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GOD AGAINST SLAVERY:

AND THE

FREEDOM AND DUTY OF THE PULPIT

TO REBUKE IT,

AS A SIN AGAINST GOD.

BY

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## P R E F A C E .

FOR the privilege of having been permitted to deliver these discourses without interruption, and with a cordial answering sympathy on the part of the public, I thank God and take courage. Seldom have I found a heart more thirsty for divine truth, more attentive under it, and more manifestly responding to it, and grateful for it, than in the great congregations whom God in his good providence brought out to listen to these sermons. I commenced them, much questioning as to the result, but determined to leave consequences to God, and to proclaim, out and out, the whole truth in his word in regard to the great reigning and destroying sin of our country. I endeavored to do this to the best of my ability. The event was, that instead of driving men away in anger, the assertion of the freedom of the pulpit, and the proof of it from the prophets and apostles, and the use of it in demonstrating the sinfulness of slavery, brought thousands on thousands to hear. They came, desiring to learn what God had really said in His word in regard to slavery. The church could not contain the multitudes that thronged, night after night, to listen to a simple, plain exhibition of God's own truth, in regard to the guilt of this iniquity in His sight, and the inevitable consequences of it, if persisted in.

Undoubtedly, Old Testament truth is a strange thing to many; they are not aware how it burns, how it cuts, how it probes and pierces, as a discerner and reprovcr of sin, and how the mighty Hebrew prophets, ever living, ever new, seem to hold a grand inquest over our organic iniquities, and to walk among us with the writer's ink-horn, and the measuring plumb-lines of the Mosaic laws. The people, generally, are glad to witness these operations. The people love to hear God's word demonstrating and rebuking the iniquity of slavery; and it is only crooked politicians, and political Christians, and preachers standing in awe of them, who cry out against it, and call it political preaching. This vulgar watchword is losing all its terrors, and begins to be, as it deserves to be, thoroughly despised.

The people prefer freedom, and are glad to find that God's word not only does not sanction slavery, but is against it, wholly and utterly, from beginning to end. But those men who prefer slavery along with freedom, slavery for others and freedom for themselves, and whose plan is to combine both, and give them the same sanction and the same rights everywhere, would be glad to find some support of slavery, some shield for it in God's word; and, if any one could demonstrate from God's word that slavery is right, he might do *that* from the pulpit *ad infinitum*, and they would not regard it at all as political preaching, but as simply the genuine meekness of wisdom preaching peace by Jesus Christ, and the very perfection of gospel conservatism. There are many who, without the least wincing, will hear you preach about the slavery

of sin, but not one word will they endure about the sin of slavery.

I have been delighted to find a great enthusiasm among young men, for the freedom of God's word in dealing with the iniquity of oppression. They feel that it is no necessary part of religion to put down, or conceal, or crucify, our native impulses in behalf of freedom, or our native sense of justice against cruelty and wrong. They have but little sympathy with those who make political or commercial expediency, in regard to great questions of right or wrong, the Urim and Thummim of their divinest consultations.

The series of discourses began with an examination of the dreadful influence and consequences of UNRIGHTEOUS LAW, as illustrated in the history of the Hebrews, under the light of the prophets. Now, in consenting to throw several of them into a volume, I have taken the liberty of breaking them up into twenty chapters, both for the sake of introducing some details into the argument, which could not be condensed in speaking within compass of the time given to a sermon, and also to relieve and sustain the attention of the reader, and give greater prominence to the principles developed in the discussion.

I am more than ever convinced of the right and duty of every preacher of God's word to preach on this subject, as contained in His word, and to show the people how He regards it; and the providence that directs and overrules all things is manifesting more clearly than ever the wickedness of the attempt to shield slavery from the reprobation of God's word, by denouncing every mention of it as

political preaching. That outcry is more likely to cover up a jealousy against *religion in politics*, than any real hatred of *politics in religion*. To the law and to the testimony: should not the people seek unto their God? And if their leaders speak not according to His word, it is because there is no light in them.

THE VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE YOUNG MEN OF MY OWN CONGREGATION, AND TO ALL LOVERS OF FREEDOM AND TRUTH IN ALL PLACES.

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## CHAPTER I.

SHALL THE THRONE OF INIQUITY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH  
THEE, WHICH FRAMETH MISCHIEF BY A LAW?

PSALM xciv. 20.

THERE are plenty of answers to this question in the Word of God; but the most startling and overwhelming is the answer by divine judgment, in the destruction of the thrones and kingdoms of Israel and Judah. We have but to trace a few steps in the Jewish history, and we find lessons that, for the closeness of their application to our own period, and people, and country, and the terror of their warning against our own legalized and cherished sins, are absolutely appalling. Would to God we might lay them to our heart!

The time from the beginning of the Hebrew kingdom under Saul to its division under Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, was not much longer than that which has elapsed from our revolutionary war to the present day. And the progress of the nation had been about as rapid and mighty as our own. What a prodigious difference between the state of the people and the extent of the kingdom at the beginning of Saul's reign, and the close of Solomon's!

In this brief time, cities rose as by enchantment, and territories were added, and brought under the one great confederation, till the fame of its prosperity, and the fear of its greatness, filled the world.

But in the midst of all this, the causes of ruin grew on with frightful rapidity; luxury, aristocracy, grandeur, riches, pride, family-wealth and rivalry, insolence, commerce with Egypt and with foreign countries, bringing in alliances, intermarriages, the imitation of foreign vices and customs, and at length the open, undisguised, and heaven-defying establishment of idolatry for Solomon's pagan concubines and wives. The wisest of kings had grown the maddest in his rebellion against God, and his iniquitous example before his people. By his own vices he had conducted the country from the climax of power and greatness to the verge of ruin. In the greatest apparent grandeur of its prosperity, none but God knew the precipice on which the kingdom tottered, nor how soon its proud union was to be dissolved forever. There it was, strong and mighty in appearance, yet instantly to be riven, as when the frost splits a rock, or one last blow upon the wedge rives the oak asunder. The blow descends from God, the kingdoms separate, and thenceforward, what a career of warning to all the nations of the earth is theirs?

The lead in wickedness was assumed by Israel under Jeroboam, as one of the separate and rival kingdoms; the first great national step in open sin



was his. By what he considered a master-stroke of policy, but which proved his ruin, he set up the two golden calves, to serve for the uses of his kingdom, in place of the worship of the Temple at Jerusalem. The one he inaugurated at Bethel, and the other at Dan, and proclaimed to all the people, with the semblance of the kindest consideration for their wants and fatherly compassion for their burdens, it is too much for you, too irksome and too great a task, to go up to Jerusalem at the times appointed in the service of the temple; these will answer for your gods, O ye people! These shall be to you the representatives of the gods that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and here shall you rejoice in your worship! The appointed ministers of God's worship, who would not subscribe to these decrees of the king and his government, were ejected from their offices, and in their places Jeroboam appointed an idolatrous priesthood from the *riff-raff* of the people; whoever was willing so accept a devil's chaplaincy under his government, him he set to work in the ministration of oblations and of incense before those golden calves; and so the people, the king, and Baal, were all served and glorified, flattered and cajoled, at one and the same time.

And so the thing became a stately sin, a systematized organic iniquity; and the people went to worship before one or the other of these calves, *even unto Dan*. The topography of these places is the best

illustration of the passage, and for want of the consideration of that matter, the force of the history is nearly lost. One of them, Dan, was at the extreme north; the other, Bethel, at the extreme south, on the borders of Jeroboam's kingdom. The whole of Jeroboam's kingdom lay north of Judah. If he had set up both calves at Dan, it would have been too far north to attract his subjects of the south; if he had set them up in Bethel only, the people of the north coming down so far as that for worship, would have been tempted to continue their journey a few miles further to Jerusalem itself. But up at Dan he caught in the snare all the population of the north, and down at Bethel all the inhabitants of the south. And by setting at the heart of Bethel the whole circle of his priesthood, and making the ceremonies of the worship there both gorgeous and attractive, he caught as in a great Vanity Fair nearly all unstable persons, whose consciences might have startled them on a pilgrimage for the Holy City, to engage in the worship of the Temple itself. Passing through Bethel, they would stop to gaze at the golden calves, they would enter into conversation with the worshipers there, they would be met by temptations and seductive bribes, and in the state of moral debauchery to which the conduct of Solomon had reduced the nation, it was not difficult to make any, except the most truly conscientious of the people, believe that they could serve both God and Mammon.

Jeroboam must have sounded the heart of the nation, and must have known that he could calculate on the idolatrous disposition of the people, otherwise he never would have dared to propose such a measure. But he had watched the passions of men, and he knew well how deeply the examples, and the idolatrous shrines, made so familiar by Solomon, had corrupted the people, and how far he could himself rely upon them. Besides, he is supposed to have set guards on the borders of the kingdom between Judah and Israel, at the feast times especially, to prevent his subjects from crossing the line, and going up to the Temple in obedience to the law of God. And so, between allurements and force, between his lies and compulsion, between the power of law, unrighteous, and the examples of the great multitude obeying it as righteous, he succeeded in quieting the most troubled and audacious consciences, and induced his people to believe that inasmuch as this worship at the altars of the calves was commanded by law, and they were bound to obey magistrates, and not to set themselves against the government, it might and must be considered a permitted substitute for the Temple worship. Moreover, the payment of tithes seems to have been done away, when Jeroboam turned the Levites out of office, and put in a set of his own priests to do his bidding; and that was an exemption which would please the covetous multitude greatly. The king well knew how to make up for the loss; he could extort

from them in other ways double what the willing support of the true worship of God would have cost them.

Now this whole mighty revolution, first, in the establishment of Jeroboam's authority and kingdom as foreign and separate from that of Rehoboam, and second, in the impious establishment of a new and separate religious worship, the commixture of idolatry and the divine law under one and the same form, would necessitate new laws, and would bring about, in many points, inevitably, a conflict between the statutes of the kingdom and the statutes of God. But the people chose to obey man rather than God. They agreed, as men do now, when they blasphemously set the laws of a human government higher than God's law, that the law of the land, right or wrong, must be obeyed at all hazards, and that to teach otherwise is to teach rebellion. They said that the statutes of the king and his government must be obeyed, and "they willingly walked after the commandment," as the accusation is brought against them for doing this by the prophet Hosea; so that the characteristic description of this monarch, up to the time of Omri and Ahab, who each set new iniquities a going, and framed laws still more infamous, was that of "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, WHO MADE ISRAEL TO SIN."

The obedience of the people to such a monarch and government in such commanded sins, was rebellion against God; and rebellion against the monarch and

government would have been obedience to God. And God by his prophets plainly denounced vengeance against the nation, for thus preferring to obey man's laws rather than God's. Your very blessings shall be blasted, said he, and you shall be swept with desolation, delivered up to captivity and the sword, because you have *kept the statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels*. Ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.

Through the impious policy of Jeroboam, and the consent and submission of the people, it thus came about that the separation of the ten tribes was as the building of a vast reservoir of iniquity in Israel; a fountain of atheism and licentiousness, of which the people continued drinking to the latest generations, forsaking God, and the cold-flowing waters of his sanctuary, and hewing them out cisterns of Satan, and springs of the vilest abominations.

## CHAPTER II.

THE PREVALENCE AND POWER OF UNRIGHTEOUS LAW, AND THE  
RUIN OF THE NATION IN CONSEQUENCE OF OBEYING IT.

HERE we have come upon a marked and mighty era. The separation of this great Hebrew kingdom into two, and the establishment of these regal and governmental dynasties and machineries, not only constituted the most important revolution since the deluge, and the greatest event of all the history of empire up to that time, but it had consequences, and it set in motion tides of principle and courses of action, that made a stratum in men's morals and character; it was a dispensation, a period of social and governmental theory of life, as distinct as any period in all the formations of geology. The periods of granite primordial foundation, and of fossiliferous rocky strata, and of alluvial deposits, are not more strongly marked and demonstrated, or more important as demonstrations in themselves of the mighty changes in the globe. The thing not justifies only, but commands our careful study; it ought not to be passed over with a superficial view.

For here began the wide, germinating, sweeping

habit of rebellion against God under cover of obedience to man; that plague in the body politic and social, worse than the yellow fever, worse than any pestilence ever begotten or active among men, of a supreme submissive regard to the laws of a human government rather than the laws of God. It is in this respect a most prominent and awful era; a period marked, as you will see, all along the record of the history, down to the time when the kingdom was swept from existence, as *the period of the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat*, WHO MADE ISRAEL TO SIN. The first book of Kings ends, as its course has often been signalized, with that stigma, that scar, that trench of God's wrath, and of moral infamy in the cause and subject of it.

Ahab and Jezebel were the next grand incarnation of such wickedness. And as upon the surface of the globe, when a roaring cataract or deluge has passed over it, there are left huge mountain cliffs, frowning over the country in front, and behind them a sloping trail of land where the soil has gathered and held on, indicating which way the convulsion and the torrent rolled forward, so stand these monarch forms, rent, blasted, blackened, the leaders of the people's apostasy from God, and the landmarks of His vengeance. And from one to the other, it seems as if you could still hear the thunders roar and reverberate. Look back to the 21st chapter of the first book of Kings, and mark the interview between Elijah the prophet

and Ahab in Naboth's vineyard, and you find in the person and character of that monarch the defiant pinnacle on which God's wrathful lightning descended. "Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord; and I will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, AND MADE ISRAEL TO SIN." And look back still further to the 16th chapter, 25th and 26th verses, to the person and character of Omri, who wrought the same evil in the sight of the Lord, and did worse than all before him, for he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin, WHEREWITH HE MADE ISRAEL TO SIN. And then, before him, look back to Baasha, and before him, to Nadab, the immediate successor and son of Jeroboam. The voice of every peal of thunder, and the sentence trenched by every flash of lightning, is the same dreadful accusation, Thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and HAST MADE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL TO SIN.

And how was it? What does this repeated phrase in the indictment cover up? How could the man carry all Israel with him in his wickedness? Mere example could not have done it; permission could not have done it; bribes could not have done it, nor persuasion, nor the inherent temptations of devil-worship. No! But in league with all these influences, *law could do it*; the State power could forcibly persuade, and if the people would yield up their conscience, the



government would find no opposition to their most impious enactments. We learn the secret from Micah and Hosea, two of the prophets cotemporary in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels, that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof a hissing." "The princes of Judah were like than that remove the bound; therefore will I pour out my wrath upon them like water. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he WILLINGLY WALKED AFTER THE COMMANDMENT." It was thus that the king, the princes, the government, by their unconstitutional and infamous legislation, by new enactments, framed on purpose, MADE ISRAEL TO SIN. You gather this demonstration from the history and the prophets together; and this is one of the points in which you see the usefulness and importance of a close comparative study of the prophets by the history, and the history by the prophets.

It was *a usurpation, under color of law*, thus forced upon the people, and the experiment being once successful, then, in giving up their conscience, and renouncing their allegiance to God, they surrendered all their liberties. They should have resisted at the outset; but there are never wanting those, who affirm that law is to be obeyed at all hazards, the moment it is law, no matter of what character. So,

by the power and majesty of UNRIGHTEOUS LAW, which is as when the starry angel, first in heaven's ranks, brightest of the sons of the morning, drew after him the third part of heaven in his rebellion, the king and the government compelled the people. For because of the original majesty, the awfulness, the reverential glory, the transcendant importance of law, even its *perversion* wears the *semblance* of its authority; even bad law, wicked law, accursed law, appears not less than archangel ruined, and men bow down to it, and worship it, and range themselves under its banners, especially when popular and profitable sins are protected by it. Sometimes, under its pressure, men must have the firmness of Abdiel to stand up against it, and nothing but God's word and His righteousness in their hearts will enable them to do it.

This usurpation began in Israel. But you are not to suppose this kind of wickedness was the exclusive property of that kingdom. You might have imagined that after such a divulsion of the tribes, the separation between Israel and Judah would have been so wide, and the enmity so mortal, that certainly the torrent of these devilish iniquities could not have crossed the gulf, and rolled over the house and kingdom of David. But where the heart is not right with God, occasion can easily be found for any wickedness. There was a mine of Satan's combustibles in the bosom of Judah ready to be fired; and there was

an elective affinity, a power of attraction by evil examples, instead of repulsion by disgust; there was an electric intelligence and fire of depravity shooting from one side to the other. You have but to run your eye down to the 8th chapter of the 2d Book of Kings, and the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses, and you discover the secret. "In the fifth year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; *for the daughter of Ahab was his wife*, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord." Here you have the bridge, the telegraphic wires, the sympathies. And running on to the 26th verse you have another step, the son of Jehoram reigning in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Athaliah, the *granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel*. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as did the house of Ahab; *for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab*. And in 2 Chron. xxii. 3, 4, it is added, that *his mother was his counselor to do wickedly*; wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab; *for they were his counselors* after the death of his father to his destruction.

The singular intensity of wickedness, the eminent and inveterate profligacy and malignity accumulated in this family, as the force of galvanism collected in a complicated battery, will be better understood, if

you consider that Ahab, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. Him, king Ahab, and the murderess his wife, Elijah the Tishbite confronted. These related and confederate families of Israel and Judah threw over their kingdoms a net-work of the same diabolical statutes; and to these enactments, and the terrors used in their enforcement, the sacred historian refers, when it is recorded, as in 2 Chron. xxi. 11, that the king of Judah caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled them into all this wickedness. So this mighty sin passed into vogue in Judah, and from Ahab and Jezebel's families, in connection with Jeroboam's, it ran on, till in the kingdom and house of David itself, Manasseh went far beyond even Ahab in the form, the magnitude, and the monstrosity of his sins. And of him it is said in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 9, 10, that Manasseh *made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err*, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people, but they would not hearken. And in 2 Kings xxi. 9, 11, God declares that Manasseh *seduced the people* to do more abominable and horrible wickedness than even the Amorites, and made Judah to sin with his idols, besides filling Jerusalem from one end to the other with innocent blood.

## CHAPTER III.

COMPULSION BY THE GOVERNMENT, ENACTING WICKED LAWS TO DRIVE THE PEOPLE INTO SIN; AND THE DAMNATION OF SUCH GUILT. THE INIQUITY OF PREACHERS DEFENDING OR EXCUSING IT.

Now in this account we have the fact of a *compulsion laid by the government upon the people, to drive them into sin*, to constrain them, and force obedience to the statutes of an idol worship. But this compulsion was no other than the choice of obeying other statutes than God's. Being compelled to disobey either God's law or the king's, they chose to disobey God's, alleging, perhaps, that whatever laws the government enacted, they were bound to obey, God's law to the contrary notwithstanding. Sometimes the princes took the lead, and proposed the enactment of mischief by a law, according to the references in Hos. v. 10, and xiii. 2, the princes removing the bound, and enacting that those who sacrificed shall kiss the calves. So in 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18, after the death of Jehoiada the priest, we have the princes coming, and making obeisance to the king, and the king hearkening to them, and all together leaving the house of the Lord God of their fathers,

and serving groves and idols. All this information is concentrated finally in the 17th chapter of the 2d book of Kings, where the whole transcript of the people's wickedness, and of God's final wrath upon them for it, is so solemnly summed up. For they walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, *and in the statutes of the kings of Israel, which they had made.* Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but *walked in the statutes of Israel which they made*; walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did, and departed not from them.

Now it is impossible to find any thing in all history more terribly instructive than all this. It shows the mutual responsibility of government and people, both to one another and to God, and the consequences of disregarding it. It shows the manner in which the responsibility and guilt of government and people may get inextricably involved and entangled, and unless there be in the people a conscience of resistance in behalf of God, they go to ruin together. It shows that wicked laws are no authentication or excuse of personal wickedness, nor any authorization of disobedience to God. *They are not to be obeyed*, but on the contrary *denounced and rejected*; and only by being thus faithful to God, can a people *keep their freedom.* And while it shows that a people are on the high road to ruin, who will suffer and obey wicked statutes, it also shows the terrific responsibility and

wickedness of those who concoct and endeavor to enforce such statutes, and who set the example of such iniquity. If there be a lower deep in hell than any other deep, such men will, beyond all question, occupy it, along with those who have put out or concealed the light of God's word, and have put up false lights to lure men upon the breakers. It is such as these, whom God gives judicially over to a reprobate mind, to be filled with all unrighteousness; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Nothing can go beyond this wickedness; it is a fountain sin, a germinating sin, an accumulating and multiplying sin, a sin that causes and compels others to sin, a sin that enlarges from generation to generation all the way into the eternal world. If it brings a million under its power this year, it may bring two millions the next; this generation ten, the next generation twenty. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way; and all the people shall say, Amen! But he that strikes out the eyesight of a whole nation, that obliterates the law of justice and humanity, and sets in its place statutes of injustice and inhumanity, and thus compels a nation so blinded, to wander in iniquity, what shall be said of such a monster? What curse is heavy enough for such an incarnation of malignity, or what curse can measure in retribution the dreadful consequences of such crime?

Of all evil things, law, that embodies in itself the example of wrong, the instruction, the authority, sanction, justification, and command of injustice and oppression, in principle and in act, is the highest and the worst. It is worse than arsenic in the fountain; it is poison for the souls of men, poison for the great heart of society, running through all the veins, and corrupting the whole system. Well did Edmund Burke say, that of all bad things, bad laws are the very worst, and that they derive a particular malignity from the good laws in their company, under which they take shelter.

If a system of wicked laws be deliberately contrived, and fastened on a people for the purpose of consolidating and rendering immovable the governmental despotism, and if, under those laws, a system of immorality and cruelty is inaugurated as the central fountain of the country's policy, to enter into both the domestic and civil life of the people, to regulate all their institutions, to impose conditions on the gospel itself, to compel men in every sphere of society, every branch of commerce, every agency of active business, to swear faithfulness to that immoral interest; and if the word of God itself, for the sake of shielding all this iniquity, is either suppressed or perverted, what really is the attitude of such a people toward God, and what their character in his sight? Can any thing cover up this wickedness?

But suppose that, along with such a system, there



is inserted in it a provision, not of improvement or correction, but rendering correction or repeal impossible. Suppose that a guard is imposed on purpose to perpetuate such a system, without change or amelioration, by which indeed any attempt at change is to be punished as treason. All these ingenious elements of evil were in the diabolical statutes, with which Jeroboam and the like kingly instruments of Satan, subjected the people to his sway. And all these ingenious elements of evil are in those execrable laws now being enforced at the point of United States bayonets in Kansas; laws acknowledged to be an utter usurpation, publicly demonstrated as such by the House of Representatives in Congress assembled, and therefore unconstitutional, null, and void. And yet the people commanded to obey them! Can any professions of religion induce God to wink at such wickedness, or to connive at the prostitution of religion itself for its support? God's own voice shall answer; you shall have his own judgment from the prophets:

“Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.” If a man could take the

bolt of God's thunder in his hand, and could flash the lightning right in the face of a tyrannical, usurping legislator, there could not be any thing more direct than this. And is not this to be preached? And if the government of any nation be guilty of this sin, is it not to be charged upon them? Is not the country where this wickedness is perpetrated the very place, and the generation in which and against which it is perpetrated, the very time to rebuke it, and in the name of God declare his testimony against it? And on whom rests the responsibility of doing this, and who have the right and authority from God to do it, but his own appointed preachers of the word? And will any man dare to call this political preaching? It is indeed the bringing of religion into politics, according to God's command, and the application of the instructions and principles of God's word to the conduct of the nation and the people, and such application the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah were commanded to make, and our Lord Jesus conjoined upon the preachers of the Gospel the same faithfulness. "Cry aloud; spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet; show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, is a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They take delight in approaching to God." And yet, besides the delineation continued in that chapter, here is their character by the same

prophet: "A rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord. Which say to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophecy deceits. Get ye out of the way; turn aside out of the path; cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Wherefore, thus saith the Holy One of Israel, because ye despise this word, and TRUST IN OPPRESSION and perverseness, and stay thereon, therefore THIS INIQUITY shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant." "For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed. Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows; for every one is a hypocrite and an evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh villainy. They call evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, and light for darkness. They justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

And every one of the prophets corresponds in his testimony with this description; and you will find in

the 5th chapter of Jeremiah, and in that which follows, the most singularly precise and pungent invectives for the coveteousness, cruelty, oppression, falsehood, and disregard of God, prevailing to such a degree that they added to their iniquities a plump denial of them, and would not listen to the word of God against them; so that God charges Jeremiah, Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.

And the prophet Ezekiel, writing and speaking of precisely the same period and people, declares, "The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none." The offer that God made by Jeremiah was unavailing. The prophet could not find a man in Jerusalem to stand in the gap before God, that he might pardon the city and the people; and God bears witness to this fact by Ezekiel, even at the very time of the punishment of the people for their sins, especially the sin of oppression.

