlor, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden." *1 Sam.* ix, 22. These facts show clearly, that the servant, whether Jew or Gentile, took the rank of his master's family, and that no degradation attended the servitude instituted in Israel. The servant in Israel

could hold his own property, and make his own contracts. 2 *Sam.* ix, 10, "Ziba, Saul's servant, had fifteen sons and twenty servants." This implies that he was a man of extensive property, and of course, made his own contracts, else how could he procure such property, and employ so many servants.

The view now given of the servitude instituted in Israel, is in accordance with reason and right; it harmonizes the laws and institutions of the Old Testament, and is clearly sustained by the law and the prophets; it presents the divine institutions in a lovely aspect, the banners of liberty and mercy waved upon the mountains of Israel in view of the surrounding nations, in which were the habitations of darkness, oppression and cruelty. Israel, as a nation, was designed to be the example and light of the ancient world, and her laws and institutions were calculated to make her the glory of the world. The celebrated republics of Greece and Rome were infinitely behind the theocracy of Israel. In this favored nation the God of mercy held his throne, and no crouching slave sat beneath his feet to disgrace his land. Shame on the Christian minister that would move his pen to fasten upon God's holy institutions a charge so deep, and dark, and horrible as that of sustaining slavery.

The pro-slavery argument, founded on the teachings of Christ and his Apostles, will now be considered. It is affirmed by the advocates of slavery, that Christ did not forbid slaveholding, and therefore it is not wrong. Christ, say they, would certainly have forbidden it, if sinful. The truth of this affirmation may be justly questioned. Christ re-affirmed the law and the prophets, and gave them his highest sanction, and made them the rule of action under the new dispensation. *Matt.* v, 17-19, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the

prophets : I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven or earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." *Matt.* xxii, 36-40, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law ? Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." *Matt.* vii, 12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets." From these passages, it is as clear as truth can be, that Christ does make the law and the prophets the rule of Christian conduct. He enjoins all that the law and the prophets enjoin, and forbids all that they forbid. And according to this exposition of the law and the prophets, they forbid every possible injury that man can do to his fellow man. We are forbidden to do anything that is inconsistent with loving our neighbor as ourselves. We are forbidden to do to any human being what we would not have done to ourselves. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." *Rom.* xiii, 10. If holding a man, and using him as property is no injury, then no injury can be done to a man. If to rob a man of property is a sin, how much more criminal is it to deprive him of the means of procuring and holding property. That slavery works ill to man, cannot be honestly denied ; and, therefore, Christ forbids slavery. The law

condemns to death the man who makes his fellow man a slave, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." The design of stealing a man is that of making him a slave, and therefore, the meaning of the law is, he that makes a man a slave, sells or holds him as such, will surely be put to death.

There is no way in which an innocent man can be made a slave, that is any more honest than stealing him. No innocent man was ever held in slavery by a title better than the thief's title. Slavery begins and ends in robbery, and the eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal." The law, then, does both in its spirit and letter forbid slavery, under the severest penalty. Christ adopted this law as the law of his government, therefore he did forbid slavery as a whole and in all its parts.

The prophets taught the sentiments of the law, and they forbid all the things involved in slavery.

*First.* The prophets forbid the taking of labor without wages. *Mal.* iii, 5, "The Lord will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages." *Jer.* xxii, 13, "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong : that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." *Luke* x, 7, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." If one man has a right to wages for his labor, all men have. Christ affirms that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and the prophets condemn those who withhold wages from the laborer, and denounce a woe against them as oppressors. Slavery withholds wages from the laborer, and therefore, the prophets forbid slavery.

*Second.* The prophets forbid oppression. Unjust bondage is one kind of oppression mentioned in the law and the prophets. *Exod.* iii, 9, "I also have seen the oppres-

sion wherewith the Egyptians oppress them." Bondage was a part of the oppression of Egypt. *Jer.* xxxiv, 8-20. The Jews held their brethren in bondage contrary to justice and the law of God on that subject. This was the kind of bondage now called slavery. It was involuntary service without contract and without wages, consequently unjust, and for this the Jews were delivered "to the sword, to pestilence, and to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." If it be said that this was for enslaving their brethren contrary to law, I reply, to enslave a stranger was equal oppression, and equally contrary to law. "Thou shalt not vex a stranger, neither shalt thou oppress him." The prophets, then, do forbid all such oppression as slavery is. And by them the Lord does command the Jews to let all such go free. *Isa.* lviii, 6, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke." This command extends to all enslaved persons, and shows that slavery is oppression, and contrary to the laws and institutions of the Old Testament. It is evident that the law and the prophets do forbid slavery and all that constitutes it. Christ re-affirms the law and the prophets, and therefore, he did forbid slavery, and his own personal teachings are decidedly against all that constitutes slavery.