The iniquities practiced by the people were sanctioned by statute, defended by false prophets, and

enforced by the priests and princes through their influence, when, if they had stood up publicly and firmly against such sins, we have God's plain declaration both by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, that they would have turned the people from their sins, and procured for them life and pardon. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

What will ye do indeed? They soon found out that the end thereof was death. "I have not sent these prophets," said the Lord God, "yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." How amazingly solemn and impressive is this testimony as to the responsibility and power of the ministry in reference to the sins of the people and the nation! They are able, at their pleasure, to mold the character of the people for good or evil, and to direct their course for heaven or hell. They may lead them either to obey or disobey God, both in their public policy and their domestic life; they may, if they choose, proclaim the law and policy of the government to be higher than the law of God, and sacred from rebuke for its wickedness, and they may make the true word of the Lord to be de-

spised and forbidden of the people; but on their heads is the consequence. They did thus deceive and corrupt the people of old, so that Jeremiah could not persuade them to listen to the voice of God.

“Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they can not hearken; behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to coveteousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. And when God said, Walk in the old paths and in the good way, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, they said, We will not walk therein. And when God set watchmen, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet, they said We will not hearken.” Such was their obstinate refusal to hear God’s word in regard to their own iniquities.

And then comes the great appeal of God to the whole world to take note, and bear witness for him, against this people of his wrath, and to mark the wickedness that is going on among them, and especially this exasperating and aggravating impiety of refusing to have the light of God’s word turned upon their national, governmental, and social policy. “Hear ye, O nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth! Behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my

words, nor to my law, but rejected it." God then proceeds just as in Isaiah, to denounce with utter scorn their formal pretenses of his worship, along with all their wickedness. He had said by Isaiah, I hate, I despise your solemn feast-days, and your rites of pretended religious service are an abomination to me. And he asks of Jeremiah, "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me; therefore, fathers and sons, the neighbor and his friend shall perish together."

And the conclusion of this tremendous sermon is impressive beyond measure for its inculcation of the necessity of discerning between the righteous and the wicked, and separating the latter with their abominable maxims, from the former, in the policy and government of a people, in order that the agencies appointed of God for the good of the people may work, and may be able to accomplish his purposes. God describes the character of the people, in their acceptance of, and submission to, the oligarchy of evil counselors and wicked governors and laws, by whom they consented to be led to destruction, following them as sheep for the slaughter. "They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed

of the fire; the founder melteth in vain; *for the wicked are not plucked away.* Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them."

God distinctly informs us, that if his ministers had spoken as they ought in regard to all this wickedness, it might have been prevented, and the ruin which it brought would have been averted. The nation's destruction was in consequence of their concealment and perversion of God's word; and hence the solemnity and appropriateness of these historic records, as applied for our own guidance at the present time.



## CHAPTER IV.

DAN AND BETHEL IN NEW YORK, AND THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALVES IN AMERICA—REPRESSION AND CONCEALMENT OF TRUTH IN THE PULPIT AND CONSERVATISM OF NATIONAL SINS.

THERE are some practical instructions from this history, of great importance. As we go forward in it, we cannot help being astonished at the very little use made of it, and the very little light poured from it, when it is certainly one of God's great suns of radiance for Christian nations, one of the orbs in the planetary system of His word; and distinctly in the New Testament, as well as the old, He declares that much of this light was given as a warning, a forewarning, and that it *should* be poured upon our own consciences, our own habits of thinking, and our own courses of action. It is light that cost more than any thing in the world ever did cost, till the light from the cross and sufferings of Christ, the light bought by his death, came down upon the world. The light from the carcasses of dead empires, the light from Israel and Judah in their crimes and final sufferings, and dreadful death, the light from their captivities before the crucifixion, and the destruction and desolation like a whirlwind after the filling up

of that measure of their iniquities, and the light from half-buried Jewish communities, and from Jewish infidel minds still going about and wailing in their grave-clothes, peeled, scattered, and exterminated thus, is a beacon-light to states and statesmen, and to every one of us in a world of probation; the world where character, both national and individual, must be formed in accordance with God's word, or it has in it the elements, the self-igniting fires, of inevitable ruin. The history shows the wickedness of obeying men rather than God, and the dangerous nature of a system of human expediency and concealment of the truth, in preference to a reliance on God, and his truth and righteousness.

But here you may possibly say that the great sin for which the nations and generations now under our examination were destroyed, was the sin of idolatry, and we are not guilty of that, and in no danger from it. Examine the record, and you will find, besides the idolatry, the great sin of oppression, occupying as large a space in the indictment; and we shall discover, as far onward as the 34th chapter of Jeremiah, the deliberate establishment of slavery in the nation to have been the one climacteric cause and occasion of the wrath of God coming down upon the whole land and people without remedy.

And we ourselves may be guilty of things as bad as the idolatry of the old Israelites, and may be quite as unwilling as they to have the light of God's truth

turned upon them. God speaks of covetousness, which is idolatry. God looketh on the heart, and if God sees a single merchant in our cities, with whom the reason, for example, why he is unwilling that any mention of the sin of slavery should resound from the pulpit, or that any agitation in regard to its wickedness should be kept up, is a regard to his business and its profits, or a fear of revulsion and disturbance distressing to the prosperous course and current of commercial affairs, that concealment and opposition of the light, and the motive for it, are as bad, in his case, with his increased knowledge, in the blaze of the whole word of God, as the idolatry of the Israelites. It is the golden calves still, and still there is the worship of them, and Dan and Bethel are in this city with their Dagon and their altars, and their priests, not among the lowest merely, but the highest of the people.

And the forced concealment of truth on this very subject, the voice to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, Prophecy not, the ban upon the light, the ostracism of opinion, the repression of freedom in the pulpit, the accusation and the outcry of political preaching, if the light of God be turned upon it, the extreme fastidiousness and fear in our fashionable congregations, sit like a night-mare on the genius of the gospel. It is a mountain of despotism, and of the fear of man thrown upon the truth. The preacher is like the fabled giant under the volcano. If the giant

will be quiet, the mountain will be quiet, and some green things may grow upon it in peace and freshness. But the moment he turns in his anguish, or strives to free himself of his load, the mountain belches forth its fire and fury, and rolls down streams of lava, and the poor be-mountained giant is the cause of it! The giant can not stir, hand or foot, with the least suspicion of regaining his freedom, but Etna rages. Tell me not that this is an exaggerated description. Almost every time the light of God's word has been turned directly upon this subject, it has been followed with tumult. Again and again have faithful and beloved pastors been driven from their pulpits, just barely for giving a single utterance of God's word against the sin of slavery. At the South a man has been driven from his church, simply for refusing to add his name to a commendation of the dastardly and murderous outrage in the Senate of the United States. In Washington, a pastor has been recently dismissed for one single sermon against slavery. In Philadelphia the people have demanded and accomplished the resignation of a pastor for the same offense. Everywhere, almost, there is this attempt to muzzle the pulpit, this impious refusal to listen to God's word on this one sin.

Now I should insult the moral sense of the congregation, if I should ask them (as though there were a doubt in their minds as to such iniquity) whether this is right in the sight of God; and God perhaps has

suffered us to come to our present crisis in the affairs of this nation, on purpose, in part, to deliver the pulpit from such bondage. There is a point where the life is reached, and men feel it, and now they begin to speak out, whether men will hear or forbear. And if we would be faithful, we *must* speak out; for we know that this is God's truth and that whatever plausible motives of expediency may induce either us to refrain from uttering it, or you to shrink from hearing it, it can not be right in God's sight to hearken unto men more than unto God.

The conservatism that would prevent the utterance of God on this subject is a conservatism that stands in the way of righteousness, and yet it makes great pretensions to sobriety and uprightness. It reminds one of Jeremiah's satirical description. They are upright as the palm-tree, but speak not. It preserves a sober and dignified silence, when God commands a fearless outspoken rebuke of cherished sins. It imputes the violence of men's passions in defense of such sins to the rashness and impertinence of those who have dared to rebuke them. It is always saying to those who open the batteries of truth, when noise and fury follow the cannonading, Had you kept silence, there would have been nothing of all this agitation; you are stirring up nothing but contention and wrath. This was the very accusation brought against Jeremiah himself, when he proclaimed the Word of God in Jerusalem and Judea against sins,

which the government commanded, and which the people declared they would defend and practice, and which not a few among prophets and priests themselves affirmed were no sins at all, but just a profitable policy. "Woe is me," exclaimed Jeremiah, "for I am become a man of contention and strife. I love peace, and I love my people, and I love my country, and out of love I speak to them this word of the Lord. I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury, yet every one of them doth curse me." Ah, Jeremiah, there are other ways to touch men's pockets, and irritate their avarice, besides charging twenty per cent. for your money. Lay the tax of the word of God upon their profitable, legalized, and cherished sins, and instantly they cry out violence and spoil, and the word of God itself will be made a reproach unto you and a derision, daily. "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall *not* perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. So I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying peradventure he will be enticed, we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him."

And all for what? Had he injured them, betrayed them, slandered them, defrauded them? Simply and

solely because he had delivered unto them the words of the Lord against their sins of oppression and idolatry. Well! if all the Lord's prophets had been faithful and true like Jeremiah, they would have conquered, and God's word in them. But Jeremiah stood almost alone, and the prophets themselves were against him, the conservatists of peace and sin. When he said that the city and the people were wholly given to oppression, and that God would desolate the land, and deliver up the city to its enemies, because of this wickedness, they said no, he will not deliver it, but Jeremiah is teaching rebellion against the king, the government, and the nation. So between the word of the Lord on the one side, and the word of these false prophets on the other, between the word of the Lord burning as a fire in his own soul and in his very bones, and making him weary with forbearing, and compelling him to cry out, like a lion in his anguish, and the lies, threatenings, and outcries of rebellion and treason, by prophets, priests, and people, the faithful preacher of God was almost distracted. "Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the word of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness. For both prophet and priest are profane, and their ways shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing.

They walk in lies, they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness; they are all unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants as Gomorrah." Nothing could be more expressive of the burning anger of the Lord against those who stood against his word. They were looked up to for examples and guides as the conservatists among the people; but they conserved the people in their sins, crying out all the while against this agitation and strife that Jeremiah was producing with the word of the Lord. There could hardly be a more offensive and deliberate wickedness against God, than the example of such resistance against his word, and such denial of its application. Therefore saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall; for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said ye shall have peace, and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?



These sneering questions of blasphemy and unbelief, this daring denial of God's word in the face of his divinely-commissioned prophets, addressed by the false prophets, and believed by the people, filled up the cup of their sins, and insured the divine vengeance. And instantly its assertion follows: "Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind; it shall fall grievously upon the heads of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart; in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they *had* stood *in my counsel*, and *had* caused my people to *hear my words*, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. I have heard what the prophets have said that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the hearts of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts which think to cause my people to forget my name, by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer

that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every man from his neighbor. Prophet, priest, and people that do this, I will even punish that man and his house; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of Hosts, our God. Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence. And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten.”

That everlasting reproach, that perpetual shame, that living destruction! We see it with our eyes, for where is the nation on whose soil some of these cinders out of the furnace of God's wrath have not fallen? And still the Jews, like half-burned shingles from the great conflagration, darken the air of prophecy. And how is it possible that men anywhere can read these burning denunciations of the wickedness by which they fell, and repeat the same wickedness, the same oppression, and the same daring defiance, and resistance, and perversion of God's word in regard to it?

God sent Jeremiah with such messages, even to Tophet, sent him on purpose, and gathered a congregation to hear him, even on the borders of that smoldering, smoking image of the world of woe; sent him to preach there in order to give a more

terrible force and stinging application to his words, sent him to that valley of the son of Hinnom, that rotting gehenna of dead men's bones and all uncleanness, and made him stand with an earthen vessel in his hands, which, amid the tide of burning eloquence poured from God's Spirit through his lips, against the sins of the nation, he was commanded to break in pieces, and cast it into the valley as an emblem of the manner in which God would break up the whole nation, and cast the people into Tophet, till there should be none to bury them, nor room for them to be buried. And after he had finished that sermon, he came into the city again, and repeated its application to all the people in the court of the Lord's house, and instantly upon that, the sermon being reported to the authorities, they lashed the prophet with stripes, and put him in the stocks, as their descendants afterward did with Paul and Silas, the New Testament preachers of the same Gospel. Never did the malignity of man, and the instant retributive power and majesty of the word of God come into more graphic and instructive conflict. Will you listen to the recital, for it is brief and pungent: "Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the Lord had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord's house, and said to all the people, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon the city, and upon all her towers, all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they

have hardened their necks that they might not hear my words. Now Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-Missabib. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it; and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house, shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies."

It was thus that God preserved Jeremiah, and, according to his promise, made the terror of his words to sink in the hearts of his opponents, made his words fire and the people wood, to be kindled by them. And all around in the region of his native place, where wicked and scornful men beset and plagued him, Jeremiah was charged with similar messages.

Now if ever there was what is now falsely called political preaching, it was this preaching of Jeremiah. It was the preaching of *religion* in politics, God's word as the only authoritative and right *guide* of politics, God's word forbidding a nation's sins. And God sustained the prophet in this preaching through a ministry of forty-three years' duration. Now mark my words, It was the preaching of *religion in politics*, which is God's own command, both in the Old and New Testament, but the preaching of *politics in religion* is quite another thing, the work of intriguing politicians and of Satan, seeking to blind the minds of men, and keep God's light and God's authority away from their hearts and consciences. If religion be *not* preached and practiced in the politics of a nation, that nation is on the high road to perdition; for the nation and kingdom that will not serve God shall perish; and if *politics* be preached and practiced in the religion of a nation, which is the case when religion is not applied to politics, then both church and people perish in their sins.

## CHAPTER V.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE PULPIT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD—HYPOCRISY OF THE OUTCRY OF POLITICAL PREACHING—THE SINFULNESS OF CONCEALMENT AND OF SHIELDING MEN'S SINS FROM THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL—APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

THE Jesuitical habit of apologizing for sin, and of covering it up, runs into every thing; he that is unfaithful in much will also be unfaithful in a little, and he that is unfaithful in a little is unfaithful in much. He whose corporate conscience is debauched in a society, will lose all tenderness and acuteness of conscience in private life, and in his own piety. He will lie, steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, and then come and stand in God's house, which is called by his name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations. Politics in religion will not only lead to the practice of such abominations, but will justify and sanctify them; but religion in politics pours the light of God's word upon men's corporate as well as individual crimes. It is impossible for the individuals of a nation to support the nation's sins, or apologize for them, or ward off the light of

God's word from rebuking them, and not put in peril their own piety and salvation.

Already, over more than half the pulpits in our land there hangs the ban of excommunication, if a single page of God's word be applied against slavery; the thing must not be mentioned, and a politic silence prevails. The drums of God's word are muffled, and they beat a funeral march instead of a Gospel onset. Our conservative Christians have turned sextons—they are for burying the truth instead of publishing it. Their whole terror is against the living truth; dead men's bones and all uncleanness have less that is repulsive for them, than rousing, cutting, and exciting truth, the truth of God, that brings religion into their cotton speculations and their politics. "My people ask counsel at their *stocks*, and their stuff declareth unto them. Ephraim is a merchant; the balances of deceit are in his hands; *he loveth to oppress*, yet he saith, I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin." There may be iniquity in the abstract, but nothing is sin *per se*. if there be great profit in it; and when the pecuniary interest of any wicked system becomes vast, there are prophets enough to justify Ephraim in its preservation.

Now, then, let such dead as these bury their dead, but the Gospel is not to walk as a mourner, at the grave-digger's bidding. Preach thou the kingdom of

God. Undertakers for the dead; preachers for the living. Let not the first presume to give instructions to the last. It is a different process, that of nailing up truth in coffins, and putting it five feet under ground, lest it be a stench in the nostrils of cotton merchants, and that of revealing its grand and noble forms, as glorious living messengers from the Lord Almighty. We walk with angels, not with dead men; we take counsel of living, beating hearts, not dead bones and purses. To those who conceal or sell the truth for a present expediency, and handle God's word by profit and loss, God gives in receipt a whirlwind; ye shall be ashamed of your revenues, says he, because of the fierce anger of the Lord. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter, Should not a people seek unto their God? Will they dare to seek for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony! If your leaders speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. And if you follow such teachers, hear ye what is in reserve for you, even in your very passage through the word of God, and what it means when the Lord says, that if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. For, says the living God, If they speak not according to my word, they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry; even through this land of glory, this place of living streams, green pastures, and cold flowing waters, and



trees of life, whose fruit is for the healing of the nations; even through this region of heaven shall they pass more famished with thirst and hunger than if lost in the heart of the great desert under the simoom cloud. They shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry, and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven into darkness. That is the fate of any political party that will not obey God's word, but chain themselves to platforms that abjure it, and trust in lies.

Nothing can possibly be more hypocritical, than the outcry about political preaching. The truth is, that the moment any sin passes from the individual to the nation, and is sanctioned by law, and becomes what is called organic, then instantly the speech against it is branded as political preaching; so that, if you wish to take all manner of sin from the touch and control of the pulpit, if you wish to shield it from that rebuke which God has appointed to be thundered against it, you have only to make it legal and national, and you have given it a tabernacle, a pavilion, you have enshrined it as a Dagon, before which you must put off the shoes from your feet, and approach it only to bow down and worship. If a man has two wives, you may preach against polyga-

my, and nobody thinks of charging you with preaching politics; but if a State set up polygamy by law, and its support be made a plank in the political platform of a party, then, if you touch upon it in the pulpit, you are preaching politics. Whenever, and in whatever way, you bring religion to bear upon politics, there are men who will accuse you of political preaching; but you are not to stop for that.

And it is most instructive to see the blundering power of political prejudices, and the distortions of men's vision. The Rev. Dr. Richards, settled in Morristown during the administration of President Jefferson, preached on one occasion a sermon on the prevalence of infidelity, applying the principles of the gospel to the duties of the nation; and the sermon happening to fall in with the opinions of the hearers, it was greatly admired. No one thought of calling it a political sermon. Several years passed away, bringing, in many respects, a great change in the political views of the congregation. But divine truth is always the same. Dr. Richards, thinking he perceived a train or habit of opinion and feeling in the congregation or community, which called for it, took up the same sermon, and preached it again as before. Not an individual remembered it, but a great portion of the congregation were very much offended by it, as being what they called political preaching. They went to the length of appointing a committee to wait upon the preacher and remonstrate with him against

such kind of preaching. One of the gentlemen on the committee, and their chairman, was Dr. Whelpley, then an elder in Dr. Richards's church. The committee presented their grievances and remonstrance, and Dr. Richards listened with great gravity and serenity. When they got through, he remarked that time brings about great changes. Men change, opinions change; nature herself works wondrous transformations; but his old sermons remained, for aught he could discover, just as they were. This discourse, said he, taking up the obnoxious sermon, is indeed discolored, and somewhat yellow with age; but its contents remain precisely the same as they were so many years ago, when you first heard its expositions of divine truth, and regarded them with admiration as the pure gospel of God, nor ever dreamed of there being any thing political in them.

The committee of remonstrance listened with astonishment; they took the manuscript into their hands, and sat gazing at one another, and at Dr. Richards, in silence. At length Dr. Whelpley, the chairman, turned to them and said, Gentlemen, I think we had better go! And after that, there was no more criticism in the congregation concerning the preaching of politics.

But at the present time, the simplest announcement of divine truth, in regard to national guilt, is asserted to be an invasion, forsooth, of the political rights of the congregation, and an unwarranted intrusion of

themes adapted to excite angry feeling, where there ought to be nothing mentioned but Christ and him crucified.

But what is it to truly preach Christ and him crucified, except to pour the light of a Saviour's sufferings and death upon men's sins, that in that light they may see and feel "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," their *own* sins, and the sins of the community, and be led, out of love to Christ, and for his sake, to renounce them? Many persons may be willing to *preach* nothing but Christ and him crucified, who are not willing, like Paul, to *know* nothing among men save Christ and him crucified; a very different thing it is, merely to preach that doctrine speculatively, from applying it practically. Many are very willing to hear about Christ being crucified *for them*, who will not listen for a moment to the proposed crucifixion of their sins *for him*, especially those sins which they call organic, those that have the sanction and protection of human law, those that are regarded and maintained as domestic institutions, and those that are defended by a strong party, so that it becomes an unpopular and a hazardous thing to assail them. But for what purpose was the gospel given, but to turn men from their iniquities, disclosing and condemning them in the light of the cross?

And what *is* the gospel, with its infinite majesty of thought, and its burning motives, and its countless applications, and its sublime combinations of thunder-

ings and halleluias, and its compass of all sounds reverberating from heaven to hell? Is it a fiddle with only one string, or a harp of infinite harmonies? Is it an organ with only one note—a monotonous anodyne of repeated truisms, so admitted, that they are cradled in the dormitory of the soul, as lifeless as exploded errors? Is it a treadmill of orthodoxy and conservatism, where men, that would be Samsons anywhere else, must grind blind-folded, crushed beneath the fear of man, terrified at the thought of a blast from the political newspapers, afraid of every thing exciting, their only object to keep things quiet, and the watchword of their millennium, First peaceable, then pure? Such an idea of the gospel is preposterous; it reminds us of our school-day declamations:

“My name is Norval! on the Grampian hills  
 My father feeds his flock; a frugal swain,  
 Whose only aim was to increase his store,  
 And keep his only son, myself, at home!”

I tell you, no wonder that the modern pulpit has lost its power, when men are afraid of the application of that power, and tremble at the consequences. The gospel is not to be perverted as a political lullaby, and shall not be muzzled at the mandate of intriguing politicians and oppressors. There is nothing, from the beginning to the end of the alphabet, connected with moral issues, and bearing on men's duty, which may not, at the proper time, be made the subject of

investigation in the pulpit, and the proper time for the consideration of any sin, is the very time, and the proper place the very place, where the sin is practiced, where its lawfulness, expediency, and righteousness are maintained, and where its disastrous, demoralizing, destructive influence, is felt, and not at the Antipodes, where sins are reigning of an entirely opposite character. The proper time and place for the consideration of idolatry is in the presence of the idol-worship, and in the community where such an abomination prevails, or where it is defended; and no matter what laws, or antique usages and authorities of state and custom sustain the iniquity, that makes no difference in the duty of the preacher. The application of the gospel must be made; nor is there any time to be lost; since the argument of possession, custom, and law, is every day growing stronger.

Just so with every dear, cherished, fashionable evil. If the probing of it occasions agitation, anger, strife, that very thing is proof of the necessity of so dealing with it; and if it is warmly contested not to be an evil nor a sin, that itself just clearly shows the danger and ruin of letting it alone, and the pressing necessity of pouring the light of God's word upon it. If it be interwoven with the politics of the state and of society, so much the worse; so much the more hazardous to meddle with it, but so much the more necessary. Idolatry was thoroughly interwoven with the fixtures and statutes of the Roman empire, but

the gospel was laid at its roots; and though the apostles might have preached Christ and him crucified, technically, orthodoxically, without saying one word against the worship of idols, yet they attacked it, and poured the light of the cross upon it, in the very heart of Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome, before the temples and the altars of Astarte, of Jupiter, of Diana, and the thirty thousand gods admitted by the indifference of Arcopagus. Think of any man undertaking to tell Paul that he must not bring his religion into politics! It was only vagabond Jews, and that only of the lower sort, and Demetrius the silver-smith, the maker of silver shrines for Diana, that cried out politics, and the turning of the world upside down with agitation, and sounded the alarm that the apostles were persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. That was the accusation; and where the law was all on the side of sin, death, and Satan, how could there but be incessant conflict and strife, till God's law got the uppermost?

I sometimes think I see, with the clearness of a death-bed vision, that the spirit of gain, and of a commercial expediency, and of an indolent love of ease and prosperity, even in spiritual things, has taken fast hold of the people. And I do know that there may be a self-deception, even in the hearts of men who think they are going on wisely and smoothly in the way to heaven, and a secret leaven of supreme

regard to self, that corrupts the whole fountain, so that, by-and-by, with the horror of an eternal surprise, they may find God saying to them, I never knew you, ye never knew me!

There are those who have asked themselves, again and again, May we not keep silence? Is it not best? Why is it necessary to speak on this subject, though it be in God's word; or, if necessary, why necessary for us, and why now? But we are answered by conscience, by God's word, by the examples of the prophets and apostles: and so answered, how can we forbear speaking out? By the help of God, I, for one, mean to speak freely, fully, on this subject, at this most solemn juncture in our history. It is not from curiosity, merely, but by constraint, that we have to seek the light of God upon our present path of duty, personal and individual, in regard to this thing. It is no mere abstraction, and never was, but it has come to every man's door, every man's own soul, asking what shall be done? what course are we to pursue, what opinion shall we maintain, and what would God have us to do, in such a crisis? Here, then, we must consent to come humbly to the word of God, and learn what is His judgment in regard to the right way; for now, at this very time, we are making, as a nation, our final decision upon it, and every man takes part in that decision.

I proclaim the right and the obligation of a minister of God's word to preach on the sinfulness of



extending the system of slavery, and to show the consequent religious responsibility of a vote in regard to it. If any persons in the nation have a right to speak on this subject, those who have thoroughly investigated it in the Scriptures, in their original languages, certainly possess that right. I have long studied the Old Testament in reference to it, out of anguish of spirit at the daring accusation brought against God's law among the Hebrews, of sustaining and sanctioning this stupendous wrong. And if, after some seventeen years' ministry in the city of New York, I could not dare to speak, or might not be permitted or sustained in proclaiming the whole utterance of God's word on this subject, where or when could I? Could I do it at the South? where, not only no man is allowed to speak, but if he be even suspected of thinking unfavorably to the system of slavery, he must be expelled from society, the safety of which is declared to be imperiled by his presence. Or, should a minister go to India or Siberia, and there proclaim the word of God against the sin of slavery, in a country five thousand miles distant? That was Amaziah's advice to the prophet Amos, when, at God's bidding, he proclaimed the iniquities *of Israel in Israel*. O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there, but prophesy not again any more at Bethel, for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

But why speak here, and why now? Because the time has come, and the occasion, and the demand, and the personal moral necessity. It is worth a seventeen years' ministry to come to such a crisis, and be permitted of God to speak out. Never before has the extension of slavery been made a personal responsibility, at least not directly; but now it is. It is put to you and to me, as individuals, to say, Shall slavery and oppression, or freedom and justice, be the rule of this nation? This, then, is a crisis in which, with the word of God in trust to proclaim for God, we can not be silent; and as to our hearers, whatever part of God's word you reject, the same shall judge you in the last day.

Now, it is no easy matter to proclaim the word of God on this subject; it is not a pleasing or a popular theme. And as to position, as to prosperity, as to popularity, are not all inducements over on the side of ease, quiet, and silence? Why endanger your position, influence, the welfare of your church, by an obstinate conscience, that makes you think, forsooth, that you must proclaim the messages in the word of God on this subject? Truly, my friends, you must see that it is nothing of ease, or self-indulgence, or the seductions of popular applause, that can constrain a man, in such a case, to give utterance to his convictions. I can but ask your prayers, as Paul did, that I may open my mouth boldly, that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But speak I must. If

I did not speak, I should perhaps receive the curse of a judicial darkness into my own soul. I should feel degraded, debased, enslaved. I could never lift my head as a man, a free man, an ambassador for God, who seeks not to please men, but God. I have been made to feel that if a man can not stand against the whole world, if need be, with a Thus saith the Lord, he is unfit to speak for Jehovah; it may be that he is unfit for heaven, destitute of the very first elements of faith in the Lord Jesus. And of the two lines of mistake in regard to eternity, that of self-indulgence in the way of timidity and love of ease, taking that for a conservative piety, and that of boldness, and a constitutional love of liberty and truth, taking that for conscientiousness;—a man may be mistaken in regard to his motives in either way. But if one must go to perdition by one of these errors, he had better go by mistake of boldness in the truth, than shame and fear of it. And sure I am, that more will be lost in this age by not confessing God and his truth before men, than by imprudent or fiery zeal in the proclamation of any part of God's messages.

O that God may work in us all, by his own grace, a most entire and hearty love of his truth. Remembering that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live, may we be enabled to say with Jeremiah, Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

## CHAPTER VI.

GLORY AND FREEDOM OF THE WORD OF GOD IN ITS UNIVERSAL AND PERPETUAL APPLICATION — DEMONSTRATIONS FROM ITS HISTORICAL AND PROPHETIC PORTIONS, AS TO NATIONAL SINS— THIS LIGHT YET TO BE APPLIED.

IT is the glory and the freedom of the Word of God, that it is for all ages, times, circumstances, men, and sins, without respect to persons. What would it be worth, if it were not? It would grow old, it would pass out of date, it would vanish away, it would be like the first Egyptian covenant which decayeth and waxeth old, and is suspended. But now, forever, every word of God is settled in heaven, every orb hung up in that divine firmament, the same faithful light unto all generations. Its very historical records are like the milky way, a galaxy of stars, disclosing new worlds with the application of every new comprehensive prayerful investigation by instruments of greater power. And its very nebulosities, that like the cloudy fleeces of the starry universe, have sometimes furnished hopeful clinging-places for the bats of infidelity, are resolved into clusters of perfect worlds, arranged from the outset by him who made them at

his own great will, for the manifestation of his own glory. The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. There is no dross in it; there is nothing to be thrown away; and the historical portions are especially precious for this, among many essential uses, that they teach us, beyond all possibility of doubt, the freedom and fearlessness with which God will have every portion of his Word applied. They set in a divine illumination the precedents, in which the statutory parts of the divine law are illustrated, with such demonstration, as to give their meaning new clearness and power. And the same is the case with the illustration of the promises, so often made to shine in the chapters of personal experience, and in the beautiful and various recountings of God's providence.

Now it can not be denied that in whatever age of the world any sinful practices or principles prevail, to the condemnation of which any part of the word of God is applicable, or for demonstration of the wickedness of which any part of the word of God can be used, that part of the word of God is meant for that age and that iniquity, was given in reference to it, was prearranged for such application, and is as directly revealed from God to that age, for the purpose of being proclaimed as his immediate message, as it was for the very first age, and the very first occasion. For this is the ever-living power and freshness of the word of God. When God revealed it first, he gave it

for all times and places, through all generations up to the last day, and with a particular foresight of all phases of human society, all forms of human government, all customs and fashions among men, and all varieties of human wickedness, whether of philosophy or impiety, intellect or heart, in the church or out of it, rulers or ruled. It is the incorruptible, eternal Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, while generation after generation, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever.

And God will have it applied; he gave it, he prepared it, he made it profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. God will have it applied by living preachers, according as men's conditions, dangers, miseries and sins, sins and miseries, require; will have it divided rightly, that every man, and every generation, and every community, may receive their portion in due season. Like the sun in the heavens, there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. And there is nothing, in individual or national life, at the door of which, as at a forbidden or sacred citadel, any man, or government, or society, may stand and fend off, or expel, the word of God from entering and applying its judgment. It has the scrutiny and freedom of omniscience and omnipresence, breaking

every seal and every spell of concealment, and flashing as God's eye into every secret recess and on every hidden thing. Whatever is morally wrong in all the ramifications, employments, and organizations of society, whatever in human business or luxury, whatever in art, commerce, manufactures, labor, learning, science, jurisprudence, civil, social, or domestic economy, on that the word of God falls, to search it out and rebuke it. Whatever there be in the laws or policy of nations, tainted with moral infection, under the condemnation of God's righteousness, or adapted, or designed, to lead men into, or protect them in pursuing courses of sin, on that the word of God comes down, to that it is to be applied, and that is the province over which it has indisputable dominion, and on which it is to be marched without fear or apology, without hindering or halting. If unrighteousness in law is carrying men in iniquity headlong, God's word is to be planted in the face of such law, in defiance of it, as a park of artillery to thunder against it, and shield the people from its dreadful sway. Of all partisan claims or theological hallucinations, the idea that the science of government, the conduct of rulers, the political creeds and practices of men, the administration of parties and of nations, the whole domain, in fine, of what is called politics, is sacred from the application of God's word, and stands aloof on ground which the very nature of the preacher's vocation forbids him to invade, is the maddest. A greater

absurdity could scarcely be broached or a more impious one in its logic and its consequences, than that which, nevertheless, has been broached, and widely insisted on, that politics are out of the supervision of piety, and that religion is out of its sphere in applying to the political doctrines and practices of a people the rules of God's righteousness, the light of God's word. The politics of a people comprise the whole scope of their laws and civil obligations, under which, if they be left to the dominion of the god of this world, given over to his undisputed sway, the whole nation will at length inevitably go down to perdition. The idea that men commissioned with the word of God are desecrating their office, or transcending its limits, when they undertake to bring the nation's laws and transgressions under the judgment of God's law; or that they are in any manner or degree going out of their own proper sphere as the teachers of God's word, is a creation only of pride and impiety; and for the ministers of that word themselves to echo such an opinion, is itself a desecration of their office and a treason against God.

And here let me say, in regard to the historical teachings, and all other teachings in the Old Testament, that they are not only not superseded by the New, but confirmed and strengthened, and of just as great importance to be applied as ever. The New Testament is an addition to, and perfection of, the revelations of God's will in the Old, but it takes not



away one jot or tittle of its authority, nor diminishes in the least degree its importance, nor supplies its place. The New Testament is part and parcel of the Old, but what the Old could not do, the New has done, and what the Old has still to do, the New does not do, and can not do, in its place. The Old came very much to governments and nations; the New still leaves that field to be occupied by the Old, and itself comes more especially and directly to individuals; but the Old has still its mission, and must occupy its sphere, as fellow-preacher with the New, both being God's eternal witnesses, neither to cease on account of the other, but both to preach together and forever, to men and communities, to individuals and nations, to governments and peoples, to rulers and the ruled alike.

And in this history, the career of nations, and of the Jews especially, is full of blazing light and practical instruction, both in regard to our duty, and in illustration of the divine Providence and word. The Hebrew people, in their own country, and in their national life, were a perpetual beacon-light amid the darkness; and in their living death among the nations they still serve a mighty purpose for the demonstration of anatomy and disease, as God's subject of dissection, for the scrutiny of deadly moral poison, and the instruction and the warning of all empires. And in these historical pages the providential government of God is revealed and illustrated as we never

could have known it, but for them. Hence, continually the vivid references by the Lord Jesus Christ back to the records of what God has been doing, for instruction as to his will and providence and our duty. Have ye not read? Is it not plain before you? Remember Lot's wife. Remember the carcasses of those who fell in the wilderness. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah. As it was in the days of Noah so shall it again be. As it was with Jonah and Nineveh, and the warned and instructed, and yet ruined cities and kingdoms of old, so again in the ever-recurring tides and destinies of rising, flourishing, sinning, and falling nations. There they lie, the ruins of those cities, and in solemn silent eloquence proclaim God's wrath; and Nineveh and Thebes, in their wonderful disentanglement and material *anastasis* bear witness to the truth. The dispersion of the Jews among all nations, and at the same time God's most wonderful providential preservation of them from becoming lost and indistinguishable, or merged and denationalized, constitute a perpetual flaming miracle, in fulfillment of the prediction in Amos, "I will destroy the sinful kingdom from off the face of the earth, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." These demonstrations cover the course of all time, and they are for all ages, and they reach to all possible circumstances and questions in their application, with their

light. They show, as one vast example and precedent, for the instruction of all generations and nations, how God is a present God, with a particular providence, interposing, acting, arranging all causes, and ordering affairs, and guiding and governing the whole world on the same principles developed in the history of that small portion of the world where the Saviour of the world was crucified.

But this light has never been applied to the affairs of nations, the administration of governments, the political life of the people; and almost half of God's word has remained a dead letter, and an unknown power. When John Robinson told the pilgrims that he was confident God had much more truth to unseal and let it break forth out of his living oracles, than they had any of them then gazed at, he might, or he might not, have had in his mind this application of divine truth to human politics; but certain it is, that by such application and guidance alone can our country be saved from going down into a deeper gulf of ruin than any nation was ever buried in. This country is the battle-ground of religious principle against a wicked political expediency, and of God's authority in national affairs against the spirit of conquest, covetousness, oppression, and diplomatic fraud and selfishness. Never, anywhere else, has principle had the field; it has been shut out and abandoned, as an interloper, an intruder, out of place in politics, and so the world has gone on without it. But here we have

it. The battle is God's authority, and the religious principle, and the power of conscience, against political dishonesty and villainy. It is by the word of God that conscience and freedom fight on against immorality and slavery; and the whole word must be free, and must be used, and no part of it veiled or rejected.

Heretofore the conscience-battle has been merely as a skirmish in a narrow mountain gorge, where not a thousandth part of the troops could be engaged, or it has only been an ecclesiastical engagement, as of the Free Church of Scotland, moving from the government and patronage of the State. Now, at length, we are down in the plain, room enough for all the forces and for every evolution, and the whole world are gazing at us, as if they occupied the mountain sides, and suspended all their interests for the issue of this conflict. It is principle, battling by the word of God, that here must contend against policy, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; must enter into policy, conquer it, guide it, shape it, inspire it, transform it. It is principle in the hearts of the people that must reclaim and govern the government, that must wrest it mightily from the possession of men who are subverting its fundamental laws and elements, and put it in the hands, and keep it in the hands, of men who will not do what God abhors.

There is but one way to accomplish this: God's

truth, working by God's Spirit in the masses, in the common people, in the whole constituency. We must take possession of the constituency for God, and so we get possession of the government for God. The opinions of the constituency in regard to politics must be formed under the light of God's word, a thing which in most nations has never yet been done, but religion has been kept as far away from politics, and politics as thoroughly on the watch against religion, as if politics were a peaceful, unpolluted Eden, and religious truth the prowling fiend, seeking to distract, divide, and fill it with mischief and desolation. The government of religion by politics has been very common; this has been the rule where church and state have been united; and between both the truth of God's word has been crushed and silenced, where it could not be perverted. But now comes a time when every thing must be brought into the light, and determined not by state or ecclesiastical power, as formerly, but by conscience, which God's truth first sets at work, and then arms with a might that is irresistible. Now, over all this domain, God's word has a park of mighty batteries to move, hitherto masked and silent, but now to be unmasked and thundering. There is a hidden fire never yet revealed, but which is to break forth in triumphant majesty and power.

## CHAPTER VII.

GOD'S WRATH AGAINST SLAVERY IN JEREMIAH XXXIV. 17—THE ILLUMINATION FROM THIS PASSAGE UPON OUR OWN SIN—THE SOLEMNITY OF THE CRISIS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY—NATIONAL DECISIONS BY INDIVIDUAL OPINIONS AND CHOICES—THE QUESTION TO BE SETTLED IS OF RIGHT OR WRONG, NOT POLICY OR IMPOLICY.

THUS saith the Lord, Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor ; behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine ; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. Jer. xxxiv. 17. These words constitute one of the most tremendous thunderbolts of God's wrath against a nation's sins ever issued from the quiver of the Almighty. It came down with the suddenness of a peal of thunder in a clear day. The cause and occasion of it were the attempted establishment of slavery in the land, in place of free voluntary paid labor. Involuntary servitude was forbidden by the divine law, and the service appointed by the constitution of the Jewish state was a free service. There had been, from time to time, great and gross transgressions of this benevolent constitution ; and God had incessantly

denounced his vengeance, by the prophets, against such oppressions ; but never before had there been a deliberate determination and attempt, on the part of the nation, to violate the free constitution, defeat its provisions of protection and justice for the laboring classes, establish the sinful and forbidden claim of property in man, and bind their free servants as bond-slaves and chattels forever at the will of the master.

This dreadful revolution and usurpation they now resolved upon—king, princes, priests, and the whole oligarchy of masters. They had hesitated, had relaxed their grasp from the subjects of their oppression, when Jerusalem was threatened by the invading Chaldean army ; but the moment the troops drew off, and the immediate pressure of fear and danger was removed, they returned to their impious project ; the gain in their wealth, by making their servants *property*, instead of *hired servants*, was too vast, and the temptation of wielding an irresponsible despotism too dazzling for their cupidity and love of power to resist. They had been going on in an immoral, sensual, proud, vicious training for this final, daring, culminating iniquity, for centuries ; but they did not expect to be reined up and blasted by so sudden a destruction. It came like a whirlwind ; it was all over with them, there was no more reprieve, no more forbearance ; the choice of slavery instead of freedom, and oppression instead of justice and humanity, as the

policy of the nation, filled up the measure of their iniquities, and exhausted the last drop in the allotted patience and long-suffering of God.

Now, the transaction of this marked and mighty sin, and God's tremendous, almost instantaneous, wrathful judgment against it, were, for the sudden illumination of wickedness and justice in our fallen world, like a sun shot into chaos. If I had time to examine, and you the patience to contemplate, the previous steps of transgression, that led to this colossal guilt, and prepared the way for it, the gradual sapping and mining of the foundations of morality, the corruption of principles, manners, and morals, the successive wicked statutes, and the habit of infidelity and disobedience toward God fastened on the people, in willingly walking after them, the sacrifice and shipwreck of conscience, in obeying man rather than God, and the consequent loss of all dignity, power, and freedom, the recital would be full of instruction and of thrilling interest. We have already dwelt upon several important points; and I can now only, as it were, take the quadrant, and, getting this orb of light in the firmament of God's word in the right line and reflection, bring it down exactly to our position, to calculate our course of duty and of safety. It is only by such celestial observations, as that great writer, Mr. Coleridge, once remarked, that terrestrial charts can be constructed: such charts, at least, as can be relied upon



to carry a nation safely through its perils. We ourselves are at sea, and surrounded by breakers, and God only can rescue us; and He will do it, only by our reliance on Him, and obedience to Him.

Let us, then, in the first place, secure an observation as to God's method in a nation's probationary trial, and as to the solemnity of the crisis to which we have been brought, and the similarity between our position and that of the Jews, from the lifted lid of whose sepulchre there comes such an awful voice of wailing and of warning. We shall then be prepared to go into the argument as to the iniquity of slavery, and as to our own guilt and ruin, if we consent to its extension.

And here I beseech you to remark, that this mighty precedent of national injustice, and of God's vengeance against it, being once set, and blazing out with lurid fire, like a burning planet, in God's word, it settles into certainty the judgment of God with any *other* nation that shall dare to take to its embrace a similar injustice as to its policy. It settles another matter also, that God will never again have patience with any other nation as he had with the first; but the wrath that with the first was restrained for ages, while the injustice was rolling on, will come down upon the last, because of the despised light of the first example, with overwhelming rapidity and power. If men neglect the examples and the warning in God's word, so much the worse for them, and worse still if

they scoff at its application. But there burns the light, the fire, the wickedness, the warning, the thunderbolt: you can almost hear it hissing and detonating anew, as you open those sacred pages. There stands the scorched, scarred, transfixed, and blasted form of a nation once chosen and beloved of God, but now a monument to the universe of his inexorable justice. Dear to him once as the apple of his eye, engraved in covenant mercy on the palms of his hands, yet for the crime of *trusting in oppression and staying themselves thereon*, plucked from his own finger as his signet ring, and whirled in scorn into the gulf of retribution!

We may be sure, if we do not mark this example, and take heed to the warning, there will be no such patience and forbearance of God toward us, as for a while reined in his wrath from riding as a whirlwind over his ancient people.

Nations have their time and scene of probation as well as individuals. They form character, habits, and fixed principles of conduct, that, in the end, however things may seem to move for a season, come out according to eternal justice. If that be violated by a nation, to secure a present seeming temporal prosperity or power, there will be a divine vengeance and retribution. The course of crime strikes back, and that which was pleasure, luxury, and power, in the forward career, is wretchedness, ruin, and death in the reaction. The time must come; it can not wait for

eternity; and whatever distance there may be between the actors of a present generation, whom the judgment for national crime overtakes, and those who began the crime, or set its causes in the national policy, the stroke of vengeance is not lightened, but falls with a renewed and accumulated, as well as original righteousness and force, the present actors having adopted for themselves the sins of their fathers, woven them in the life of the nation, and made that perpetual which might have been temporary. That upon you may come all the righteous blood, from that of Abel down to the last man murdered for his principles. It all comes, and comes righteously, for the last act challenges all the preceding, as adopted, legitimated; and the fate that, like the whirling of a sling, has been swinging round and round for generations, to gather force and swiftness, at length descends, as with the speed of lightning, in the concentrated fury of a vengeance long scouted and defied. Ages of expostulation and rebuke, of compassionate delay and warning, throw themselves into the blow. The spirits of retribution awake and hurry onward from a thousand quarters, where the moans of the injured have been going up to God.

When the time comes, when the books are open for settlement, as in the time of vengeance on the French monarchy for ages of oppression, every outraged principle, and every agonized class, presents its account. The universe seems but one uproar of

wrath ; seems to have taken fire for God and justice, and to rush upon the long-escaping and long-defying criminal with a rejoicing energy and strength. The race of men in Sodom, overwhelmed with the storm of fire from heaven, were perhaps no worse than the generation that preceded them ; but the vengeance long delayed all came down upon *them*. The vengeance due for past crimes, which might have been prevented by repentance and humility, is condensed, pointed, and brought down, by impenitence and hardness of heart, as when a lightning rod is lifted to the clouds. There is always a last drop of insolence and cruelty that fills up the measure of a nation's iniquities, and then the edict goes forth, *Actum est de te : periisti*. There was, in the case of Belshazzar and Babylon ; there was, in the case of Israel ; there was, in the case of Judah ; there was, in the career of Jerusalem, when incarnate Deity, in person, warned and expostulated.

There are awful unseen junctures, unseen, because men choose to be blinded, and there are days of unknown visitation, unknown, because men scoff at the thought of being thus under the judgment of a present God. There are seasons of deliberate choice forever, where two ways meet, and nations, as individuals, come to the point, decide, and from that step, go steadily downward or upward, according to that decision. We ourselves, as a nation, have come to such a point. We are to choose for an empire between

wrong and righteousness, between injustice and justice, between oppression and benevolence, between slavery and freedom. It is a point, in which all the characters and wills in this country come to a convergency, one side or other, good or bad. It is a point where the choice will be determined by individual adopted opinions and preferences, under motives and principles which in every case God unerringly traces and judges, as he alone can do.

It is a spectacle, and a national issue, such as there never was before in all the world ; a decision affecting at present and in prospect, more millions of men, and greater varieties of interest in this world, and more solemn eternal results, than any movement of any nation's policy ever on record. All such issues, heretofore, have been made up by the few in power, by consolidated governments and councils, in regard to whose determinations the people have no choice, and whose edicts are only to be registered and executed, unless the people have had the virtue to resist them. So the world has gone on, amid the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in provinces ; the place of judgment, and *iniquity* there, the place of righteousness, and *iniquity there* ; oppressors making wise men mad, and the few assuming, by robbery and tyranny, the responsibility of many, defrauding them almost of moral agency.

But out of this condition of the world there has been great progress ; it is given to our country to see

whether the many will act more truly and justly for God, and mercifully and righteously for themselves and others, than the few; whether human nature is unjust, selfish, and tyrannical in the few only, *because* few, and intrusted with too great a trust, or in the many also, except God's grace interpose. It is a new, vast, unexampled step, that of a question of morality for hundreds of millions and for ages, committed to a whole people to determine, by the expression of individual judgment as responsible as if the whole decision were thrown upon each one's own mind.

The question of duty with us is therefore not merely national, and corporate, but INDIVIDUAL, inasmuch as every man is called to vote, and to vote freely, according to his own opinion and choice. It is his highest moral responsibility, and most solemn action, as connected with the state. In forming his opinions, justly or unjustly, and in selecting his representatives or agents, with reference to those opinions, and in voting for his rulers, he is himself the actor of the justice or the injustice. What a man does by his agent, he does himself. *Qui facit per alium, facit per se.* If a man orders a broker to buy, *he* buys; if a man hires an assassin to murder, *he* murders. If a man votes for Senator, Representative, President, or Governor, pledged to pursue a particular line of oppression and iniquitous policy, he votes for that iniquity, he sustains it, he transacts it himself, he will have to stand before God in judg-

ment on that indictment. The vote is always a moral trust, but especially when a great moral question is to be determined by it. It is, of all others, a thing of individual responsibility, and a matter of conscience, a matter between the soul and God, a matter of religion, and not of mere politics, a matter in which every man ought to seek the instruction of God's word, and in which we are bound to proclaim God's judgment. We do not preach to the government, but to the people, the government being merely their agent. We do not preach to the people on a question of mere expediency, or diplomacy, or profit, or political economy, or statesmanship, or even of what is best, but of what is right, of what God allows. The question of slavery is not a question of power or revenue, but of RECTITUDE; and, since God's will is plainly expressed upon it, a question of obedience to God's law. Beyond all contradiction therefore it is a legitimate, appropriate, authoritative subject for the pulpit; and if the course proposed for the nation is that not only of sanctioning and sustaining the system of slavery, but of enforcing it as the policy of a new state, the system to be set at the heart of a virgin society, and men who religiously hate and abhor it to be driven into an endurance of it and submission to it at the point of the bayonet, then no true ambassador for God can avoid speaking out. On the plain and pungent principles laid down in Ezekiel, he is bound to proclaim God's denunciation of such an iniquity.