It is said by the advocates of slavery, that it existed in the Apostolic Churches, that slaveholders were admitted to communion, and that the Apostles gave directions to masters and slaves respecting their relative duties. In proof of this they cite 1 *Tim.* vi, 1, 2, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, and they that have believing



masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit." It is generally admitted that the servants under the yoke were slaves, but this admission is without proof. It cannot be proved by the terms used. The term yoke is figurative, and applicable to any kind of subjection or obligation. The Saviour said, "take my yoke upon you." *Matt*, xi, 29, 30. The same word *zugon* (yoke) is used in both places. And this is sufficient to show that nothing can be proved by the term yoke. If it had been *pous*, the foot, it would have been more like slavery. A slave is *andrapodon*, from *aner* a man, and *pous* the foot. This word, definitely meaning a slave, does not occur in the Scriptures. Nothing can be proved from the word *douloi*, servants, for that is a general term answering to our English word servant, which never defines any one kind of servants. This term can be applied to slaves only as servants, and not as slaves. The word *doulos* means simply one that serves, without describing his relation as a servant. The learned world is challenged to show that it means anything else than simply one who serves, without any respect to the particular relation under which he does serve. He may serve voluntarily, he may serve as a hireling, or as one that has sold his services for a term of years, or as an apprentice, or as one unjustly compelled to serve as a slave, or he may serve as the subject of a king, or as a minister of the gospel, or as an officer, or as a legislator, or one who serves in any way of which we possibly can conceive. Our English word servant is an exact translation of the Greek word *doulos*. And to translate it into the definite word slave, is a gross violation of the original. Our translators of the Scriptures have uniformly translated the word *doulos* into the word servant, never

into the word slave, and for the reason that it never means slave. There were other servants in the Roman Empire besides slaves. The Apostles addressed servants in general, but never slaves in particular, and therefore, the term slave (*andrapodon*) is not found in Apostolic writings. And so they address masters in general, but never a slave-master in particular. The term slaveholder is once, and once only, found in the Apostolic writings. 1 *Tim.* i, 9, 10, "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for *andrapodistais*, (slaveholders,) for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." The translators rendered *andrapodistais* into man-stealers, and very justly, because all slaveholders in the Roman Empire were man-stealers, according to the Divine law. The same is true of all American slaveholders, how honorable soever they may be in other respects.

The English word master, is a general term that does not describe the sense in which one is master; consequently we say, schoolmaster, horse-master, master of apprentices, slave-master. Thus, the kind of master must be described by some other word. *Kurios* and *despotes*, each translated into master, do not define the relation by which one is master or lord. It is therefore denied, in the face of the whole learned world, that the Apostles did, in any of their writings, address either slaves or slave-masters in particular. They used just such terms as would be appropriate in any free State. They simply address masters and servants in general, and define and enjoin such mutual duties as exist in free

States. And they enjoined mutual duties wholly subversive of any slave system. If Paul had said, let as many *andrapoda* (slaves) as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, there could have been no doubt but that he meant slaves and none else; but instead of *andrapoda*, (slaves,) he uses *douloi*, (servants.) And besides this, it is not easy to see how slaves, unjustly held as property, and robbed of their rights, could count their own oppressors worthy of all honor. It is affirmed then, that it cannot be proved that slaves were intended by servants under the yoke. But if slaves were meant, it proves nothing, inasmuch as their masters were unbelievers. The servants that had believing masters are not represented as being under the yoke, and are taught not to despise their masters, but voluntarily to do them service. This implies that they were at liberty to decline their service, were liable to be tempted to despise their masters and leave their service; else why should the opposite be enjoined. There is no evidence that believing masters were slaveholders.

The case of Onesimus is likewise cited as proof that slaveholders were in communion. That Onesimus was a servant to Philemon is clear, but that he was a slave there is no evidence. It appears that Onesimus was a relative of Philemon. *Phil.* 16, "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." Unless a relative, how could he be any dearer to Philemon than to Paul "in the flesh and in the Lord?" The probability is, that he was a poor relative, that Philemon had brought him up, and that he had been a wayward boy, and had left service before he had remunerated Philemon for the expense of bringing him up, and therefore, might be justly indebted to him. Hence

Paul said, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account ; I will repay it." This is wholly inconsistent with the idea that Onesimus was a slave. Had Paul believed it right to hold men as property, and that he was rightfully held as a slave, would he have expressed any doubt respecting his owing Philemon service for life ? Or would he pledge himself to put that in for him ? As a slave, could he owe anything unless it were service for life ? If Paul believed slaveholding right, would he have asked Philemon to give up his rightful claim of service ? One of two things is true ; either Onesimus was not a slave, or Paul believed slaveholding wrong, and that slaves ought to be set free. Had Onesimus been a slave, Paul would have said, not as a slave, (*andrapodon,*) but above a slave ; instead of saying, not as a servant, (*doulos,*) but above a servant.