## CHAPTER VIII.

OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST THE MENTION OF THIS SIN—THE  
OPINION OF COLERIDGE—THE EXAMPLE OF LORD ERSKINE IN  
RESISTING AND REBUKING OPPRESSION—THE WORD OF GOD  
OUR ONLY SAFE GUIDE.

BUT here again I hear the stale, accustomed outcry of political preaching; and perhaps you say, it produces noise and agitation, dispute and disturbance, in the churches, to have the sluices of God's word opened on this iniquity, and revivals of religion will be stopped, and every thing will go to ruin. But, we may be sure every thing will go to ruin by sin, and not by the efforts to put a stop to sin. It produces a dreadful noise, to have the safety-valves opened on board a steamboat racing with such reckless speed and pressure of steam, that the boiler is about bursting. And suppose a party of men on board, engaged in a religious conversation, should run and jump upon the safety-valve, to prevent that noise, declaring that they could not converse while the noise continued. Would that be piety or wisdom? Suppose they asserted that all the danger was from the noise, and not from the racing. Your fire-engines make a great noise, tearing through the streets to put out a conflagration.



gration. Suppose that they should be indicted as a nuisance, while the incendiary goes at large, and the flames prosper. According to the word of God, he that kindled the fire shall make restitution, not he that made a great disturbance in striving to put it out.

Ludicrous as it may seem, I have absolutely had the charge brought against my preaching, that it excites the nerves to such a degree that the man could hardly sit still under it. A man complained to a friend who brought him to church one Sabbath evening, that he never was so excited in his life, that he did not come to church to be excited, but quieted, but that he never found himself under such excitement of mind anywhere, and he would not stand it. Poor man, just as if the word of God were nothing but carpenter-work, to make sound sleepers ! He did not consider that there are sleepers enough in our churches any day, strong timber, and no danger of disturbing them ; and that the very thing we need is excitement by the truth, excitement in the mind, excitement in the heart, excitement in the conscience. But you can not have it all one way ; and when there are snags in the mind, there will be a ripple where the current of truth sweeps over them. Hurlgate itself could be kept smooth, by widening the channel, and blowing up the rough rocks at the bottom.

Between the mealy-mouthedness of preachers, and the mealy-heartedness of the people, with the motto,

*first peaceable, then pure*, there comes to be a most unsubstantial, unreliable state of things. Christians educated in this manner are not to be relied upon for a confession of the truth in troublous times, or a defense of it when it becomes unpopular. You might as well make a cable out of a bag of meal as expect to hold fast by such a Christianity. The fashionable and time-serving congregations can not endure plain truth. The flour of the gospel itself must be so finely and exquisitely bolted, that all the strength is excluded, all that goes to make bone and gristle, and between that and the evil mentioned in God's word (*Ephraim is a cake not turned*), you get nothing from the gospel-oven but dough-faces. And the same monstrous inconsistency is visible now, in the profession and life of Christians; as was in the character of the people of God of old, when in one verse he described them as a people making great ostentation of seeking God, and delighting in his ordinances, and parading their oblations, and in the next as a rebellious generation, a lying people, who would not listen to the word of the Lord, when it condemned their own cherished and defended sins. They fasted, but refused to break a single yoke. They prayed, they made long prayers, and then turned and gave their influence against all preaching and all effort to establish freedom instead of slavery, which was quite equivalent to making long prayers, and then devouring widows' houses. Just so now, men pray for

revivals of religion, but if any brother from the country, too simple-hearted to understand the atmosphere and the currents of the prayer-meeting, happens to pray for the deliverance of the oppressed and the enslaved, a feeling runs through the room, as of something strange, ill-judged, unmannered, as if fanaticism has appeared bodily in the assembly. If slavery be in any way referred to, they remark upon the injudiciousness of such preaching, how certain it is to put a stop to revivals of religion, and drive away the pious praying hearts that long for the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Now is it to be supposed that God does not see to the very bottom of such hollow professions, or that his indignation against such hypocrisy is any less at this day than it was when he told his people of old, that all their oblations and their approaches to him, were a smoke in his nose, instead of gaining his approbation, and that even when they burned incense to him, it was no better than if they blessed an idol? Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations; I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them. God is not mocked, and we have yet to learn what that meaneth; I will have *mercy*, and not sacrifice. Love your neighbor as yourself, and thus prove that the love of God is in you.

A deplorable, sickly, hypocritical fastidiousness is in danger of settling down on our congregations,

destructive of every thing manly, bold, and original. There are plenty of gentlemen with kid gloves in our pulpits, but no brawny blacksmiths with sledge-hammers; or if by chance a sledge-hammer ever does come into play, it must be garlanded with silk and flowers, or cased in India rubber, to accommodate itself to the elastic conscience with which it is to come in contact; and even then, though it may be used advantageously to pound all in pieces the sin of dancing, it can not preserve a conservative reputation if brought down upon any organic iniquity. But God's description of his word as a fire and a hammer certainly smacks of the blacksmith's shop rather than the parlor, and looks as if burning thoughts and hard blows were more acceptable to him than fastidious elegances. Our young men look in vain to our pulpits for that sympathy with the oppressed, and affinity with the native impulses of the human heart for freedom, which true religion always possesses, and which the true gospel cultivates. They are repelled by the cold, sanctimonious caution with which all enthusiasm for freedom is banished from the sanctuary.

I have but just received a note from a brother minister in which he says, after inquiring as to Jeremiah's positions, "The pro-slavery sentiment here has spiked so many guns, that they expect to spike mine without much difficulty. I only wish it was of a larger caliber." Now it is rather hazardous business,

this spiking guns while the fight is waging; and one thing is certain, if conscience has had the casting of the gun, and the management of it, the attempt to spike it will only result in filling it to the very muzzle with grape-shot, and giving a tenfold fury to its cannonadings. Spike the guns of the gospel against men's sins? Try the experiment. More than forty men once bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink till they had spiked Paul's gun by killing him; but they only opened before him a wider and more effectual door of utterance, and mean time we do not read that they starved themselves to death, though really all that their oath could do was only to spike their own stomachs. Just so the pope tried to spike Luther's gun, but only taught him how to load and fire more effectually.

And this is the effect which outrages upon truth and justice always will have, and ought to have, upon faithful and noble souls; it will only make them still more earnest and resolute. Certainly, when truth is fallen in the street, and equity can not enter, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey, it is time for gap-men, time for the duke's guard, time for Cromwell's invincibles, time to storm the enemy with greater energy than ever, but not to compromise our principles or spike our guns.

The truths that have been outraged are to be re-proclaimed in the spirit of outraged truth, at the behest of conscience, in the service of the God of

truth. They may require the voice of loud alarm and impassioned warning. "Such," says Coleridge, "are in our own times the agitating truths with which Thomas Clarkson and his excellent confederates the Quakers, fought and conquered the legalized banditti of men-stealers, the numerous and powerful perpetrators and advocates of rapine, murder, and of blacker guilt than either, slavery. Truths of this kind being indispensable to man, considered as a moral being, are above all expedience, all accidental consequences; for as sure as God is holy, and man immortal, there can be no evil so great as the ignorance or disregard of them." Both the duty and the privilege of bearing such testimony, and of rebuking such wickedness, especially in high places, has been defended and demonstrated with illumination so dazzling, on occasions so illustrious, in a manner so noble, and with consequences so grand, that the instances are the most impressive and instructive chapters of history. I have seldom met with a prouder and more fearless averment of the grandeur, solemnity, and imperious necessity of such testimony in the teeth of tyranny, than that of Lord Erskine, when the minions of the British crown, and a cringing, tyrannical judiciary were endeavoring to force the guilt of constructive treason upon innocent men, and to compel a jury to bring in a charge of guilty, just as they are now doing with innocent men in Kansas, but in that Territory in a manner more outrageous, more defiant of

truth, freedom, and righteousness, than ever before in any nation under heaven. "Gentlemen," said Lord Erskine to the jury, "this is such a horrible proposition, the imputation of treason to men whom we know never designed it, and the proposition to hang them by law on account of it, though they could have been indicted only by perversion of the law, that I would rather, at the end of all these causes, when I had finished my duty to their unfortunate objects, die upon my knees thanking God that for the protection of innocence and the safety of my country, I had been made the instrument of denying and reprobating such wickedness, than live to the age of Methuselah for letting it pass unexposed and unrebuked."

The religious sacredness and nobleness of testimony against oppression were never more grandly illustrated; but if such be the convictions and exalted sentiments of an advocate at an oppressive earthly tribunal, surely, they who occupy the place of ministers of God's truth in God's own sanctuary ought to be animated by impulses not less sacred, ought to glory in their testimony with an ardor not less sublime.

But why do we refer to mortal instances, when we have the example of divine? In the judgment-hall of Pilate, Christ Jesus himself transcendently glorified and illustrated the duty of bearing testimony to oppressed and persecuted truth, by declaring that his own object, even in becoming incarnate, was to give

it utterance, and to stand up in behalf of it. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

Now when we hear God declaring that the throne of iniquity, which frameth mischief by a law, shall not have fellowship with him, and when we hear him saying Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and write grievousness which they have prescribed; it is beyond all possibility of doubt that the denunciation from the pulpit, of such vast, creative, germinating, and accumulating wickedness, is pleasing in his sight. It is one object for which he has established the pulpit, and given it a sacredness in the opinion and a hold upon the hearts and consciences of men. But let ministers beware how they lose that reverence, by yielding up the freedom of the pulpit to the fear of man, and suffering the hypocritical outcry of political preaching to prevent them from pouring the light of God's word on political sins.

Lord Erskine denounced the wickedness of the imputation of treason to men who were known to be true lovers of their country and of freedom, and the infamy of the proposition to hang them up by an indictment which itself could not be framed except by perversion of the law. But the wickedness that Lord Erskine was called to battle against might almost boast of sanctity in comparison with the complicated villainies transacted in Kansas, and enforced by our government. For we have there the unrivalled



atrocities of a pretended territorial legislature, proved and acknowledged by our own government to be a violent fraud and usurpation, and all its authority null and void, yet sustained by our national government, with the whole available force of the United States army; we have in the second place the atrocities of laws enacted by the same legislature, and pronounced by the Senate and House of Representatives to be infamous, barbarous, unconstitutional, and fit only to be broken and trampled on, yet enforced by the same government at the point of the bayonet; we have in the third place the transcendent farce and wickedness of the very best men in this outraged Territory indicted and imprisoned for the crime of high treason in peacefully and constitutionally opposing this diabolical usurpation, and their fetters riven, and their prison guarded by the same government with the same army. I defy all history, from the foundation of the world, to show any usurpation to be compared for atrocity, with this unparalleled wickedness, for it is a usurpation entered into and sustained for the extension and perpetuity of slavery. And if the people of this country tamely submit to such shameless and monstrous prostitution of law and complication of injustice, their liberties are dead and buried from this time and forever. And yet, the Executive of this undeniable and enormous tyranny remains unimpeached; and there are not wanting

men bearing the Christian name to palliate if not to justify and sanctify the wrong!

This could never be, if we, as a people, had kept the word of God in view, and had not forgotten or denied its principles. We need to return to them, and to examine this iniquity, and our conduct and position, in their light. Even as politicians, in regard to this matter, we must take our stand on God's word, and square our policy, our platform, according to it, or we shall surely perish as a nation, and with such a destruction as the world never beheld.

I invite you, therefore, in the first place, to a calm investigation of the judgment in the word of God in regard to the system of slavery. In the second place, it being proved to be a sin in the sight of God, I invite you to consider the defiant iniquity, the daring and abominable impiety, of making it the great, chosen, and perpetual policy of the nation, a system not only tolerated, but to be protected, defended, extended, and enforced.

## CHAPTER IX.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE SINFULNESS OF SLAVERY—ARGUMENT FROM THE LAW OF LOVE—ARGUMENT FROM THE LAWS AGAINST OPPRESSION—NO SUCH THING AS SLAVERY AMONG THE HEBREWS—LUDICROUSNESS OF THE CLAIM OF AFRICANS AS OUR PROPERTY BY REASON OF NOAH'S CURSE ON CANAAN.

THAT the system of slavery is sinful in the sight of God, is capable of demonstration by several distinct lines of proof. We take the simplest first, and from that ascend to a broader induction. First, there is the law of love. Second, there are the laws against oppression. Third, there are the laws against man-stealing and man-selling. Fourth, there is the nature, the inviolable sacredness, of the parental relation. Fifth, there are the recorded retributive judgments of God for the attempt to hold and use servants as property. Sixth, there is the providential argument of great power, the manifestation of God's curse upon the established system of slavery in full blast, and the destruction of nations by it. The evolution of the argument on any one of these lines would be enough for conviction; the forces marched upon them all, are overwhelming, irresistible. I restrict myself to the word of God, and even thus, much brevity will

be requisite, in its various steps, to compass the argument.

First, we take the Law of Love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Neither color nor race puts any man out of the category of my neighbor. You would not yourself be made a slave. You can not, in conscience, say that you would, under any circumstances, be so treated, be deprived of your natural liberty, and held as the property of another. You feel that you are a person, and not a chattel, and that to be treated as a person and not a chattel, is your right, by the law of common reciprocal justice and benevolence.

If you had been stolen and sold, or your father before you, and had passed through forty different hands, called your owners, you would still feel that no theft of your father, grandfather, or most remote ancestor before you, could pass by transmission into honest ownership, or could give to any human being any right of property in you, and that no money whatever could purchase such right. Applied to yourself, as a man, to yourselves as men, you know, you feel, that these principles are undeniable, impregnable; by the law of God, then, you are bound to apply them to others, as yourselves. On this ground, the command in the New Testament, specific as to duty, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal," would strike the fetters

from every slave in existence. No man can claim property in man and not violate that injunction. You would not have your fellow-men compel you to serve without wages. You would not have a master sell your wife and your children from you. You would not have your fellow-beings take away every natural right and dignity of a human being from you, and treat you as a beast of burden. You would not consider it exaction, on your part, if you demanded that your children should be *your* children, and should be free, since you never entered into any contract with any human creature otherwise, and could not rightfully have done such a thing, if you had wished.

Now, then, the law of love demands in you the same treatment, the same award of justice, to your fellow-being; and any relation in which you hold him, subversive of these natural rights and claims of love, is sinful. The compulsory relation itself, as your work, is sinful. It is sin *per se*, and can not possibly be otherwise. I might trace and demonstrate this sinfulness, in other infractions of the law; but the worst of all, and the most prolific, is the robbery of children from their parents, the moment they are born into the world, and the claiming, as your property, what was the gift of God to those parents, what you never paid a farthing for, what you never made a contract for, what you never received from any trader even in human flesh, and over which you

have not the least shadow of a claim, on any ground on which human beings ever settle the just relationship of possession or ownership, as between one another. You can not in any thing do to others as you would they should do to you, if in this fundamental thing you take their children, and claim and use them as your property. You could not rightfully use your own children as your property; much less the children of others.

I might rest the whole argument here; but I pass to a second demonstration of the sinfulness of slavery in the various laws enacted against *oppression*, which are indeed necessary conclusions from the law of love. If slavery is *not* oppression, nothing under heaven can be. It is the violation, in every particular, of every one of the statutes of God against that wickedness. When God says, Cursed be he that oppresseth his neighbor, in whatever respect: *that* curse comes, in every possible shape, upon the man who claims property in man; because that claim gathers up into itself every conceivable exaction and exasperation of tyranny, either as essence or result. When God says, Thou shalt not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, the widow, the servant, the hireling; and when he teaches us to pray, Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts; every one of these statutes and instructions demonstrates the system of slavery to be sinful; because its fundamental claim of property in man is the sum

of all these oppressions, and God could never sanction in a general system as right, that which He forbids, in every particular, as wrong. All the laws against oppression, all the manifestations of God's abhorrence of it, go to show the divine sentiment and sentence in reprobation of slavery, God's hatred of it, God's intense feeling and judgment against it. When God says, "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him, but the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;" and when He names the counts in His indictment of the nation for its sins, "In the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger; the people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully:" the just moral application of these sentences can not possibly be made without the condemnation of slavery as sin.

There was never, at any time, in the Jewish statutes, or authorized by them, any such thing as slavery in the Hebrew nation; never any claim of property in man. When they fled out of Egypt, there were no slaves with them; the census of souls is that of free souls only; not a creature went out of Egypt on compulsion. And the laws promulgated by Moses, in regard to the obtaining and the treatment of servants, were in no respect what is called slave-legislation, but legislation *against* slavery;

legislation to render its introduction into the nation absolutely and forever impossible; legislation only for the voluntary contracts of service with free men. The obtaining of a servant by such a contract was called the buying of him; it was simply and solely the buying of his time and service for such period as might be specified in the contract; and, to prevent the possibility of such service running into slavery by long possession, the period itself of such contracts was limited to six years; and if in any case extended to a longer time, only by solemn mutual agreement, and in no case, on no consideration, nor with any party, could such contract hold beyond the jubilee. Every fifty years, every servant in the land was free.

And children were never servants because their parents were; no claim upon the time or service of the parents created any claim to that of the children. Servitude was not transmitted by birth, and never could be. Every instance of service, whether of the Hebrews or the heathen, was by free voluntary contract. The same phraseology is used of contracts with the heathen as of those with the Hebrews, and the one is no more a possession than the other. Whether Hebrew or heathen, when a man entered into a contract with a servant, he was said to have bought him (as, when he married a wife, he was said to have bought *her*), and as to the obligation to fulfill the contract, and perform the work paid for, the servant was described as his money, his possession, for



that contracted period. Hebrews thus sold themselves to strangers or heathen, and heathen sold themselves to Hebrews, but in every case as freemen, in no case as property. There is no such idea as that of property in man recognized, except as a wicked oppression; and the whole Mosaic legislation guarded the people at every point against such oppression, and was admirably contrived to render it impossible.

In consequence of these careful and humane statutes, both the spirit of the Hebrew constitution and the letter of the law, so effectually secured freedom as a personal birth-right, that the idea of slavery, in our sense of the term, was never embodied in the language. There is no word to signify what we call a slave, a human being degraded into an article of property. And the laws were minute and specific in regard to the treatment of servants, and their rights, to such a degree, with such explicitness and exactness, in order that there might never be any temptation to introduce or establish slavery in the land, it being from the outset made so impossible, that without direct defiance of Almighty God no man could intend such a thing, and no tribe could accomplish it. And accordingly, notwithstanding all the oppression of which the Jews were guilty, and the instances and forms in which they evaded the law, and at length attempted to establish slavery itself instead of the system of voluntary paid service prescribed by law, yet never, at any time in Palestine, was there any slave-mart or public

slave-traffic. Babylon and Tyre, Greece and Rome, all nations of the earth, indeed, out of the land that was under the teaching and discipline of these laws of God, maintained the slave-trade; and never a philosopher, unenlightened by God's word, rose high enough to see its wickedness; but in Judea its violation of the first principles of justice and humanity were so manifest by the law of God, and so many statutes combined to render it impossible, that though the idol altars of the heathen world were at length naturalized in Israel, and in the seductions of idol worship the people were carried headlong, yet the slave-traffic and the slave-mart never once obtained a footing.

But here you aver that God devoted Ham to perpetual slavery. It is difficult to treat this ludicrous and wicked refuge of oppression either with patience or gravity. For, in the first place, it was not God, but Noah, who pronounced the curse; in the second place, the curse fell not upon Ham, but upon Canaan, whose descendants were as white as the Hebrews or ourselves; in the third place, the descendants of Ham, as you claim the Africans to be, have nothing to do with this curse. Your pretended title to curse them is not in this deed; your pretension to a right from heaven to lay this curse upon them, and hold them as your property, is the wildest, vastest, most sweeping and diabolical forgery ever conceived or committed. You pretend to be, by charter from heaven, the min-

isters of God's vengeance against a whole continent of men, a whole race of mankind, whom, in the execution of that vengeance, you are to hold and sell as your property. You are the trustees of this will of Jehovah, the executors of this inheritance of wrath, and as such you are to be paid for your trouble in proving the instrument, and carrying its details into operation, by assuming the objects of the curse as your property!

Now, then, come into court, and show your own names in this instrument. God himself is the Judge of Probate, and all those who ever defrauded or oppressed the widow or the fatherless will find it so to their cost forever, except they repent of their wickedness. Where is the sentence in which God ever appointed you, the Anglo-Saxon race, you, the mixture of all races under heaven, you, who can not tell whether the blood of Shem, Ham, or Japhet mingles in your veins, you, the assertors of a right to traffic in human flesh, you, worse Jews, by this very claim, more degraded, more debased in your moral principles, than the lowest tribe of Jews who were swept for their sins from the promised land. Where is the sentence in which God ever appointed you, four thousand years after Noah and his children had gone to their graves in peace, to be the executors of Noah's will, with the whole inheritance given to you, as your property, for your profit, the reward of your faithfulness in fulfilling God's curse? Where is God's

curse? Where is the gift of property at all? Where is the designation of the race whom you pounce upon by this mighty forgery, and where the designation of the race commissioned to pounce upon *them*? You might as well go to Russia, and take the subjects of the Czar. You might as well go to England, and take your cousins of the sea-girt isle, the descendants of your own great-grandfathers. You have no more claim upon the Africans than you have upon the aborigines of the Rocky Mountains. The whole thing is a more frantic forgery than madness itself, unless it had the method of the deepest depravity, could have ever dreamed. But then again, if God devoted Ham to perpetual slavery, he also devoted strangers to perpetual freedom. All the strangers in the land were to be treated as those born in it, to be loved and treated as brethren; and you are God's executors *for this law of love*, and not for any law of vengeance to accommodate your own selfishness. There is no article in God's will giving you all strangers as your property, or allowing you to buy and sell strangers.

Again, there is an infamous contradiction of a graver kind, in the logic applied in support and sanction of this wickedness. You say that God subjected Ham to bondage, and that you are God's appointed instrument to fasten the chains upon him, the curse, the vengeance of perpetual slavery. But then, in another breath, in order to excuse yourself for this

instrumentality, and under a galling sense of its odiousness and shame, you say that God is a God of wondrous mercy and love, and has appointed the poor Africans to be Christians, and has made you no longer the executioners of his wrath, but the almoners of his bounty, to convert them, by means of slavery, to Christ. You are appointed to put chains upon them, and to buy and sell them as your property forever, in order to make freemen of them in Christ Jesus. You are God's appointed missionaries, to Christianize them by the gospel of slavery!

But did God ever put that in the will? We thought he appointed you, as residuary legatees, to execute his curse upon Ham, and in default of any other heirs direct, to take the blackest colored skins upon the earth four thousand years after all Canaan's posterity had died out of existence, and lay the cursed inheritance upon them, and sell them as your property. Now you can not get the curse and the blessing out of the same will. If a man leaves a hundred thousand dollars to endow a hospital, you can not, by law, take that and apply it to the endowment of a vast distillery. And if a man left a million to be spent in exterminating rats or wild beasts, you could not, by law, take that and endow a Trinity cathedral with it. And if you were named, for example, as executor in a man's will, who had given five hundred thousand dollars to be spent in making a descent upon Cuba to establish perpetual slavery there, you

could not come into court and aver that under that will, and as its meaning, you had been appointed to take that money, and make that descent, for the purpose of converting all the inhabitants into free republicans, and giving them a constitution of their own. You might come into court, indeed, but you would be speedily turned out of it. And no principles or precedents of human custom or equity would ever permit men to deal by subtlety, sophistry, and perversion, with any human instrument of policy or conveyance, as the advocates of slavery deal with God's word. No court, hardly even Jefferies's, would have suffered such palpable distortion and misinterpretation of the king's statutes.

The claim set up by Americans, eighteen hundred and fifty-seven years after Christ, to hold the African race as their chattel property, by reason of the curse pronounced on Canaan two thousand three hundred and forty-seven years *before* Christ, exceeds in the extravagance of its impudence and madness any Christian or pagan hallucination ever assumed by any nation under heaven. You will say it is too ridiculous to receive a sober notice; but I have had to meet it as a grave and serious claim, put forward by a professedly religious person, who deliberately urged it as a proof that slavery could not be sinful in the sight of God!

Shall we or shall we not make God's word our guide, God's law our standard? Time is like an

inclined plane, and a nation that has dragged slowly and carefully up to the summit, may go down on the other side, by carelessness and treason toward God, as swift almost as the lightning. God himself removes the brakes, when a nation deliberately cuts loose from his law, and sets up its policy of profit in defiance of his righteousness; and when God lets go his restraining grasp, then the crash is not far off, and when it comes, is terrible. They may say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; but the voice comes, Woe unto them when I depart from them, and their whirl to ruin is like a wheel of fire.

The atrocities in Kansas have roused up very many who would not have been aroused by the claims of simple truth and justice. There are those who can not be made to see that our liberties are endangered, or are worth keeping and defending at the cost of painful effort and expense, unless there is actual, intolerable, and continued outrage. And some men are more affected by fire, thunder, and fury, than by quiet truth, and power. An unpretending man or principle passes with them for nothing; but a man full of swagger, ferocity, and profaneness is your great man. Any thing done in a quiet way seems to them not done at all, or not worth doing, and certainly not worth praying for. One is reminded of the man who came to a skillful dentist to have a tooth pulled, and when it was done in an

incredibly brief space of time with very little pain, objected to the charge of half a dollar for the operation, declaring that on former occasions he had been pulled by his jaw half way across the room, and almost killed with pain, and had only paid a quarter of a dollar for the whole of it. Let no man think that by waiting for greater outrages he can get relief at a cheaper rate.



## CHAPTER X.

THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST THE JEWS FOR THE ATTEMPTED ESTABLISHMENT OF SLAVERY — THE PENALTY OF DEATH AGAINST THE CRIME OF MAN-STEALING — COMPASS OF THIS LAW, AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE CLAIM OF CHILDREN AS PROPERTY.

THE people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath, their own ways have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.\* This passage was written with reference to precisely the same generation, and precisely the same iniquity as the tremendous passage on the 34th chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah.

To those who have not examined the subject, it may seem strange that not the sin of idolatry, but the sin of slavery, the violation of the law of freedom, should have been marked of God as the one

\* Ezekiel xx: 29, 30, 31.

decisive act of wickedness that filled up the measure of the Jewish iniquities, and brought down the wrath of God upon them without remedy or repeal. But the wonder ceases, when the nature of the crime is taken into consideration. Being a crime concocted and determined by princes, priests, and people, together with the king, it was really making the whole nation a nation of men-stealers; and man-stealing was a crime whose penalty was death; so that the adopting of it by the government and the people was an enshrining of the iniquity in public and glaring defiance of God's authority, in the form of their state policy. They thought themselves secure against punishment, as a corporation of usurpers, under guilt which they could not have committed as individuals without exposure to the penalty of death. But the sword of God came down upon them in the very midst of this appalling crime, as swift, almost, as the lightning.

They were deliberately inaugurating an iniquity, as their chosen state policy, which they knew would increase in a numerical ratio from generation to generation. If it could have been restricted to the first persons stolen, and deprived of their liberty, the iniquity would have been comparatively small. But for every two immortal beings forced into this chattelism, there would be five others stolen and forced, in like manner, by the next generation; the guilt of oppression on the one side, and the sufferance of

cruelty on the other, enlarging as it ran on into posterity. Now to set going such a system of injustice, which was to branch out like the hereditary perdition from the depraved head of a race, increasing as the Amazon; to set a central spring of thousand other springs of domestic and state tyranny, coiled and coiling on, in geometrical progression; and a central fountain of thousand other fountains of inhumanity and misery; and to do this in opposition to the light of freedom and religion, and of laws in protection of liberty, given from God, and maintained by him for a thousand years, was so extreme and aggravated a pitch of wickedness, that it is not wonderful that God put an instant stop to it, by wiping Jerusalem and Judea of its inhabitants, as a man wipeth a dish and turneth it upside down.

The evil of such a crime was the greater, because, while it is enlarging every year, both in guilt and hopelessness, it *seems* lessened in intensity, as it passes down into posterity. The sons of the first men-stealers would, with comparatively easy consciences, take the children of those whom their parents had stolen, and claim *them* as their *property*, being slaves born. But in fact we find that the guilt is double; because, while the parents may have been stolen only from themselves, the children are stolen both from the parents and from themselves. The stealing and enslaving of the parents could create no claim upon the children as property, nor produce any

mitigation or extenuation of the sin of stealing the children also, and holding them as slaves. And so the guilt runs on, nor could the progress of whole ages diminish it, or change its character.

In pursuing our demonstration of the sinfulness of slavery, and consequently of the guilt of its extension, we come next to the laws against man-stealing, man-selling, using men as servants without wages, and bringing them into bondage against their will. Slavery is forbidden of God, and condemned as sinful, by every one of them. HE THAT STEALETH A MAN, AND SELLETH HIM, OR IF HE BE FOUND IN HIS HAND, HE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. God be praised for this law! It strikes through and through the vitals of this sin.

*Man-stealing* and *man-selling* are almost the sole origin of slavery; and in the Old and in the New Testament, these things are condemned as sins, worthy of death. But if neither stealing a man and selling him, nor holding him, nor conveying him in any way to another, could make him the property of another, neither could the buying of a man, so stolen, *take away his right of property in himself*, or convey it to another. The sum of fifty thousand dollars might be paid for a man offered to you by a slave-trader, but you would have no more right of property in him after you had paid that sum than before, or than if you had paid but one farthing. The common law lays down this principle, in regard to a horse,

which, if it be stolen and sold forty times over, neither the selling, any more than the stealing, can take away the right of the rightful owner, but whenever and wherever he appears, he can claim his property. Now a stolen man may have been passed through five hundred hands, and the five hundredth may have paid more for him than all the four hundred and ninety-nine put together; but the last purchaser has no more rightful claim over him, no more right of property in him, than the first stealer. And if he purchased him with the knowledge of his being originally stolen, he is himself also a thief, a conspirator, a pirate, on the principles of common law and righteousness. And if he had not that knowledge, but made the purchase ignorant of the original theft, his ignorance can not change right into wrong, can not take away the man's indefeasible and inalienable right of ownership over himself. The price of a world might have been paid for him, but he is still his own. When Joseph was sold by the Ishmaelites into Egypt, the purchase of him by Potiphar did not take away, or diminish one iota, his indestructible right of freedom in himself. Not the wealth of all Egypt could have given any purchaser the least right of property in him.

*He that stealeth, and selleth, or if he be found in his hands; stealing, keeping, trading, all forbidden on pain of death. It is impossible by transmission to convert this crime into an innocent transaction.*

No man can innocently buy a fellow-man as property, or acquire any right of property in him, though he should give for him the cost of the whole solar system, if that could be weighed in God's balances and put into his hands.

Now the main origin of all the slavery on our globe has been violence and theft. An unrighteous predatory war is theft; such wars as the barbarous tribes in Africa wage against each other, and then sell their captives, are thefts. A man violently taken from his family, and thrust into bondage by such violence, is a stolen man, no matter whether ten men did the deed, or ten thousand. But the captives of the African race, the origin of the body of slaves in this country, were brought in as the prey of kidnapers, slave-traders, the most abandoned, degraded, infernal miscreants, on the face of the earth, hovering on the coast, stealing up the creeks and rivers, prowling about the unguarded hamlets, and, like vultures, grasping their victims in their talons, or with stratagems and lures, bribing others to entrap them. The slave-ships, and the slave-pens, have been crowded, and are still, for still the accursed traffic rages, with such outraged and down-trodden human beings, bought and sold, and the slave-property, so called, on this whole continent, is the result of bloody violence and theft. So that, though you may talk as much as you please of your slaves as being inherited, or as having been the property of your father, or grandfather, or

great-grandfather, but every increase from every ship's cargo ever landed on our shores, from the latest importation in this generation, back to the landing and enslaving of the very first gang, is piracy; and all the increase by natural propagation is the result of it, and the race is a stolen race. The quality of crime, the taint of theft, the essential element of man-stealing, is in the very title by which you claim any creature of that race as property. It is a brand that no art can efface, no file of sophistry can rasp it out, no machinery of law can erase it. The brand of ignominy which you put upon the slave, when you call him a chattel, and treat him as such, is the brand burned deeper in your bargain, in your complicity with robbery, in the immorality of your legal title, than in his soul; and generation after generation can not cover it up, can not eliminate it; can not so vulcanize it, but that the fires of the last day itself will only bring out more clearly its essence of oppression and iniquity.

But we must apply the argument still more directly and definitely to the children of the slaves, and the title of the slave-owner, so called, to the children born on his estate, under his jurisdiction. Suppose, then, that the stolen slave has children, born to him while under the compulsory dominion and ownership, so called, of his master. Do those children belong by right to the master? Has he any better title to them than to their father, whom he bought knowing

him to have been stolen? Whose property are they? Did the man's purchase of their father give any claim to them? Did the father himself make any bargain, either to sell himself or his children? Nay, but the owner, so called, of the father, steals the children, the moment he claims them as his own. He commits the crime of man-stealing, the moment he declares those children to be his property. And if his children take those children as their property, and claim their children of the next generation as the same, they, in their turn, become men-stealers. And here we have, in brief compass, the very essence of slavery; at every step downward, in its progression, it is man-stealing. There is no escaping from the logic of this argument. The facts, the principles of natural and revealed justice and law, and the reasoning from them, hold you with a grasp as inexorable as death. All the generations of mankind to the last day, and all the complication of their interests, can not alter the nature of right and wrong.

What can be a greater violation of natural right and justice, than to determine before-hand that the beings born shall be born your property, and that this is righteous law? What claim have you? Where did it begin? You say, perhaps, that you bought the parents, and paid for them. But you never bought the children; you have paid nobody for them, no master, no slave-dealer; if they *are* property, you have got it without an equivalent; it



is stolen property. Time can not sanctify the claim, but only increases the iniquity, for the more the slave's faculties are developed, and the more precious they and his rights are to himself, and the more profit you make out of them, the greater becomes the theft. Transmission can not sanctify it. You might as well argue that because Adam sinned, and you were born of sinful parents, it is therefore right for you to sin. Original sin has produced inherited righteousness! What was original sin, by being inherited, becomes propagated holiness!

## CHAPTER XI.

DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME—THE GOSPEL OF SLAVERY—  
ITS GERMINATING AND PROPAGATING POWER OF EVIL—THE  
STEALING OF CHILDREN—PAUL ON MAN-STEALING.

It is thus that the support of this iniquity requires and effects the perversion of all the principles of morality. This is one of its greatest evils. It sanctions the principle, Let us do evil, that good may come. Because a few savages brought from Africa have been taught Christianity here, therefore the robbery by which they were brought is itself changed into piety! The evil, out of which God brings good, is asserted to be good. Because some native Africans, stolen from their country, have been taught the gospel here, therefore, instead of giving them their freedom here, let their posterity itself be enslaved, that slavery may be to them the means of redemption from a more barbarous state! But the millions born in this country are not born in Africa, nor in barbarism, but under the light of the gospel, and have no need of slavery to redeem them. So that, even if the original iniquity of stealing men in Africa and making slaves of them in order to make them Christians, were right, it does not make it right to

make slaves of their children, who are born, not in heathenism, but in Christianity. It is not slavery that redeems them, but slavery that prevents their free enjoyment of the light and civilization under which they were born. Their fathers may have been born in heathenism, and slavery may have redeemed them from it; but their children being born in Christianity, slavery plunges them into a state below it, and deprives them of its privileges. Their parents being made slaves are the cause, not of their being made Christians, but born slaves, and continued as such. Our forefathers being persecuted was the cause of their coming to this country as freemen. Is persecution therefore the just inheritance and law for their children, the normal state of their descendants?

It is this propagation of evil, this germinating power of sin, that fastens the curse of God inherent in the system. Every generation of this property, so called, is not only stolen, but the theft and impiety are enormously increased. In proportion as it travels a greater distance from the fountain, its volume is enlarged, till it rages like the sea. It becomes the domestic policy of a nation. It enters into all their system of justice and of law, corrupting and perverting it. It has a reflex influence on society and character, sweeping the morals as with a pestilential wind, or a tide of impurity. The proverbs directed of God against the unjust accumulation of riches,

strike into the heart of this iniquity, and work the retribution there. He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked. Cursed be he that oppresseth the poor, and they that sell the poor for silver, and the needy to increase their wealth. Wealth gotten by oppression bringeth its owner to shame. Cursed be he that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his hire. He that getteth riches, but not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool. They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns; they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit; ye shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the Lord. A wasting pestilence, a fretting leprosy, a fire not blown, a rust that burns and consumes like fire, is in the riches of such a nation, and the wealth rolled up by such iniquity. All these curses are appropriated, are vindicated, by the propagation, by the perpetuity, by the extension, of the crime of slavery, and its being practiced for the profit of it.

This germinating and perpetual quality and power of sin, inhering in slave property as it does in no other kind of riches, it is no wonder that God, in his legislation for mankind, condemned it at the fountain, and affixed to the crime of stealing a man, and using him as property, the penalty of death. The condemning moral power of that penalty runs on with

the propagation of the crime; the condemnation does not die out, as if the crime itself died out by being propagated, or as if it were diluted instead of being increased, in passing to the next generation. On the contrary, whereas, to a wicked and remorseless man, bent on self-interest only, and accustomed to this wickedness, there may seem to be some actual claim of property in a man whom he has bought as a thing, and paid for as a thing, from another man who claimed the right to *sell* him as a thing, there is no shadow of such claim in taking the *children* of that man, whom he grasps as his property, without ever paying a farthing for them, or consulting a creature in regard to them. So, supposing the slave-father to beget two children, the slave-owner, so called, multiplies the iniquity just in that ratio of increase in every generation: where he bought one, he steals two.

It is partly for this reason that, coming down near two thousand years from the publication of these Mosaic statutes, Paul, in effect, republishes them under the authority of the gospel, and, in the Epistle to Timothy, includes *man-stealing* specifically among the other forms of sin forbidden by those statutes, and, accordingly, to be condemned by the gospel. But, to such a depth of corruption and blindness have the practice, the profit, and the legalization of slavery, sunk men's minds, that there have not been wanting creatures who, to evade the prodigious power of the

argument against slavery drawn from the terms of the divine law, have contended that, not a man, *as a man*, but merely a *Hebrew* man, was signified in the statute against stealing a man and selling him; so that, to steal a man, *as a man*, might neither be unlawful or unchristian, but only a Hebrew man. This attempted evasion of the universality and power of the first statute is founded on the specification in Deut. xxiv. 7: "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and making merchandize of him, or selleth him, then that thief shall die." But this latter statute was passed forty years after the other, without any mention of the other, or connection with it, which proves that the other was never abrogated; and if the other had referred solely to the Hebrew man, the latter had been perfectly superfluous, being neither a statute of limitation nor interpretation. It having been found, in the course of forty years, that the first and general law might have been claimed as applying only to the stranger or the heathen, and not to the stealing of a Hebrew, whose servitude, even if stolen, could not last more than six years, it was found necessary, for greater security and definiteness, to add the second enactment, specifying the Hebrew man. But any limitation of the first statute by the second is forbidden by the application of verse 14, of the same chapter: "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." Now, if a hired servant, that was not a Hebrew, could not be oppressed, any more than a native, much more could not such a one be stolen with impunity, or the thief escape the penalty. He could not be permitted to plead that because there was a law against stealing a *Hebrew*, therefore the law against stealing a *man* was null and void. But now, you perceive, the Apostle Paul has set this point forever at rest, by himself referring to the first law as applying not to Hebrew men, but to men, any man, a man. The word he uses in quoting the law is a word meaning MEN-STEALERS, not *Jew-stealers*, not stealers of *Hebrew* men. Stealers of MEN he specifies, and his reference to the law there is no possibility of mistaking, and this sets the matter beyond dispute.

Just so with reference to the other evasion (for there is no end to the quibbles and quirks with which men have struggled to prevent the crushing and annihilating power of these statutes) by which some have endeavored to restrict the application of the law against *man*-stealing to the stealing of *slaves*, as if this statute were merely a law for the protecting and rendering more sacred a man's slave-property, making it, in fact, incomparably more sacred than any other property. They say that, indeed, to steal a slave from his owner is worthy of death, but not to steal a man, as a man, from himself, and from God his Maker. You may steal a free man, and make

him a slave, and that process, in certain cases, in these latter days, may be just a Christian process for his good, the providential mode by which he is to be taught religion! But the moment you have stolen him from himself, and made him a slave by selling him, then you have converted him into a sacred piece of property! then, to steal him from his *master*, is a sacrilege worthy of death! Is the human mind capable of contriving a more diabolical or a meaner palpable resort of lying villainy than this? Can Christian men believe that men could be found willing to descend to such baseness, or smit with the capacity of such detestable wriggings and twistings of sophistry! How much better to come out boldly, and deny that there is any guilt at all in stealing a man anywhere, if your interests, or the interests of your state, demand it.

Unfortunately for this argument, or rather this make-shift in the place of argument, the Apostle Paul, in quoting and applying this law against men-stealers, does not speak of servants, but of men, and uses a Greek word of perfectly well known and unquestionable meaning, as applied to men, and not to slaves, so that this settles the matter, even if upon the interpretation of the statute there had rested the slightest cloud of uncertainty.



## CHAPTER XII.

SACREDNESS OF THE PARENTAL RELATIONS—VIOLATION OF IT BY SLAVERY—SLAVEHOLDING, WITH THE CLAIM OF PROPERTY, & MAN-STEALING.

IN the fourth place, the inviolable sacredness of the parental relation, by which the children of the parents belong to them, and them only, a thing acknowledged even by the most barbarous tribes, all the world over, but settled by the legislation of the Hebrews, demonstrates slavery to be sin. For, the denial, the utter disregard, and ruthless violation of the parental right and claim is one of the essential elements of slavery, so that one of the most valuable considerations of this kind of property is its life-power of reduplicating itself by propagation, through the very prostitution and perversion of the family and parental relation for the breeding of slaves. And it is wrought into slave-law in terms that might make the air redden with wrath at such a lie against immortality, and such a theft of body and soul in the very instant of birth, that the thing born follows the condition of the womb that bore it. The mother being the property of her master by law, the child born is, without any pretense of purchase, or

equivalent paid, or bargain contracted, or permission, or consent asked or given, the property of the same master. This claim is in itself, and as wrought by law into the system of slavery, and set at its foundation, a criminal violation of the parental claim and authority as established by the Creator; in every generation it is stealing from the parents. Even if there were a bargain with the parents, that could not wipe out the guilt, or change the moral essence of the transaction. For no parent has any authority or right to sell his child. A man can not abrogate the responsibility of the parental relation for his child's own good, can not sell him to another for a price. A man can not sell what he does not own to sell. This it is, that vitiates the claim to the children as property, and beyond all possibility of contradiction demonstrates the system to be sin *per se*, that maintains such a claim as its essence.

Now it is just here that the shoe fatally pinches; the argument cuts to the quick. There is nothing at all that rouses up such anger as to be told that slaveholding is man-stealing. But the logic will have its way; you can no more stop it than you can stop the lightning. And you can no more, by noise and fury, prevent the truth of this conclusion from being truth, or from being evident, than by drums and kettles you could call up an eclipse, or hang a veil over the solar system. Your exceptions are honestly and frankly admitted. It is the case that under an inherited

compulsion some become slaveholders in law, who are not such in gospel; that is, they hold their slaves not as property, not as owners of them, but as human beings who own themselves, and to whom they owe, for their services, whatsoever is just and equal, and over whom they maintain their legal claim, not to sell them, but as masters and guardians for their good, as well as for domestic service, to preserve them from oppression, till the providence of God may open a door for all parties out of the whole evil. Less than this can not possibly consort with the phrase, that which is just and equal, nor with the law to do to others as you would they should do to you. But whosoever claims them as his property, to sell for money, as a horse is sold or a wheelbarrow; or whoever takes their children, born God's immortal souls, and says, These are my property, because I bought the parents, and these I can sell as mine, or do whatsoever I please with them that the law allows, that person is, by impregnable logic, a man-stealer. He may say, There is a wide diversity of opinion on this subject, and I never could see it in this light. He may keep out of the light, may refuse and scorn with great indignation to hear the argument from God's word; but that makes no difference in the truth itself, or its application. If he might see, and refuses to see, God is the judge why he will not see; but his keeping away from the light does not change the nature of the sin, any more than a man's commit-

ting robbery at midnight, without a lantern, when he absolutely could not see whether what he stole was bank-bills or brown paper, prevents that act from being sin.

But when a man says, I see, and with his eyes wide open goes into this wickedness as a sacred right, or if God sees that he loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil, and that he hates the light, and cometh not to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd; then God must take him in hand, and will administer judgment, for man can not do it. But O! the solemnity of that declaration in regard to any part of God's word that you will not hear, but deny, "The word that I have spoken, and which you reject, that same word shall judge you in the last day!" Men are apt to think, if they put away God's truth, and deny its application, or keep out of its light, that what they do in their imagined innocence, because they do not see or acknowledge its iniquity, they will not have to encounter in the judgment, under God's word, in God's interpretation, and not their own. But if they say, We see, we are not blind, and we know that we are right, then comes the answer, If ye *were* blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth. And for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; that is, they that feel and acknowledge their blindness, and come to God for light; and that they which see might be made blind;

that is, they who declare that they see, and can not and will not be taught by a greater light than their own opinions, even the light from heaven, they shall justly and judicially remain in blindness, and go on presumptuously and confidently sinning in consequence.

A man's keeping out of the light does not release him from responsibility, though the Romish casuists excuse the most enormous crimes in this way. A man has but to avoid or evade the truth, or to restrain himself from examination and reflection, and thenceforward for things done in ignorance he is not to be held to account. A Roman Catholic theologian, writing concerning the quality of human actions, says, "If a man commit adultery or homicide, reflecting indeed, but still very imperfectly and superficially, upon the wickedness and great sinfulness of these crimes, however heinous may be the matter, he still sins but slightly." That may be logic on earth, but it will never do in heaven. A man may abide by it here, but it will abide by him hereafter, to his cost, if he does not repent of it. There are degrees of sin, according to degrees of light, but they who keep out of the light, in order that conscience may not plague or prevent them in the indulgence of sin, every degree of darkness into which they succeed in sinking themselves does but add to their guilt. They who deliberately sanction oppression, and live in and by the approval of the claim of property in man,

maintaining slavery to be right as a divine institution, can not do it and keep up to the profession of a Christian hope, but by violence and stifling somewhere. Like divers, they have to put weights upon their feet, and armor over their bodies, to get down into such depths, and not die there; and all the air they do get is but just enough to keep them from suffocating, and they get that in the most constrained, tortuous, artificial way. And the fact that people can live and breathe at all in such darkness is not to be taken as a proof that darkness is as good as light, or the sea as good as the air to live in. Just so, there is an abstract possibility, perhaps probability, and actuality of there being slaveholders, who are such in the eye of the law, but not in the eye of God, because they abjure before God all claim to any of their fellow-creatures as property, and consider their slaves as servants simply, to whom they are bound to give that which is just and equal. But one such case, or a dozen such, can not change the nature of the system, nor take away its sinfulness, nor excuse the wickedness of treating a man as a thing, nor shield slavery from being declared to be what it is, with the claim of property in man, *sin per se*.

The crime of *murder*, considered simply as the *killing of a man*, is no more *sin per se*, than slavery; there may be exceptions in the same way, but the exceptions do not destroy the rule. If a man kills another, as Moses did, in defense of his brother,

the fact of such killing not being sinful does not prevent murder from being sinful *per se*. Just so, the fact of one man holding a slave under a State law that compels him to do it, by making it impossible for him to set him free, does not prevent another man's holding a slave as his property from being sinful in itself and absolutely. The claim of property in man is in itself and absolutely, by demonstration of the divine law, sinful. But when a man holds a slave by slave-law, not as his property, but to protect him from the iniquity of such law, that is not claiming property in man, but denying it, and defending the victim of such claim. There is an infinite distance between that and slavery. It is not benevolence, but oppression, against which we contend. It is a very convenient mode of covering up the enormity from exposure and reprobation, to say that some men may hold slaves for their good. Very well; and if all would do it, there would be no more slavery, and no more need of slave-law; but this possibility does not change the nature of the system. By wranglings about *per se*, some men succeed in putting their own judgment and conscience *at sea*, and sinking their moral discernment *in* the sea of sophistry and falsehood. Can they imagine that God will excuse them, when they stand at his bar, and plead as their reason for not opposing the wickedness of slavery, that they could not accept the doctrine of its being a sin *per se*?