It is strange that many suppose that there were in the Roman Empire no other servants than slaves. In all countries there are persons bound to service for just considerations ; they are liable to do wrong, and even if they do well, they are liable to be badly treated, and therefore, it is necessary that the Scriptures should enjoin the mutual duties of master and servant. Such duties the Apostle enjoined, and in just such terms as are in common use in free States, where slavery does not exist ; terms that are appropriate in all ages and in all places. The Holy Spirit dictated such general terms as are adapted to all times and all nations, and not such as were applied to a single class in a particular nation and age. In a moral sense, slaves, as such, owe no duties to their masters ; but may, and ought to escape from them whenever it is possible to be done with safety. Consequently, the Apostles never addressed them in particular as slaves, nor their masters as slaveholders.

From what has been said, it appears that there is no evidence that slaveholders were admitted to membership in the Apostolic Churches. There is not the least evidence that the believing masters were slave-masters. Judea was a free State; the Jews held no slaves. They hired their laborers, as the parable of the vineyard represents. The servants of the father of the Prodigal Son were hired and not slaves. The first Christian Churches were founded in Judea, where there were no slaves, and doubtless the Gentile Churches were formed after the model of the Jewish Churches, no slaveholders were received. The Roman Government at that time placed no obstacles in the way of liberating slaves; and therefore was, in this respect, more liberal than our slave States. If a slave-holder became a Christian, he could easily set his slaves free; and there is no reason to believe that any were received into the church while living in the practice of the worst form of oppression. No man can prove that such were received to Church fellowship.

That the Apostles forbid all that constitutes slavery, will now be shown.

*First.* The Apostles sanctioned the Old Testament Scriptures, and therefore, all that is said in the law and the prophets against oppression and wrong doing, they have approved. This is the same as to forbid all that the law and the prophets do forbid.

*Second.* Slavery abolishes marriage, and, consequently, is a system of adultery and fornication. Who does not know, that the parts of the South in which slaves are numerous, are little else than common brothels? The Apostles forbid adultery and fornication, and therefore forbid slavery, as involving in it these degrading and ruinous vices.

*Third.* Slavery is extortion. It extorts from a man

all, except bare existence, and therefore is the worst kind of extortion. The Apostles declare that "extortioners shall not inherit the kingdom of God." 1 *Cor.* 5-10. The Apostles, therefore, forbid slavery.

*Fourth.* The Apostles forbid oppression. Slavery is the worst form of oppression, and therefore is forbidden. If to force a man down to the rank of beasts, that are bought and sold, and to compel him to labor without contract, and without wages, is not oppression, there is no such thing as oppression.

*Fifth.* Slavery deprives the slave of liberty, of the marriage and family rights, of wages and possessing property, and, of course, slavery is unrighteousness. And therefore the Apostles forbid it. *Rom.* i, 18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." What other system than that of American slavery does so entirely sum up in it all kinds of unrighteousness? What other system does so hold, that is, hinder the truth, in unrighteousness? What other system has so entirely taken away the key of knowledge? And what other system chains its victims down to ignorance under penalties so heavy? What is there in American slavery that the Apostles do not forbid?

The Apostles give such instructions to masters and servants as are calculated to abolish any system of slavery. 1 *Cor.* vii, 21-23, "Art thou called being a servant, care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather; ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." The Apostles use the word *doulos*, (servant,) which is applicable to any one that serves, consequently, it is applicable to any who are bound to service. He gives an injunction to servants in general, so far as such were in any kind of bondage to men, to obtain freedom if pos-

sible. The use of *doulos* (servant) instead of *andrapodon* (slave), forms a testimony against every form of bondage. The expression in the Greek is strong,—“If thou hast power to be free, use it rather.” It is the duty of every man in bondage, who can justly do it, to free himself. If a man is, for just considerations, bound to service, he ought, in justice, although inconvenient, to fulfill the service due, unless honorably discharged; but the slave, being unjustly held in bondage, may at any time, and whenever he can do it with safety, ought to escape from his master. The injunction to be free can mean no less than that it is the duty of all in bondage to free themselves whenever they can justly and safely do it. One reason assigned is, “ye are bought with a price.” And that price was the atoning blood of Christ. He had redeemed them for his service, and therefore, they ought not so to be under the control of men, as to prevent entire service to him. “Be not ye the servants of men,” If *douloi* (servants), mean slaves, as the advocates of slavery affirm, then we have a positive injunction never to be slaves of men; but the injunction extends even farther than this, it makes it the duty of men to free themselves, so far as it can be justly done, from every species of bondage; and for the reason that there is no species of bondage to imperfect men, that may not interfere with the duties we owe to our Redeemer. Had the Apostle used the word *andrapoda*, (slaves), then the duty enjoined would have been simply, be not the slaves of men; but having used *douloi*, (servants), the duty enjoined extends to every form of bondage. It is true, that the word *douloi*, standing alone, does not of itself imply anything more than persons that serve; but the connection shows that bond-servants of some kind or other were intended. It is, therefore, an injunction to all bound to the service