As if that were a talisman to protect you from God's judgment! You, who resort to such apologies to shield you, and hide yourselves from your duty and your country in the hour of peril, the hour that demands an outspoken boldness, are like the bewildered prophet fleeing to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. The mighty tempest is now about you, but you are all Jonahs sleeping in the sides of the ship, as if a snug berth could keep you from ever knowing what a storm is raging. But by-and-by, in bare self-defense, the very shipmen will haul you out, and throw you overboard, as the only means of quieting the tempest. And God perhaps will teach us, out of our own misery, how to pray for the enslaved, and by our own anguish will open our mouths for the dumb under oppression, if we refuse to do it in our churches.



## CHAPTER XIII.

THE COMPOUND INTEREST OF CRIME—THE SLAVE'S NOTE-OF-HAND  
AGAINST THE SLAVEHOLDER WHO CLAIMS TO BE HIS OWNER—  
ACCUMULATED CRIME, ACCUMULATED RETRIBUTION.

COMPOUND interest is a terrible thing. A man shall steal five dollars from his neighbor, or take a piece of property from him by fraud worth a hundred, and in a course of years shall make what he thinks an honest fortune, having possibly forgotten the wrong done to his poor neighbor. But at length the fraud is proved, and what was a hundred dollars at the outset shall take his whole fortune to redeem. Compound interest runs with money; and do you suppose it can be separated from crime? It holds on, it runs on, and a man's mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. It makes no difference by what gentle name he baptizes his robbery or cruelty, nor by what specious apologies of law, or custom, or inheritance, he excuses it. God sees through all his sophistries. God's conscience does not wait upon his; nor will God's justice be turned aside by his willing self-delusions, nor is God's righteousness to be defined, or its operation paralyzed, by his igno-

rance. The great accountant will not stop casting up the columns against him, because, when he incurred the items, he never considered the interest; nor will the presentation of the bill for payment be prevented, because he has nothing to pay.

The slave holds, under God's own hand, a note against you, with compound interest for the crime committed against his father; and when you lay your grasp upon his children, and take them as your property, the note is more than doubled against you, and the interest runs on. The man was stolen originally, and now tell me, if you dare, where did the guilt stop? Did that theft convert two immortal beings, not then born, into just property? Did the man who bought the slave, knowing him to have been stolen, convert him into just property by paying the price of blood? When the High Priests gave thirty pieces of silver to Judas, did they buy a right of property in Christ? Or, if the man bought the slave without inquiring as to the title, does that willful ignorance take away the ownership of a stolen man from the man himself, and convert him into property? And when the buyer, in addition to that injustice, claims the man's children as his property, without ever even going through the pretense of giving one farthing for them, does that clear his conscience, and still further establish his claim?

Ah! there is a God in heaven that looks on, and his justice takes account of these transactions. The

man, by that claim of property, indorses the original guilt as his own, and the compound interest of crime waits for him. As the persecution of the prophets came down from age to age unavenged, but held their possession, their claim for retribution, not only undiminished, but accumulating with every repetition of the sin, no quit-claim ever given, nor action of ejection by delay, nor outlawry by lapse of time; but when the bill came in, all the columns were footed up, all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias, to be paid by that generation, so runs on the guilt of slavery in a nation that sanctions and sustains it. The souls under the altar count up a vast difference in the dates of their respective bills of retribution, as they cry out still, How long? But the oldest of them is as fresh in the justice of the living God as the latest. The cry loses none of its power, but gathers it, by age. Indeed, there is not a moral issue in the universe but increases by procrastination. The mournful wailing voice of Zacharias had the same earnestness and claim of vengeance with that of Antipas, the last martyr catalogued by name in the New Testament; and Polycarp's is as fresh as Latimer's, and Latimer's as Lovejoy's. For one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. As long as the iniquity is not repented of, but indorsed and repeated, so long the voice of thy brother's blood

crieth unto me from the ground. No injury is ever outlawed, and some injuries perpetuate themselves in more than geometrical progression, having a side increase in ten thousand channels and directions, in the way of moral corruption, beside the direct onward reduplication.

And this is the case with slavery. Who shall take account of the millions of white men lost by it, defrauded of their birthright in Christianity itself, by the debauchery of conscience and the habits of pride, cruelty, licentiousness, and unrighteous gain and power fastened on them, by the antagonistic gangrening energy of this domestic system, as a dead corrupting carcase, hung round the neck of their Christianity itself, and made a part of it by the law of the land? And who can compute the amount of infidelity nourished, if not produced, by such a caricature of Christianity thrust upon the anguished soul? What horrible perversion of truth, and confusion of principles, to read in the Old Testament how all God's attributes burn as a consuming fire against every form of oppression, and then be called on to believe that the same divine revelation sanctions, as the most just and perfect form of domestic society, the greatest possible oppression under the sun!

## CHAPTER XIV.

OWNERSHIP IN MAN NOT POSSIBLE—FORBIDDEN IN THE SCRIPTURES  
—THE ACT OF SELLING MEN, A CRIME ABHORRED OF GOD—THE  
NATURE OF THIS CRIME, AND OF THE SIN OF SLAVERY, WELL  
KNOWN UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT.

To this branch of the argument, as to every other, belongs the fact that never in the Scriptures is the idea of ownership in man admitted, nor the possibility of selling man, woman, or child, as property, without the guilt of an enormous crime. The *owner* of a servant or slave is a phrase never known. The owner of a horse or an ass is spoken of, but of a man, never. The cases of selling men, of trading in them, are marked with abhorrence, as cases for God's wrath. In the whole history of the Hebrews there is no instance recorded of any man's selling a servant or child, and no trace is to be discerned of any such transaction. It is indeed mentioned, but mentioned as sin, mentioned to receive God's curse as criminal. "Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment, because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes."\* And the selling of

\* Amos ii. 6.

children by the heathen is expressly marked for God's vengeance.

The crime is plainly denounced as a crime, whether committed by any miserable, degraded, avaricious sinners among the Hebrews, who well knew how abominable this iniquity was in the sight of God, or by ignorant and abandoned pagans, according to the custom of their own country, and permission of their own laws. The examination and comparison of these cases shows with what infinite abhorrence God must look upon the enormities, abominations, cruelties, impurities, and diabolical practices of the slave-trade, as kept up by a Christian people such as we. The internal, domestic, horrible iniquity of slave-breeding, and the known and open existence of slave-marts, slave-traders, and slave-trading, sanctioned and maintained by custom and law, are, beyond all comparison, worse than any thing of the kind in the land of Judea, that ever called down the curses of God on those who dared to engage in it. Yet in this Christian land, this indescribable and most atrocious abomination is maintained, and as of old, when the word of God is directed against it, those guilty of it maintain not only its legal innocence by unrighteous law, but its sacredness in the very sight of God, as part and parcel of the great missionary system. "For every one, from the greatest unto the least of them, is given to covetousness. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not

at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore shall they fall among them that fall; in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.”\*

This searedness and stupidity of conscience is no excuse for crime, but rather, under the light of God's word, an exceeding great exasperation of it. That men *could* so torture, and blind, and petrify their moral sense as not to be able to blush at such abominations, just shows how completely their iniquities are their masters; they are holden of the cords of their own sins, and love to have it so. They are like those condemned in Zechariah xi. 5; the oppressors of God's sheep, the destroyers of men; “whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich!” The same crimes are alleged against the heathen when they oppressed the captive Jews. “They have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will sell your sons and your daughters, and will return you recompense upon your own head.”† Such passages cast a powerful incidental light upon the wickedness of selling human beings as property, whether men, women, or children. It is plain enough how God regards it.

\* Jer. viii. 10, 12.

† Joel iii. 3, 6, 7, 8.

And this is a thing we are to bear in mind in turning to the New Testament, and examining the instructions given both to masters and servants there. When it is there commanded, "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal," what think you is the standard of equality and justice by which measurement is to be made? Was it left to the option or judgment of the master, or even to the contract between master and servant? Nay, these very Old Testament Scriptures, these laws before us on this very subject, were the sole and the authoritative guide. There was no need, at any time, of denouncing slavery in the New Testament, for it had been rendered impossible by the Old Testament for any man to practice it, to claim property in man, and preserve a conscience clear from wickedness. There was not a creature in existence who knew the teachings of God's word in the Old Testament, who did not know that the claim of property in man was a crime in God's sight, and that no man could give to his servant that which was just and equal, and yet treat him as a chattel, or hold him as a slave. There was not a creature who knew God's statutes on this subject in the books of Moses, and God's wrath for the violation of them, as recorded in the histories and the prophets, and was capable of reasoning at all, who did not know that for him to take a young child, and claim that child as his property, because the father and the mother had been his slaves, was to make him-



self a *man-stealer*, to incarnadine his conscience with the stain of that crime, denounced in God's word with the penalty of death. There was no need to repeat these precepts, but to comprehend them in the law of love, and to turn every man's conscience in regard to all the duties specified by them back to them, under the power of the gospel, for definition and detail. It is as plain as the day that no man could submit to the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, and yet maintain the iniquity of claiming property in man.

## CHAPTER XV.

NO RESTORING OF RUNAWAY SERVANTS—THE HEBREWS FORBIDDEN TO RESTORE THEM—THE HEBREW FUGITIVE LAW, A LAW IN BEHALF OF THE SERVANT AND NOT THE MASTER—DEMONSTRATION FROM THIS LAW THAT HUMAN BEINGS CAN NOT BE PROPERTY—PAUL'S EPISTLE TO PHILEMON IN THE LIGHT OF THIS LAW—THE ASSERTION THAT THE WORD OF GOD SANCTIONS SLAVERY AN IMPIOUS LIBEL.

THE consequence of these safeguards for the freedom of the servant was such, that there is no such thing ever known, ever intimated in the history of the Jews, as that of any master seeking to recover a runaway. There are cases of men going from Dan to Beersheba to recover an ass or an ox that had strayed from its owner, but no instance of any man going after, or sending after, a stray servant. The first and only instance of a slave-hunter figuring in the sacred pages is that of the condemned liar, hypocrite, and profane swearer, Shimei, whose servants ran away to Achish, King of Gath; and no wonder that they fled from the service of a man who threw stones at David, and cursed him by the wayside, if that was the way in which he treated his domestics at home. The Jewish law strictly forbade any one from ever returning unto his master that servant that had fled

from his master to him. If an ox or an ass had strayed from its owner, any one finding the beast was commanded to restore it to its owner, as his property; but if a man's *servant* had fled away, every one was in like manner *forbidden* to restore him; demonstrating in the strongest manner that a servant was never regarded as property, and could not be treated as such. A man's ox belonged to him, and must be restored to him as his property; but a man's servant did not belong to him, and could not be his property, and if he chose to take himself away, was not considered as taking away any thing that belonged to his master, or could be claimed and taken back by him.

It is not possible for an incidental demonstration to be stronger than this. If the possibility of property in man had been admitted, if servants had been regarded as slaves, and masters as owners, then the law of God would no more have permitted any two-legged property to run away from the owner, to steal itself from the master, than a four-legged property; a biped would have no more right of property in himself than a quadruped; and the law would no more have permitted any man to secrete, protect, and keep back from the owner a strayed or runaway biped in the shape of a man, than a strayed or runaway quadruped in the shape of an ox or an ass.

“Ox, ass, sheep, raiment, or any manner of lost thing which another challengeth to be his, the thing shall be judged; if stolen, thou shalt make restitution

to the owner; if found, thou shalt bring it back to the owner."\* But a servant is not a lost *thing*, not an article of property, and there is no such thing as an *owner* of him recognized. "If thou meet even thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again."† But "thou shalt *not* deliver unto his master the servant which has escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in any one of thy gates where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him."‡ He is a freeman, as any of you, free to choose his residence, free to go and come as he pleases, free to stay unmolested, in whatever place he may prefer, and there is no owner to him, no creature that has any power to interfere with his liberty, no law binding him as any man's property, but an explicit, divine law, recognizing, guarding, and establishing, beyond possibility of denial or interference, his sole right of property and ownership in himself.

Now, I maintain that it is not possible for language or thought to present a stronger incidental demonstration than this, of the impossibility of a creature of the human race being property. The demonstration is absolutely all the stronger for being incidental. It never entered into the mind of the sacred writer, it never entered into God's heart, to set forth, in a formal proposition, that the claim of property in man

\* Ex. xxii. 9, 10, 11. † Ex. xxiii. 4. ‡ Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

is sin, or that no man can be the owner of a man, because, there stood the law, He that stealeth, or selleth, or holdeth, shall surely be put to death. Just so, there was no need of saying, as an abstract proposition, that the act of *murdering* is sin, because the law said, Thou shalt do no murder; and, The murderer shall be put to death. But when we find, side by side, in the catalogue of statutes defining and illustrating the sin of stealing, and commanding the restoration of stolen or lost property, with the appellation of *owner* bestowed on those to whom such property is to be restored, a commandment, *not* to restore to his *master* the servant that has fled from his *master* to thee, the forbidding of such restoration, and the avoidance of the term *owner*, are intensely significant.

This is the thing to be borne in mind, also, in reading the Epistle of Paul to Philemon. This is the thing that accounts, in the first place, for his sending back Onesimus to Philemon at all; which he would not have done, and could not conscientiously have done, with the statute in Deuteronomy staring him in the face, had he not known that he was sending him back to a Christian, perfectly aware of that statute, and acquainted with God's whole reprobation of the crime of oppression, and the iniquity of claiming property in man. And, hence he says to Philemon, "*Whom I would have retained,*" would have done it, and could have done it, conscientiously, by the law

of God ; but, perfectly confident in Philemon's Christian integrity, he would not impose that detention upon him, and compel him by the law, but would give him the sweet privilege of yielding up the man to Paul, on gospel grounds, and willingly. And hence, also, he says, Thou therefore receive him, as I have sent him, *not now as a servant*, but above a servant, a brother beloved.

*Not now as a servant.* It is impossible to understand this, or any part of this remarkable Epistle, indeed, except under the light of all these statutes against slavery, which we have been considering. But the moment you bring this phrase under the convergency, the focus, of this light, the brilliancy is glorious ; it is as if a diamond had burst into a blaze. Paul would not, and could not, have returned Onesimus at all except to a man who, as a Christian, well knew God's judgment against slavery ; nor to him, unless he had had perfect confidence in his Christian integrity, that he would receive him as no longer a servant, a slave, even if he had been one before. Paul would never have sent back Onesimus to any doctors of divinity who proclaim slavery a divine institution, nor to any one who could have stood up and said, as doctors of theology since his day have done, We accept the system of human slavery, and conscientiously abide by it.

In the whole history, from that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, down through the whole line of their de-

scendants, not one instance is to be found of the sale of a man, whether as servant or slave. The only approximations to such a thing are treated and denounced as criminal. When they obtained servants, or purchased them, as the phrase was, they purchased their time and labor from themselves; but if they attempted to sell them, it could not be done without stealing them; it was making articles of property out of them; it was asserting, and violently assuming, ownership in them; it was MAN-STEALING. Accordingly, is the transaction of the *selling* of Joseph, which is described as the crime of *stealing*; and no person in Judea could ever have sold any human being, no matter by what means in his power, without the conviction of doing what was forbidden of God. Man-selling was no more permitted than man-stealing.

It was on the ground of the impossibility of property in man, that made the selling of him a crime, that the statute was enacted forbidding any man to return the escaping servant to his master. It was on this ground: that every servant belonged to himself and not to his master, and that if his master undertook to treat him as property, he had a perfect right to flee from him, and no man had any right to stop him, but every man was bound by God's own law to assist and defend him. This most beneficent statute was a key-stone for the arch of freedom which, by the Jewish legislation, God reared in the midst of universal despotism and slavery; it formed a security

for the observance of all the other many provisions in favor of those held to labor or domestic service; it opened a gate of refuge for the oppressed, and operated as a powerful restraint against the cruelty of the tyrannical master. There might be cruelty and tyranny in the land of Judea, but there was a legal escape from it; the servant, if men attempted to treat him as a slave, could instantly quit his master, was not compelled to abide in bondage, was not hunted as a fugitive, nay, by law, was protected from being so hunted, and everywhere, on his escape, found friends in every dwelling, and a friend and protector in the law.

In this statute, and in all the others on this subject, we see how shameful is the libel on the word of God, how impious, how blasphemous the charge against it, of sanctioning the system of slavery. They are, in some respects, the meanest and the wickedest of all human moles, who go burrowing among the Scriptures, and twisting and distorting its passages, in the hope of finding some shadow of an excuse for this wickedness. Their work is, as far as in them lies, to make infidels; for they do what God denounced, with his extremest vengeance, the false teachers of old for doing; they belie the word of the Lord, and cause men to turn from it with the feeling that a book that teaches iniquity can not be God's word. But we throw off and denounce their perversion, and we challenge all the world to find any-



where so great a security for human freedom, and against the possibility of human slavery, or so deep a fountain and assurance of benevolence and justice, as in these laws. They constitute, beyond all comparison, the most benign, protective, and generous system of domestic service, the kindest to the servants, and the fairest for the masters, ever framed in any country or in any age. The rights of the servants are defined and guaranteed as strictly, and with as much care, as those of the employers or masters. Human beings could not be degraded into slaves or chattels, or bound for involuntary service, or seized and worked for profit, and no wages paid. The defenses against these outrages, the denouncement and prohibition of them, are among the clearest legal and historical judgments of God against slavery. The system in our own country, even in the light of only these provisions, holds its power by laws most manifestly conflicting with the divine law, and stands indisputably under the divine reprobation.

## CHAPTER XVI.

JUBILEE STATUTE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM—ITS APPLICATION TO HEATHEN SERVANTS—PERVERSION AND MISINTERPRETATION OF THE MOSAIC LAWS—NO INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE ALLOWED—VARIOUS FORMS OF CONTRACT—LIMITATION BY THE JUBILEE—MEANING OF LEV. XXV. 46—NO REFUGE OR STANDING-PLACE FOR SLAVERY.

THE great crowning statute, which secured all the others on this subject, was the Jubilee Statute, of universal personal liberty for all the inhabitants of the land. The Hebrews were permitted to obtain servants from the heathen on a contract lasting till the Jubilee, but at every recurrence of that time of release all were free, and every contract was voluntary. No heathen, no creature, of any name, or race, or residence, could be forced into it; it was at any heathen servants's option to make a contract to the Jubilee, or not. If, rather than make such a contract, he chose to return to the heathen country, he was at perfect liberty to go; and if he staid in Judea, and could find any master to take him as a hired servant, and not as a servant of all work, till the Jubilee, there was no law against that; he was at liberty to hire himself out on the best terms, and to the best master, that he could find. So much is

indisputable, and so much is absolutely and entirely inconsistent with slavery.

And had it not been for the arbitrary translation of the word servant into *bondman*, by our English translators in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, where the Jubilee contracts with the heathen are treated of, no semblance of an argument could have been found for the existence of any kind or degree of involuntary servitude for them. The same word is used of procuring heathen servants as Hebrew, and in neither case, nor any case, can it mean bondman, but simply and only *servant*. In the 46th verse of the 25th chapter of Leviticus, the word *bondman* is inserted in our English version, where there is not only no such word, but nothing answering to it, in the original Hebrew. The service of the heathen was not bondage, and made no approximation to slavery; and the law of heathen servitude until the Jubilee was simply a naturalization law of fifty years' probation, of those who had previously been idolaters and slaves, for freedom.

It was a contrivance to drain heathenism of its feculence. The heathen slaves were in no condition to be admitted at once to the privileges of freedom and of citizenship among the Hebrews. They needed to be under restraint, law, and service. They were put under such a system as made them familiar with all the religious privileges and observances, which God had bestowed and ordered; a system that ad-

mitted them to instruction and kindness, and prepared them to pass into integral elements of the nation.

It was a system of emancipation and of moral transfiguration, going on through ages, the taking up of an element of foreign ignorance, depravity, and misery, and converting it into an element of native comfort, knowledge, and piety. And the Statute of the Jubilee, the statute of liberty to all the inhabitants of the land every fifty years, was the climax of all the beneficent statutes, by which the sting was extracted from slavery, the fang drawn; and by this statute, in conjunction with all the rest, the Hebrew system constituted a set of laws and causes to prevent the introduction of slavery and render it impossible, and at length to break it up, all over the world. The system of Hebrew Common Law would, by itself, have put an end to slavery everywhere. The Hebrew laws elevated and dignified free labor, and converted slave labor into free. The service of the heathen being a voluntary apprenticeship, and not involuntary servitude, it was, by reason of the privileges and instruction secured by law, a constant elevation of character, and preparation for citizenship; and then, every fifty years, the safety of complete emancipation was demonstrated. The Jubilee Statute can not be understood in any other light. But, when the vail of prejudice is taken away, it is especially by the tenor of the Hebrew laws, in regard to slavery, that the beauty

and glory of the Hebrew legislation, its justice, wisdom, and beneficence, become more apparent than ever. We might rest the demonstration of a divine inspiration of the Pentateuch in no small degree on the supernatural benevolence and wisdom of those laws.

It is from the misinterpretation, misrepresentation, and perversion of those laws, that the advocates of slavery have contrived to draw some shadow of pretense for its existence and divine sanction among the Hebrews; although it was never slavery, but free voluntary service, concerning which the whole system of jurisprudence was established. Some men really have the idea that the heathen were given to the Hebrews for slaves, in such wise that they might, any time that it pleased them to make a foray, go forth and snatch up any men, women, and children, whom they chose to take, and keep them in perpetual bondage! And this, notwithstanding the repeated statutes enacted, and staring them in the face, commanding the Hebrews to treat all strangers in their land as brethren, and on no account, nor in any way, to oppress them. The heathen were strangers, and there were no strangers in the Hebrew country *but* heathen; so, if the heathen *had* been given to the Hebrews as slaves, here were two sets of laws right against each other, directly and violently conflicting. But there never was any such gift, nor any such permission, nor could heathen

servants be oppressed, nor brought into bondage any more than Hebrew servants, nor made slaves, nor treated as property.

Even the term *forever*, applied to the longest possible contract for service, is used both with reference to the Hebrew and the heathen. It is this fact which renders null and void the pretence alleged by some, from Leviticus xxv. 46, that the heathen were perpetual slaves; for, if the heathen were, then the Hebrews were; precisely the same declarations being made in regard to the Hebrew, in the same case: namely, the longest contract, that *he shall serve his master forever*; whereas, it is admitted on all hands, without a single denial, that the Hebrew could not be a slave, and, if he had made the *forever-contract*, that is, till the Jubilee, then in the Jubilee he was free as ever. The cases are precisely parallel, the form of language used is the same in the Hebrew original, both in Exodus xxi. 6, of the acknowledged freeman, and in Leviticus xxv. 46, of the pretended slave, but who was, just as truly as the Hebrew, a freeman, having made his own contract voluntarily with his master, till the Jubilee, and no longer. Then, in the Jubilee, by the great standing appointment in the Hebrew Constitution, ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND, whether of Hebrew or heathen origin, that had been bound for any term of service whatsoever, long or short, were FREE.

Let us read the two passages together. The first

is in reference to the Hebrew servant, with his wife and children, apprenticed to serve his master for the ordinary service-term of six years. At the end of that time, he is as free as his master. But he had the privilege, by law, if his situation pleased him, if he loved his master, and liked his service, to enter then into the longest engagement with the same master, even till the Jubilee, and his master was compelled to agree to it, and could not compel him to quit. The law reads as follows: "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him unto the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; AND HE SHALL SERVE HIM FOREVER."

Now, several things are here to be considered. 1st, It is admitted, and can not be denied, that this means simply *till the Jubilee*, when by law, he, and every servant in the land, was free; and no master, whatever might have been the terms of contract, could keep any servant one moment longer than that period.

2d, The terms here used are the same as in Leviticus xxv. 46, when it is said of the heathen, in reference to a contract of the same period, *they shall be your bondmen forever*; but in this latter place, the word *bondmen* is not in the original, but is put in by the translators; and so the place should read, as in

the first passage, *they shall serve you forever*, or, *ye shall serve yourselves with them forever*; meaning, just as in the first passage concerning the Hebrews, *till the Jubilee*. The first passage might just as properly have been translated, *he shall be his bondman forever*, as the last.

3d, The details of this law were thus minute and definite, equally for the sake of the servant and the master, to prevent fraud on either side; to render alike impossible oppression on the part of the master, and cheating on the part of the servant. If it was a privilege for the servant thus to secure for himself and his family a permanent place with a good master for forty or fifty years, it might also be a tax on the kindness of the master; and this admirable legislation most effectually guarded against fraud on either side. The servant might die very soon after the contract-money had been paid to him, and in that case it might all be lost to the master. For it is pretty clear that the money was always paid down, or a great portion of it, in this bargain, and the servant had the privilege of trading with it, and making the most of it he could, and thus, if he chose, he might at any time, if successful, buy back his whole contract. But, if the money was thus to be paid beforehand, some idle rascally servants might possibly be so wicked, so imitative of the more respectable swindlers on a grander scale, as to take advantage of this, and having received a considerable sum for the con-



tract, then deny that they had entered into any agreement longer than a renewal of the ordinary six years' term. To guard against that, if the servant insisted on staying with his master till the Jubilee, the desire must (1st) be solemnly affirmed, and the contract drawn, in the presence of judges; and (2d) the servant was to have his ear bored, so that if at any time he denied the contract, designing to cheat his master, there was the unobliterable proof of it.