of others. It is a glorious decision against all bondage to men, and a noble testimony in favor of universal freedom. Glory to God for this decision against oppression, and for liberty! We have here, (as Paul was inspired,) the mind of God against all bondage to men. All such bondage is liable to interfere with the happiness of men and the service due to God. While it has always been deemed lawful for a man, in order to avoid greater evils, to sell himself to service for a term of years, yet the Scriptures and experience both teach that, so far as possible, it should be avoided, because liable to produce misery, as well as to interfere with the duties of religion. For a man to enter into such bondage, without some absolute necessity, is sinful.

It is the duty of the servant to obtain freedom so far as it is possible and just for him to do it. Of course, the correspondent duty of the master is to yield to all the claims of justice, and let servants go free. *Collos. iv, 1*, "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal." He does not address slave-masters in particular, but masters in general. It must be admitted, that it is just for the master to allow the servant to do what Paul enjoins as a duty; that is, to obtain freedom if he can. If it be just for the servant to be free, it is the duty of the master to let him go free. If slave-masters are intended, then they are commanded to let their slaves go free; nothing less than this can be just and equal. If the Apostle intends masters in general, as the term masters implies, then the duties enjoined are just wages, kind treatment, remuneration for injuries done them, and freedom according to justice. It is easy to see that slaves could not be held under such injunctions as these. Let American slave-holders give to their slaves that which is just and equal, or as it is in the Greek, "justice and



equality," and freedom will be the first thing given; and the next, so far as possible, remuneration for the injury done them. The Apostle James denounces a dreadful woe against those who deprive the laborer of his hire, that is, wages. *James* v, 1-4, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." "Behold the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Who in the Roman Empire but slave-holders did this? The rich men were slaveholders, and the slaves reaped their fields without hire. Who but the slaves reap the fields of the rich men in the slave States without hire? If such an Epistle as that of James were written to the inhabitants of the slave States, who but slaveholders could be intended as the rich men in general, who pay no wages to their laborers? The denunciation by James could be intended for none but the Roman slaveholders. These were the rich men that paid no wages to their laborers.

Paul affirms the law was not made for a righteous man, but for *andrapodistais*, (slaveholders). *1 Tim.* i, 9, 10. The word *andrapodistais* is compounded of *aner* (a man,) and *pous*, (the foot,) and means that class of men who put their feet upon men, and make them *andropoda*, (slaves.) *Andrapodon* is a slave, one on whom the foot has been put, and *andrapodistai* are the persons who put their feet upon men and make them slaves, and hold them as property, and are literally slaveholders. These the Apostle ranks with murderers of fathers and mothers. There is no reason to believe that slaveholders, while ranked amongst the worst of criminals, were admitted to church fellowship. And the assertion that Christ and his Apostles did not forbid slaveholding, is utterly false. We

might as well assert, that when the Catholics, in excommunication, begin and curse the excommunicated in his hair, and proceed to curse all the parts of his body, and then curse him as a whole, they do not curse him at all, as to say that Christ and his Apostles do not forbid slavery. They have forbidden it in all its parts, and then as a whole. The charge that the Sacred Volume justifies slaveholding is without foundation, and is, no doubt, a cunning device of the devil, designed to excite disgust at the Sacred Oracles, and to array the feelings of humanity against Divine Revelation. To bring the Scriptures into conflict with humanity is the most certain way of propagating infidelity, and that of a form the most dangerous. It seats itself in the sympathies of the soul, and in the strongest affections of the human heart. The more sympathetic and affectionate a man is, the more he is in danger of falling into this kind of infidelity.

While other forms of infidelity have been cold and speculative, and have possessed nothing calculated to fire up the soul and inspire zeal, this form goes forth lighting up all that is inflammable in the mind, seizes upon the strongest passions of the heart, and turns the stronger currents of human nature against Divine revelation, because men are made to believe that the Sacred Oracles sanction the horrible system of slavery. Is it not time that all lovers of the Sacred Scriptures should unite in presenting them to the world in a true light, as opposing every system of oppression and wrong, and enjoining supreme love to God, and universal benevolence to man? Let this be done, and soon the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.











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