4th, On the other hand, these provisions were just as necessary for the protection of the servant; for if at any time the master, on his part, designed to repudiate the contract, and turn his servant out of doors, there was, manifestly, the ear bored, and there were the judges to whom he could appeal, and the laws by which he could compel his master to keep him.

5th, It is obvious that this contract, once entered into, was a contract *belonging to the family*; it was a contract, by which, the servant's time and labor having been purchased for forty or fifty years, was due to the family for that period. It had been purchased by the master for himself and his household, his children; and the servant so apprenticed would belong (that is, his time and service would belong) to the family, to the children, if the master died before the time of the contract expired. If, for example, the master entered into such a contract the seventh year after the Jubilee, it would be a contract for

forty-three years to come. Now, suppose the master to die ten years from that time · then manifestly the time and service of the Hebrew servant would belong to the family as their inheritance ; it would belong to the children as their possession after their father ; and again, if *they* all died within the next ten or twenty years, and the servant lived, then ten or twenty years of the unexpired service would still belong to the grandchildren, as *their* possession ; and so on till the Jubilee. It would be an inheritance for the master, and his children after him, *to inherit a possession* ; inasmuch as his death, ten years after a contract made and paid with a servant for forty years, did not and could not release that servant from his obligation to complete the service, for which he had been paid, in part at least, beforehand.

Let us now read, along with this, the passage in Leviticus xxv. 46, relating to the heathen servants, or servants coming from the heathen nations into Judea for employment, and engaged under the same Jubilee-contract, *the forever-contract*, as in the preceding instance of the Hebrew servant so engaged. It reads thus : “ Ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit a possession ; ye shall serve yourselves with them forever.” As we have said, the phraseology is almost exactly the same in the last clause, defining the extent of the contract with the heathen servant, as in the clause in Exodus xxi. 6, which defined the extent of the contract with the Hebrew servant ; the word forever being used in

both cases, and used with the same meaning, that is, of a contract extending till the Jubilee. The word bondman or bondmen is not used in either passage, though our translators have chosen to put it in the text, in the passage applying to the heathen, but without the least authority or reason for so doing. Instead of saying, *they shall be your bondmen forever*, the passage simply says, just as concerning the Hebrew servant in Exodus, *they shall serve you forever*; that is, they shall be your servants for the longest period admitted by your laws for any service or any contract, even till the Jubilee. And as engaged by such contract, and paid on such terms, ye do take them, and may take them, as an inheritance for your children after you, for any part of the term of service unexpired, when you, the head of the family, are taken away from your household. Then, these servants, by you engaged and paid for an apprenticeship till the Jubilee, shall be for your children to inherit as a possession, the possession of their time and service, which, by your contract with them, as rightfully belongs to your children as to you, until the stipulated period come to an end. That is the Jubilee-contract, *the forever-contract*. The passage in Exodus xxi. 6, is absolute demonstration in regard to this matter.

And thus are all the refuges of lies swept away, by which the advocates of slavery, asserting that the heathen were slaves to the Hebrews, or could be held as such, endeavor to make men believe that slavery is sanctioned by the law of God.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE JUBILEE-CONTRACT OF SERVICE FOR THE HEATHEN—EVERY CONTRACT PERFECTLY VOLUNTARY—USAGE OF THE WORD BUY—SERVANTS BOUGHT BY VOLUNTARY CONTRACT WITH THEMSELVES, BUT NOT OF A THIRD PARTY—THE FAMILY INHERITANCE OF SERVICE TILL THE JUBILEE — BOTH HEBREW AND HEATHEN SERVANTS FREE—NO PROPERTY IN MAN EVER SANCTIONED.

Now taking the 44th and 45th verses of the same chapter in Leviticus in the original, the meaning is perfectly plain, according to the law of Jubilee, with reference to which they were written. It is the long contract, the Jubilee-contract, called, with reference to the Hebrew servant, *forever*, which is under consideration in these verses, as in Ex. xxi. 6; under which contract, namely, the servants taken from among the heathen were to be engaged, and were to be for a possession according to the engagement, up to the time of Jubilee, voluntarily assumed by both parties. No Hebrew could compel any heathen to serve him; no Hebrew could buy any heathen servant of a third party, as an article of property. No such buying or selling was ever permitted, but every contract was to be made with the servant himself. The 44th verse reads thus: "Both thy men-servants and thy maid-servants, which shall be to you of the

heathen that are round about you, of them shall ye buy the man-servant and the maid-servant;" that is, of the men-servants and maid-servants themselves that have come into your land, of them, shall ye procure, shall ye obtain, your man-servant and your maid-servant, on the Jubilee-contract.

And the 45th verse reads thus: "Moreover, of the children (descendants) of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be to you for a possession." *Of the children of the strangers shall ye buy*; that is, ye shall take the children (the descendants) themselves, as many as are willing to enter your service on this contract, not from a third party, but from themselves, by their own free choice, and from their families, begotten among you; and those so taken, so engaged, shall, as to their time and service for the period for which they engage themselves, belong to you, be to you for a possession, a fixture of service, up to the period of Jubilee.

The English word *buy* conveys, of necessity, to an English reader, the idea of traffic and of property; but such was not the idea attached to the word in the original, which is the same word used of marrying a wife, as when Hosea *bought* his wife;\* and Jacob *bought* Rachel and Leah his wives, and paid for them seven years' work each to Laban.† Just so,

\* Hosea iii. 2.

† Gen. xxix. 16-23.

Boaz *bought* Ruth.\* And just so God is said to have *bought* his people.† And in Exodus xxi. 2, If thou *buy* a Hebrew servant, we have the exact usage, in reference to a free contract of free service for six years. And corresponding with this, we have in Jeremiah the expression “every man his brother a Hebrew, *which hath been sold* unto thee,” in the original, *which hath sold himself*;‡ that is, engaged as a servant in contract for six years.

Just so, in Lev. xxv. 47, after considering the cases of heathen servants engaged till the Jubilee, there follows the consideration of Hebrew servants engaged to the stranger till the same period, and the case is, if he, the Hebrew, *sell himself* to the stranger, *or to the stock of the stranger’s family*. But in the 51st verse this Hebrew servant is said to have been *bought* for money, which money was paid to himself, and the contract a perfectly free and voluntary contract. So in the 39th verse, If thy brother *be sold* unto thee, that is, in the original, *sell himself*; the same free contract. And the expression, *the stock of the stranger’s family*, is just precisely a paraphrase or explanation of the expression in regard to heathen servants *taken for an inheritance for you and your children after you*; that is, heathen servants who have *sold themselves to the stock of your family*, engaged themselves by contract, for which you have paid the money to them, to serve you and

\* Ruth iv. 10.

† Deut. xxxii. 6.

‡ Jer. xxxiv. 14.

your children till the Jubilee, thus constituting a fixture, a possession, as to time and service paid for, in the family stock. This was done by Hebrews themselves, who nevertheless were perfectly free, and in no sense slaves; it was done in exactly the same way by the heathen, on a contract exactly as free, and they were nevertheless in no sense slaves.

It is from the misinterpretation of the words *buy* and *sell*, that much of the perversion of Scripture on this subject has originated and been maintained. A fair examination clears away all the sophistry, and leaves the case as plain and open as the daylight. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PROPERTY IN MAN PERMITTED OR SANCTIONED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS AGAINST SLAVERY PROVE IT TO BE SIN—THE CONTEMPORANEOUS TESTIMONY OF JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL—EFFECT OF SLAVERY IN THE RUIN OF EMPIRES—ITS EFFECT ON THE MORALS AND SENTIMENTS OF A PEOPLE—DEGRADATION OF FREE LABOR.

IN the fifth place, the recorded judgments of God for the attempt to hold and use servants as property, are another demonstration of slavery as sin. The great foremost instance is the one recorded in the 34th chapter of the prophecies of Jeremiah. It was the last crowning and exasperating crime of the nation, this attempt to establish slavery, in perpetuating the servitude of their servants, at the will and pleasure of the masters, who, by such usurpation and oppression, claimed and treated them as property. They had been guilty of oppression in many ways before, and in this way at intervals, but now they made it a national act and establishment, and it was a fundamental violation both of the letter and spirit of the constitution and of God's law. The princes of the nation and the lords of the capital, the holy city, Jerusalem, and the priests, and all the people, conspired and combined in this iniquity together; and if God had let their existence as a nation be prolonged,



they would thenceforward have had slavery instead of freedom, as its ruling fundamental law. But the wrath of God came down so instantaneously, that they hardly had leisure to begin the working of the system. And nothing can prove more clearly God's abhorrence of it; for, as a thunderbolt from heaven, the fierce anger of the Lord transfixed the nation. The sword, pestilence, and famine, captivity, fire, and desolation, consumed the people, and destroyed the cities of the land. There is no possibility of mistaking this record. "The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God." This passage, and the whole 22d chapter of Ezekiel from which it is taken, were the testimony of God by his prophet in Chaldea against the very same wickedness, on account of which God had declared, by Jeremiah, that the whole nation should be swept from the land.

For every other iniquity forgiveness had been offered, and space granted for repentance; but there was none for this. God had endured the idolatry of

the people, for that was not an iniquity established and defended as an organic sin, nor had the attempt been made to subvert the constitution given to them from God; and while many were guilty of idolatrous abominations, there were also many who resisted and abhorred them. But this attempted establishment of slavery was a glaring national trampling upon humanity and justice, and defiance of God, in which all classes were combined. Strenuous for rites, but not for righteousness, for sacrifice toward God, but not for mercy nor common honesty toward man, they would kill an ox for worship, and steal their neighbor's wages, and slay his freedom in the same breath. They "trusted in oppression and perversion, and stayed themselves thereon;" and these are crimes, the lurid light of which burns in the pages of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and others, in such a manner, that we see how the nation went into the establishment of slavery against the reiterated and long-continued warnings and denunciations of God's messengers in every faithful free pulpit all over the land. And slavery being the subversion of the constitution, to make it an engine of oppressing and crushing the free servants in the land, instead of protecting and blessing them, the moment they attempted to shield and establish this sin under the guardianship of the constitution and the laws, making themselves a nation of men-stealers, the extremest wrath of God came down upon them.

The sixth branch of this argument is the providential demonstration in the manifestation of God's curse upon the system, by its practical workings among men, and the ruin of states and empires under its influence. Its path has gone over the earth in an infinite train of iniquities and miseries, sins of oppression and cruelty, licentiousness and avarice, suggested and produced by its temptations and its gifts of opportunity and power, and finally concentrated in its essence; the corruptions of manners and morals, the decay of commerce, arts, manufactures, learning, and literature, the destruction of industry and intellect, the blasting and emasculation of the earth itself under its curse and blight.

Then there is the effect upon the moral sentiments and feelings, the habits of immoral reasoning induced, the monstrous sophistry admitted and maintained, and the consequent insensibility of the conscience, and blinding and darkening of the understanding; a thing predicted in the prophets for those who would not be guided in their policy by the word of God, but trusted in oppression, and in the lying that was necessary to sustain it, and fulfilled in the judicial blindness of the Jews; and again declared in the New Testament, as the consequence of rejecting God's testimony against our own sins, and changing the truth of God into a lie, God himself giving such over to a reprobate mind, and to the all-deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. For this cause God shall send

them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, since they would not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Just so in that psalm so vividly descriptive of the character of unjust judges, and of the effect of habits of injustice in putting out the eyesight of the mind. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness, all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

The most abandoned principles are openly maintained; the most ancient and revered landmarks are swept away, the most sacred compacts disregarded; the institutions of mankind, the wisdom of history, and the nature of eternal justice, alike perverted and defied. The doing of evil that good may come is justified and applauded; a selfish expediency is proclaimed as the right rule of the exercise of state power; all the theories of moral sentiment grounded in the word of God are overthrown, and a system of public and domestic moral principles adopted, that would have disgraced the darkest ages of mankind. Among all the monstrosities of idol superstitions, the fanaticisms of infanticide and Moloch-sacrifices, in the darkness of heathenism, without the light of the Bible, none were ever so bad as the deliberate maintenance of such doctrines as are now maintained *in such light*. That slavery is better than freedom, and more accordant with God's intention in regard to human society, that the degradation and enslavement of one race is necessary for the higher refinement and

happiness of another; that the African race are separate from humanity, and only a footstool for it, by standing on which the Anglo-Saxon race can reach a higher stature, nearer to the gods; that society itself ought to be nothing but the two extremes of unquestioning, unappealing, inevitable servitude, and unquestioned, despotic power; that the perfection of domestic, and even of religious life, is in such a state. We are reminded by such doctrines of the horrid manufacture of the music in the pope's choir, where the mutilation of children is said to give a tone of plaintiveness and pathos to the melody, so exquisite as to be unattainable in any other way. We are taught in one and the same breath that God appointed slavery as a providential good for the slaves themselves, and at the same time, that they are to be perpetual bondmen, chattels, bought and sold, in order to make us, by contrast, nobler, prouder freemen; and that, in fine, the institution is itself a whetstone for the sharpening and polishing of our own humanity. It certainly does sharpen.

We are told that for such an acute, haughty, and finely-toned order of humanity, labor is disgraceful, and that it should be put upon slaves only, to make white men the more ashamed of it. We are taught that industry and submission are the properties of slaves, indolence and command the marks of a gentleman; and that to labor, working with our hands, instead of being the feature and the praise of an

elevating Christianity, is the badge of degradation. Our virtues are turned into vices, and our vices into virtues, by this system. Humanity is put to shame, is set in the stocks, is crucified, because it is a slave's deportment; haughtiness, resolute cruelty, arrogance to those beneath, are virtues in the master, and there must be a race always beneath to accustom the superior race to such a bearing. Intense and unmitigated selfishness, pride, revenge, ferocity, hardness of heart, and griping, close-fisted extortion, along with the seemingly opposite qualities of lavish profusion and waste, were not merely wrought into fixtures of character among the Roman slaveholders, but they are fruits of the same system now. Thomas Jefferson's graphic and powerful picture of these things will last as long as the English language, together with his well-known declaration, that in case of a slave insurrection, Almighty God has no attribute which could take part with the master against the slave.

Indeed the demoralizing effect of this system in making labor disgraceful, where God has made it honorable, and in taking from it its right to a place of nobleness and respect in human society, is worse than its influence in defrauding independent laborers of their just adequate recompense. I have a most marked illustration, which I know to be authentic. A man on Staten Island, a carpenter, who as master workman had become successful by industry, honesty,

and intelligence in the pursuit of his business, learning that there was great demand for his work at Charleston in South Carolina, and thinking he might more rapidly acquire a competency there, closed up his business here, and went south for that purpose. He had hardly got established, when a lady sent for him to make a contract with him for repairing and in effect rebuilding some part of her establishment. She desired him to make a computation of the cost, and to let her know the lowest price at which he would undertake the business. The bill somewhat exceeded her expectations. She reflected awhile, and at length told our honest friend that on the whole she concluded not to engage him. The work would take two or three months, and on the whole she could do better to *buy a carpenter*, and *sell* him again in the spring! The man left the house, went to his shop, packed up his tools, closed up his half established business, and took passage in the first ship he could find for New York, declaring that a country where housekeepers could buy their carpenters, and sell them again in the spring, was no place for him or free labor to live in. And where, in the whole extent of our territorial empire, let slavery once be established in the length and breadth of it, can free and honorable labor find a breathing place? Where will it ever be able to command its rights of existence, or its just reward?

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE COMBINATION OF DEMONSTRATION—SOLEMNITY OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES—THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY—PROVINCE OF THE PULPIT TO PROCLAIM THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY OF A VOTE.

SUCH now is the vast and mighty evidence in regard to this system, in the word, and in the providential judgments of Almighty God upon it, and in its fruits in the misery of man. The intuitions of all mankind go with this evidence; the moral sense of human nature itself pronounces the system of slavery to be, in its essence, oppression, injustice, and sin. God's own testimony as to the sinfulness of slavery is as clear as his condemnation of idolatry itself; and then, as to the proof of its injustice and inhumanity to man, in the very nature of the case this is more manifest still, because human beings are the subjects of it. On the whole, there is nothing that has a more united and concentrated verdict in regard to its wickedness, from within and without, from feeling, from conscience, from experience, from the recorded opinion and testimony of men, from the study of history, the fate of empires, and the word of God. The reverberating roar in every part of the word of God in regard



to the sin of oppression is as the sound of many waters; and the ground-wave of conviction from the depths of the consciousness of all mankind, amidst the groans of humanity, generation after generation, rolls up the judgment that personal slavery is the culmination of this sin. The feeling of our common humanity has found a common expression, and the literature of all nations is as a shrine of many-forked lightnings against it. The logic of common law, of common honesty, of common charity, must all be set at defiance in denying its sinfulness. Millions on millions of beating hearts assert, that for themselves,

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower  
Of fleeting life its luster and perfume,  
And we are *weeds* without it;

and if they can turn from such sentiments, and with eyes moistened with the tears springing from the poetic sensibility of a Christian patriotism, can vote to make their fellow-creatures such weeds, by fastening the chains of a perpetual slavery upon them, how will they stand before God, face to face with the victims of such hypocrisy and cruelty? The proud boasts of liberty for themselves, the care with which they guard their own personal freedom, shows what they consider the dearest birthright of *their* humanity; and, therefore, by the common law of love, what they know to be due to the humanity of others; and if they defraud them of it, their own natural emotions will witness against them at the last day. The dem-

onstrations as to profit, also, and the proofs of what men's true interests require, are equally clear, and must equally be defied, in the maintenance of this iniquity. John Wesley did truly declare that it is the sum of all villainies, and others in our land have testified that there is no sin in the decalogue but slavery is the parent of it.

Now it is this iniquity that a large portion of the community defend. At the South it is entailed; but each generation consents to the entailment. It would be easy for any State Legislature, nay for all, if the people would consent, to put a stop to the evil. If they would but take example from the law of jubilee, and bring in a bill that at the end of fifty years every child born in the State should be born free, the evil would, in that period, without difficulty work itself away. But instead of staying it where it is, they propose its universal extension. There is territory enough to carve out twenty-nine new States in the region proposed to be set open to the freedom of slavery. There are no geographical barriers to the existence and the lust of power; it overrides every thing; there is no climate on earth unfavorable to it. Freedom is a flower that you must cherish; but slavery is a weed, as Burke once truly said, that you may have anywhere, only scatter the seed. The question before us is as to the deliberate national extension of this system. My argument does not run backward, but was constructed simply to illustrate, by

a survey of the cogency and clearness of the demonstration that slavery is sin, the solemnity of the responsibility laid on us at this juncture in voting in regard to it. God has brought us, at length, by a wonderful combination of circumstances, to this, as the one absorbing issue before us as a nation, Will we choose slavery or freedom? Will we sanction and extend that which God abhors, or will we choose that which he commands? In the history of the whole world, no nation was ever brought face to face with God, to answer such a question, as ours is at this day. It is a position, the solemnity and importance of which arrest the gaze of the nations. And the responsibility is individual. God has concentrated the whole issue, at length, after a whole age of thrusting and parrying, and fending off, on the primal election, which combines the opinions, choices, wills, of all our teeming population in the same act. There is no diversion of the responsibility in other ways, or on more than one principle, one line of policy, which is brought to every man's own door to decide upon, to every man's own bosom for his judgment, to every man's own conscience for approval or rejection. The choice of every man, we had almost said of every man, woman, and child, is concentrated in this decision with a directness of opinion, will, and responsibility, such as never accompanied any other elective act of the people, in such sovereignty of determination as no other nation under heaven ever exercised.

On this account it is indisputably the province of the pulpit to proclaim at this time the judgment of God for the guidance of the people, in this, *their religious responsibility*; and all plausibility and power are taken away from the accustomed allegation with which every mention of the sin of slavery has been met, when it has been referred to, namely, that we, the people of this congregation, or any other congregation in a free State, have nothing to do with it. We now have every thing to do with it, and are ourselves to determine in regard to it. The question as to the sinfulness of slavery and its extension, is as direct, practical, and personal for us, as of stealing, lying, adultery, intemperance, or infidelity. If a bill for licensing polygamy were before our own State Legislature, there would be no more obligation to turn the light of God's word upon that iniquity, than there is now to examine the iniquity of the extension of slavery in the same light. It is no more a political thing to preach concerning slavery, than it is concerning dishonesty in business, or repentance toward God. On the principles laid down in the 33d chapter of Ezekiel, of which no man ever dreamed of denying the application directly to every preacher of the word of God, no minister of the gospel can do his duty, and avoid speaking in such a case. "If the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him as a watchman, if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people

be not warned, if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the people; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my hand, and warn them from me. If thou dost not warn them, then the wicked shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." This applies to whatever moral evil or sin any people are in danger of committing. No sword, no pestilence, no external misery or distress, is ever to be compared with the sword of a deliberate iniquity, cutting the people to their vitals, or the *habit* of iniquity, chosen as their State and domestic policy.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE ONE QUESTION BEFORE US—PRETENSIONS AND DEMANDS OF SLAVERY—THE CONSEQUENCES IF WE YIELD TO THEM—GUILT OF EXTENDING SLAVERY, AND SETTING IT AT THE VITALS OF A NEW STATE OR TERRITORY—THE PERPETUAL AGITATION AND POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

THE question now before us is just this, and no other, Shall slavery, henceforward, be the chosen policy of our nation? Shall it be extended over new territory, comprehending an area for the habitation of man, and the formation of human societies, larger than all civilized Europe? Shall every thing be made to bend to its advancement, and no freedom of speech, or even of opinion, be tolerated, that does not swear fealty to it? Shall the whole power of our government be enlisted and applied in its support? Shall the United States army force it upon freemen, at the point of the bayonet, with rights that had been secured by the Constitution struck down as treason, and the freedom of thought itself forbidden by atrocious law? To this it must come, and this is the essential despotism brought upon ourselves, if we, as a nation, deliberately fasten the law of slavery on our free Territories.

Shall we plainly choose, as our guiding and ruling policy, a system of injustice and cruelty that God abhors, and that all the nations of the civilized world in turn have abolished and cast out as the scourge of a prosperous, and the opprobrium of a virtuous, society? Shall this condemned and abandoned policy be set in new States and Territories, as their normal form, their jurisprudence, the Shechinah of the genius of the country? Shall that which is as plainly forbidden of God as idolatry itself be selected by this nation and government, stamped with the people's approbation, and inaugurated as the fundamental, determining, administrative act and prudence of public and private life, the object of our worship, the North Star of our being, the standard of our morals, the law of domestic society, and the rule of State?

To this extent its pretensions and demands have come. It has happened, in the providence of God, which has permitted the experiment to go that length, before throwing the question of its sanction or rejection solemnly on the whole nation's choice, that the preparation for this crime of the extension of slavery has been begun in open violence, in a daring, yet acknowledged usurpation, establishing the throne of iniquity, in the method of framing mischief by a law. The annals of history can not show a greater wickedness. The statutes of the house of Omri in Israel, for the iniquity of obeying which, the whole people of the land were swept into desolation, were not more directly

in conflict with God and his righteousness. The territorial legislative fraud transacted in Kansas, and the execrable laws under it, enforced by the United States army, at the command of the executive, at the same time that the House of Representatives has declared that very Legislature, and those very laws, to be unconstitutional, infamous, unrighteous, and therefore null and void, constitute the grossest usurpation, all things considered, ever perpetrated; because our light, our privileges, our position in the world and its ages, our Constitution, our Declaration of Independence, our theory and practice of liberty for ourselves, our knowledge of the word of God, our light from history and from the examples of all nations before us, and our long consideration and examination of the nature of public justice and righteousness, brand it as a foreknown and heaven-defying crime, not rejected and reprobated, when committed, but sanctioned *as* crime; so that the sun in heaven never shone upon a greater enormity, all these things considered, than the oppressions and cruelties in Kansas. It is impossible to set their wickedness in an adequate light.

And now, if we accept and sustain them, and carry out the villainy for which they were committed, we have sealed our own subjection, and the ruin of our liberties forever. I say this, because, a revolution from good to evil, requiring at the outset a bloody usurpation and civil war, can go on only by the sacri-



fice of all principle. The two things can not live together : a slavery, aggressive, jealous, devouring as the sea, that requires such abnegation of principle and conscience, such barbarous laws and such brutal ferocity in their execution, developing its remorseless despotism in them, and a freedom, whose whole soul of justice and humanity rises up against them ; the one must destroy the other. And to this it is running on. If we accept and sustain this iniquity, our policy must be henceforward wholly despotic, and as much against the spirit and letter of our own Constitution as of the word of God. All our strength will be called into requisition against ourselves to subdue our own prejudices in favor of liberty ; and a new net-work of law will have to be arranged to hold the swelling emotions we have been accustomed to utter, as a lunatic in a strait-jacket. Our statutes must be overhauled and knotted for the submission of State rights, and judicial precedents and decisions favorable to slavery must be prepared and enforced, that there may be no rebellion, nor whisper of discontent. The silent, unbroken, un murmuring reign of terror at the South will be a stormy terror at the North, but a reign of terror still, the worse for the uproar and resistance of conscience. The agencies of power are in readiness, and the needed judges are at hand, to apply all the instrumentalities in their keeping. With great assurance the advocates of the slave-system look forward to the established and unquestioned catho-

licity of its despotism, determined that it shall no longer be the creature of municipal law, or local state sovereignty, but of national and international righteousness. Not more confidently did Philip of Spain load his vessels of the Armada against Protestant England with thumb-screws and boots for the tortures of the Inquisition, to be applied to freemen. And then, our very literature will have to be mutilated and re-cast, and intellectual eunuchs must be set over all our book-shops and libraries, with an *index expurgatorius* for their guide.

I wish that it were in my power, by any language, to express the sacredness and solemnity of a vote in this crisis. If there ever was a religious responsibility in human affairs, it is the obligation to resist this iniquity, when the opportunity is given of a vote against it. There has never been such an opportunity till now; but now, no other issue is pretended, no other is talked of, no other is thought of, but the sanction and support, or renunciation and resistance, of this sin. It is idle to pretend any other question depending than just this, Shall slavery be extended and nationalized? I wish that I could portray, as with lightning, the unmeasured wickedness of that man, who will let his individual profit, or imagined profit, determine his vote on the side of injustice and oppression, in a matter on which the temporal and eternal condition of millions in future generations may depend. The baseness of any merchant or cap-

italist is not to be fathomed, who, because the ramifications of his southern trade require that he cast a benignant regard upon the system of slavery, will therefore vote for its extension in the land. I do not believe that human nature ever sank to a deeper debasement than it has in those men, who, under the light of Christianity, will, for the sake of an imagined greater security of property, establish, or vote to establish, the curse of slavery where it has not gone. To set this cancer in the vitals of a new land, to inculcate with this plague the heart of a new society, with the full knowledge of all the evils it will entail generation after generation, is a climax of wickedness a sublimity of crime, such as no nation under heaven before our own ever had a possibility of attaining. Divine providence has never once committed such a possibility to mortals, and would not have done it now, except to a nation educated, trained, disciplined, under the light of the gospel, and therefore prepared to repel the evil, and elect the good. And now, for such a nation, having the power to determine the policy, the social and civil institutions, of another state, and in the words of God in Isaiah, to raise up the foundations of many generations, deliberately, after long dispute and discussion, to set the system of slavery at the heart of it, would be a crime so gigantic, a cruelty so infinite, that eternity alone could reveal its enormity. It is a transaction without parallel on the face of the earth. Nations have made slaves, have prac-

ticed slavery, but, to compel another nation, abhorring it, into the endurance and establishment of this iniquity, puts a complication and intensity of malignity into the transaction, beyond the power of the imagination to measure and of language to describe. If you could take one immortal being, and set within the circle of his faculties, for your profit, regardless of his fate, a spring and machinery of incessant sin and misery, *that* would be the supernatural wickedness of a fiend; but who can adequately illustrate or characterize the enormity of setting such a spring at the heart of a whole nation, of placing there this productive cause of all miseries, this fountain and creative agency of cruelty and crime?

We can almost see the great God of our fathers warning us for the last time; we can almost hear the voice of incarnate divine compassion, Oh that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, thy decisive visitation, the things that belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate! We can almost see the spirits of our fathers bending down over us from their bright abodes, to see what shall be our decision in this hour of solemn trial. Oh that God would in mercy guide us! Oh that he would *constrain* us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God! But if we will not, then

there is a conflict before us, such as the nations never knew. Every step of the way we have got to grapple with God's word, and with conscience, and we can not overcome it. He has set it within us, and it is on God's side, and we had better have ten thousand devils outside opposing us, than conscience within. And God will still work; his word will break forth like a volcano. You have even now the conscience of twenty millions under the light of God's word, against the conscience of three hundred thousand slaveholders drugged by self-interest and sophistry. The conscience of the twenty millions God will continue to stir up. He will make his word like a fire in the bones, and a fire in the heart, and a fire in the brain, and the whole Pacific ocean could not put it out, nor all the mountains of profit and expediency keep it down. No small part of our country, thanks be to God, is all conscience on this subject, living conscience, outraged conscience, conscience burdened and agonized, and crying up to God. If you undertake to silence or to suffocate that conscience, you will have such convulsions, such volcanoes as the world never saw; and if you undertake to put down the volcanoes, then you will have earthquakes, and your institutions will roll and totter like a raging sea, as when God takes whole cities by their towers, and beats them against one another. When God and his justice are pledged against a nation in rebellion in this one sin, you can not question who will conquer.

God has thrown down the gauntlet against this wickedness, and at this late period of the world, the nation that dares to take it up will be blasted with the fury of his wrath, not less terribly than his peeled, scattered, and exterminated people of old.

A D D R E S S

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

Iniquity of the Extension of Slavery.

DELIVERED AT THE MUSICAL ACADEMY,  
OCTOBER 30, 1856.





# ADDRESS

## ON THE SUBJECT OF THE INIQUITY OF THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY.

BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF NEW YORK, IN THE MUSICAL ACADEMY, ON THE  
EVENING OF OCTOBER 30, 1856.\*

WE are grateful for the opportunity to address an assembly of our fellow-citizens in regard to the crime

\* This address, and on the same evening an address on the same subject by Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, D.D., were delivered to an immense assemblage of citizens at the suggestion and request of a number of gentlemen, as detailed in the following correspondence.

NEW YORK, October 27, 1856.

REV. GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D.D., REV. JOSEPH P. THOMPSON, D.D.

SIRS: The undersigned, being desirous that the moral and religious aspects of the question of the extension of slavery in the United States may be presented, and the criminality of such extension fully argued before the public, respectfully request you to address an audience on those topics, at the Academy of Music in this city, and would suggest the evening of Thursday, 30th instant, at 7½ o'clock, as a suitable time.

We are respectfully, etc.,

J. W. EDMONDS,	WM. CURTIS NOYES,
M. H. GRINNELL,	JOSEPH HOXIE,
FRANK TUTHILL,	R. H. MCCURDY,
HENRY J. RAYMOND,	S. DRAPER,
H. D. ALDRICH,	WM. M. EVARTS,
B. F. BUTLER,	THOMAS DENNY,
FRED. W. KING,	HIRAM BARNEY,
DEXTER FAIRBANK,	JAMES HUMPHREY,
B. F. MANNIERE,	EDWIN WEST, M.D.,
W. N. BLAKEMAN, M.D.,	JAMES W. HALSTEAD,
LEWIS HALLOCK, M.D.	ISRAEL MINOR,
HORACE GREELEY,	RICHARD F. HALSTEAD, M.D.,
CHARLES A. DANA,	H. A. RICHARDSON,
W. C. BRYANT,	WM. G. WEST,
W. H. SMITH,	J. F. WHIPPLE.
GEORGE GIFFORD,	

of extending slavery, and especially on grounds of religious principle. We rejoice, because to that foundation the whole permanent opposition against slavery must come at last, and the sooner the better. It is better, at whatever expense, to dig deep now, and lay our foundation on a rock, than with careless, costless labor for the present, to build upon the sand, and by-and-by, when the waves rise, and the storm

NEW YORK, October 28, 1856.

TO MESSRS. J. W. EDMONDS, M. H. GRINNELL, AND OTHERS:

SIRS: The perils that threaten every social, moral, and religious interest of our country from the extension of slavery, demand of the Christian patriot, whatever of influence he can exert, in private or in public, to stay the progress of this gigantic evil.

We shall be thankful if any words of ours shall contribute to deepen in the minds of our fellow citizens their abhorrence of this great iniquity, and their determination to suppress it.

We therefore accede to your somewhat unusual request, and will respond to your call upon Thursday evening next.

With sentiments of esteem, we remain, gentlemen, yours,

GEO. B. CHEEVER,  
JOS. P. THOMPSON.

At the hour appointed for the meeting, William Cullen Bryant, Esq., was called to the chair, and introduced the speakers with the following appropriate remarks, which were responded to by the audience with great earnestness and applause.

MY FRIENDS: I have been called to this place for the purpose of presenting to you two of our fellow-citizens of the clerical profession, who have consented this evening to address you on topics of the highest public importance. They are men who do not hold themselves *absolved* by their profession from any of the obligations which belong to the members of our great political system. [Applause.] They do not hold that they have fulfilled their duty to God until they have performed their duty to their country. [Applause.] I honor the noble zeal which brings them

rages, see our structure dashed upon the billows, and if we ourselves are spared, spared only for the confusion of digging over again, at a thousand-fold cost, our former work, to get below the sands, and in contact with primeval granite. Let us go down to the granite now, and we shall have nothing to do afterward, but just build on securely toward heaven.

In the conflict against slavery, conscience and the

forth to give the benefit of their eloquence to the cause of justice and humanity, and I am sure, fellow-citizens, you honor them for it, too, or you would not be here this evening. My friends, the cause which brings us hither to-night is the cause of the many—the cause of the people. The battle we fight is the battle for the rights of the many against the interests of the few—a battle for the people against an oligarchy. In the records of the ancient Hebrew race, we read that when the Israelites had passed the Red Sea, they were attacked by the Amalekites, and when Moses, the great civil chief and leader of that race, beheld from the summit of the mount the conflict, he lifted up in his hands the rod before which the waters of the Red Sea had parted. As long as his hands were raised, the people of Israel, we are told, prevailed against the Amalekites, but when his hands were lowered, the Amalekites drove before them the children of Israel. As the hands of the Hebrew chief grew weary, Aaron, the High Priest of the living God, came from his sacred function to support him on the one side, and Hur supported his hands on the other side until the going down of the sun; and the Amalekites, we are told, were smitten with the edge of the sword, discomfited and scattered, and their race was blotted out from under heaven. My friends, let us accept this omen. So may it be in the cause in which we are engaged, and so may the enemies of justice and humanity be discomfited, confounded, and overcome. [Applause.] So may these servants of the altar, who come forward to-night to support our hands, strengthen our hearts by their words until the going down of the sun, and the victory be complete. I take great pleasure in presenting to you the Rev. Dr. Cheever of this city who will now address you.

word of God are with us; yet we may not delude ourselves with the hope of an easy victory, since the battle is but begun; though with us it is half the victory to have a battle in earnest, and a battle on *principle*. The enemies of freedom have always been afraid of that, afraid to look principle in the face, and have trembled whenever, casting their eye over the hosts marshaling on one side and the other, they have seen anywhere a brave flag floating to the breeze, with ETERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS inscribed upon it, and the joyful rallying cry, In this we conquer! We have come at last to an issue upon principle, *this*

In the course of the address by Rev. Dr. Thompson he paid a very eloquent and beautiful tribute to the genius and character of Mr. Bryant, which we quote as follows from the report of the meeting. He had been speaking of the extension of slavery and its dreadful consequences. "Where then," said he, "are your missions, and schools, and churches? With slavery in Kansas, in Oregon, and with Utah and Nicaragua to boot, we have next an actual majority of *slaveholders* in the government at Washington—and then who can speak for *you* there, though he bristle all over with bowie-knives and revolvers; then your port becomes a mart of slavers; and the 'right of transit' for slave property will be asserted here, against your own State sovereignty, by an *armed police* of the Federal Government. Are you ready for that?"

"Their lives a poet who yet leads the choir of American literature; a poet who has opened the fount of Helicon and brought forth its sweetest music, amid the din of commerce in this modern Babel; a poet who [turning to Mr. Bryant] does not deem that his sweet and lofty communings with the Muses have '*absolved him* from any duty to his country.' [Immense enthusiasm, and three cheers for Mr. Bryant.]

"Years ago that poet traversed the unpeopled prairie, broken as yet only by the tramp of the buffalo and the swift foot of the hunter. Musing awhile upon the interminable wilderness, his ear caught

issue, slavery or freedom, the very issue which it has been the effort of the enemies of freedom to fight off; for any thing under heaven would be more acceptable to them than that; tariffs, naturalization laws, import or export taxes, foreign diplomacy, national quarrels, even a war with England, any thing, every thing, they would rather battle about, and occupy the mind of the whole nation, than freedom and slavery, and the difference and choice between them. But now it has come not only to the *difference*, but the *choice*. After fending off and parrying, this way and the other, to keep out this issue, to keep down even the murmuring of the adventurous bee; and his soul kindling with prophetic hope, he sang,

“ I listen long  
 To his domestic hum; and think I hear  
 The sound of that advancing multitude  
 Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the ground  
 Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice  
 Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn  
 Of Sabbath worshipers. The low of herds  
 Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain  
 Over the dark-brown furrows.”

“That picture, which so touches the heart of the Christian patriot, is a picture of *freedom*; the home of free men, the homes of Christian families; the dignity of labor: the freedom of knowledge; the inviolable sanctity of worship; the peace and smile of God. Shall we *blot out* that picture? Over all these prairies shall we see the blight of slavery? Shall we hear the clank of chains, the curse of the oppressor, the lash of the overseer, the sighing of the needy, as they toil without hope, and sink into forgotten graves? Will you who have given your thousands to evangelize the West see all your gifts and labors swallowed up in the black abyss of slavery? [Cries of No; no; God forbid.] *No*, sir, no; that vision of yours was not the mere dream of the prophet; it was a *prophecy* inspired of God; and my children shall yet read your prophecy fulfilled upon those teeming prairies.”

agitation of it, at length we are brought plump and full upon it, so that neither man, woman, nor child can mistake it. This, then, is the issue, an issue of eternal principle, and this is one point on which we desire to address you, namely, that righteousness is higher than policy, and must be the foundation of our policy, if we are ever to have rest.

Righteousness must be the foundation of law, or law itself is but wickedness bolted, principled, consolidated, and worse than chaos. An arch of wicked principles, keyed with the key-stone of law, is something substantial, something reliable; it has a dreadful impregnability, durability, and power. It is order in wickedness, and wickedness in order. Every one of the materials of this wickedness, scattered in the wildest anarchy, and riding through the air in huge uproar, would be mindless and powerless for evil in the comparison. Anarchy is a thousand times preferable to wicked law. Anarchy is the chaos described by Milton, which, until it was bridged, only the devil dared attempt, or could cross; but when the materials were shoaled and surged into a solid consistency, and law and order reigned in solid arches, then there was a way, smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to hell.

The nations do not live by law, but righteousness. Not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live. Not law but righteousness, must be the rule; and if men pervert that, if rulers turn traitors to it, and undertake

to lead the people down to ruin by unrighteous law, or by perversion of righteous law into unrighteousness, then the people must revert to the original elements and covenant of power, and take the thing into their own hands, as they did when they struck off the head of Charles the First, and as they did in California, when the fundamental law of the republic had been violated by those in power.

Now there has been a deliberate and monstrous treason of this kind transacted in our government, not by a clique, not in a corner, not on a side issue, but in an endeavor *to subvert the fundamental laws of the commonwealth*; a treason, the greatest that can possibly be committed, because committed against the whole people, in a way in which the insanity of Nero's mad malignity is realized, in getting the neck of the people at one knot in the noose, and under foot; a treason that cuts the jugular vein, and lets out the life blood, and, if successful, would leave nothing but a trampled carcass, like the worn-out corpses of European despotisms. It is the treason *under* the Constitution, of applying the power conferred *by* the Constitution, to enforce laws contrary *to* the Constitution; to sustain and enforce a legislative usurpation, a legislature whose members were constituted by violence and fraud, in transgression of the fundamental law that underlies all our liberties, the law of republican representation by a free and pure election. It is a treason that only some one

co-ordinate branch of our own government could commit, for no private individual could accomplish it, nor could the government itself, or a party in the government, except by complicity and instrumentality of the executive as its tool. Our national executive is chargeable with this dreadful treason, applying the power of the United States army to sustain the strength and enforce the dictates of a Legislature demonstrated to have been fraudulently and violently imposed upon the people, more fraudulently and villainously than if by foreign conquest; a Legislature created by villainy, fraud, and armed assault at the ballot-box.

It was the duty of the executive, as the appointed guardian of the fundamental laws of the commonwealth, and provisions of the Constitution, to have thrown himself, with the whole power of the State, *against* that usurpation; to have resisted and crushed it at once, and brought the perpetrators of so huge a treason to punishment. The seeming advocacy and protection of such a crime, such a perversion and destruction of the fundamental provisions on which the whole frame of our liberties is grounded; even the *seeming* advocacy, for a moment, is a thing to be dreaded and deprecated, because of so fearful an example, because this is the last stage of iniquity, ordinarily, by which a nation's liberties perish, falling into the hands of the usurper; and a fearful thing it is for a nation, yet young in years, and fresh in prin-



inciple and power, to look such a crime in the face, to endure the beginning of it, the shadow of it, or to be possibly quiet in the contemplation of it.

But instead of resisting these traitors, our national executive has taken their part. He shields them with the whole weight of his patronage, prerogative, and authority. He adopts and sanctions the usurpation, and adds to its bitterness as territorial, the crushing force of the nation, binding it down upon the people. Instead of *guarding* the people *by* the Constitution, he has aided in trampling the people *under* the Constitution. Instead of redressing their wrongs, he has even taken from them the means of defending themselves, and denounces, not the oppression as treason, but the defense against it. The Constitution gives him the power of the army at his disposal in certain cases, and he has taken that power to enforce submission to a usurpation, not while it was a question, or might have been, whether it were a usurpation or not, but after every step of it had been solemnly investigated by the House of Representatives, and the whole transaction pronounced by them to be a stupendous violence and fraud.

It adds a severity and atrocity to this treason, unparalleled, that the known and avowed purpose of it was the establishment of slavery in a Territory free from slave-law, and under the government of the United States, which government is constitutionally appointed and established for the establishment and

protection of freedom, and the securing of a free republican government as guaranteed by the Constitution, which gives the government of the United States no authority to establish slavery, and does not permit the army of the United States to be employed for that purpose. Will there be no impeachment for such treason, no punishment of it? THE PEOPLE would have a right, in dealing with their executive *for* such treason, to lay aside the common forms of law, as was done in the trial of Charles I.; and *such* treason is never outlawed; and therefore whenever they are ready to do it, though it should be years hence, they have the right; they may justly call the great delinquent to account, and punish such extraordinary crime in a suitable manner, without the express sanction of the Constitution or of statute-law.

But a people that will endure this, submissively, tamely, and not only allow the conspirators and the executive in so mighty a fraud and villainy to go at large unimpeached, but will vote to sustain it, by voting for a POLITICAL PLATFORM, that not only recognizes its object, but builds it in as the central plank, and by refusing to vote for A MAN pledged to put a stop to this monstrous oppression, pledged against the extension of slavery; such a people certainly show that they deserve to be enslaved, that they are not worthy to keep the freedom God has bestowed upon them, that they are not *capable* of keeping it. We sneer at the populace of France and

Italy, as being not prepared for freedom; but a people who will submit to such usurpation and despotism as this, *for the sake of enslaving others*, are themselves fit only to be slaves. Neither France nor Italy have ever yet endured a usurpation, or voted for it, whose object was to make slaves of others, or to secure to three hundred thousand out of twenty millions the monopoly of governing the whole, by slave-extension and slave-law. The shame of such a vote, if such be the choice of our people (which may God in his mercy forbid), will be our shame, original and alone; sole and sovereign in it, over all the nations of the earth.

It is these two enormous features in this iniquity of the extension of slavery, as now proposed and contemplated, and in the measures by which its enforcement has been provided for, and by which it is to be carried out and sustained, these two, namely, (first) the enactment and enforcement of UNRIGHTEOUS LAW, taking into fellowship "the throne of iniquity that frameth mischief by a law," a thing glaringly forbidden by the Almighty; and (second) the sanction and extension of the crime of slavery as a national righteousness, or, in defiance of all considerations about the righteousness at all, as a *national expediency*, whereas it is demonstrated and forbidden in the word of God as a national iniquity and destruction; it is these two things, standing out in this proposed policy, as manifest as the Andes on our conti-

ment, as unmistakable as Etna in volcanic blast, that put the conscience of every Christian man, every upright man, every man that fears God, and therefore fears nothing but sin against him, in angry and intense conflict against this policy. And as the Christian conscience, the conscience of the whole community enlightened by the word of God, naturally seeks, and justly ought to find, an expression, an explosion, in the utterance of a faithful, fearless, and not a time-serving ministry, and as the word of God ought to have its batteries unmasked, and its shotted guns thundering against this wickedness, because, not only by the general law of righteousness it is condemned, but God's word signs and seals it by name with his curse, and orders his ministers to speak out against it; therefore, unless the pulpit and the ministry also turn traitors to the Almighty as well as to mankind, they *must* speak, and at all hazards they *will* speak, and no power on earth or in hell can prevent it, because God will have it. He never gave his word on this subject in vain, or to be sealed up in a Jesuitical silence, letting men go down to hell in politic, orthodox reserve and prudence, but though its proclamation were as revolutionary as one of the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, he would have it poured out. For when a nation undertakes to stop the mouth of God's word, and to say to the seers, See not, and to the Holy One of Israel, Cease from before us, this is such defiance of God, that

there can be no compromise with it, no endurance of it.

Furthermore, a rightly constituted ministry, in connection with God's word and spirit, and with the church and people, are as the discharging-rod at the focus of a galvanic battery, or a compound blow-pipe: they *must* let off the fire, the intensity, the burning shock; and it is not theirs alone, but the gathered, accumulating, and concentrated fire of conscience and conviction in the whole community, that thus finds vent; and if, for fear of consequences, or through fear of man, they will *not* give it vent, or for a season hesitate, then, if they be the true prophets, it will be in them as a fire in their own bones, and they will be more weary with forbearing, than afraid of speaking; but if they are false prophets, the fire that they refuse to utter for God, will, at length, however smoothly it may go with them for a season, consume them in behalf of God's justice.

There is no apology for silence. The iniquity of slavery is palpably, undeniably demonstrated in God's word, both by statutes and by precedents in its execution. Now these two things, every lawyer knows, coming together, and having the sanctity of age and repeated investigation and reiteration, constitute the strongest of all demonstrations. If a lawyer can refer back to cases in such and such reigns, where a statute, even if now disputed, has been illustrated by a great decision, on which the eye of the whole

people, and perhaps the gaze of other nations, was fixed, it is a great thing. It would take an almost insupposable amount of depravity and power to defy and reverse such a decision, supposing it to be just. There are some things as glaring as the sun, and no more to be denied than the shining of the sun at noon-day. And such are the decisions of God's law, and the precedents of his judgments in regard to slavery. Their light has been shining for ages, and it is a light diffused through all history, and enshrined and burning in separate urns, in so awful a manner, that a man must be an idiot or a madman who undertakes to deny it. We have all the statutes in regard to domestic service, and all the definitions of oppression, and all the statutes against it; and then we have them illustrated in precedents, age after age, and at length in one grand and mighty indictment, and trial, and sentence, with the penalty announced and executed, in a tragedy of crime and wrath, so sublime and awful, that until the crucifixion, there was nothing on earth to compare with it.

For our determination of this question, Divine Providence has brought us to a point in the world's history, where all conceivable lines of argument and demonstration converge, from experience, from the fate of empires, from every array and variety of statistics, civil, political, economical, social, moral, religious; from the word and the providence of God; from our own experimental knowledge, forcing us on,

generation after generation, year after year, to more irresistible conviction. There is no subject in the world on which there is clearer light, or more impregnable argument, or a mightier body of it; and in six distinct branches of the investigation, I have already condensed the particulars, in a manner which on the present occasion it is impossible to survey. The nature of the law of love, and of the divine ordinance of marriage would be enough to consider; for we have, in the crime of slavery, the violation at once of the first comprehensive moral law of Jehovah, binding us to one another and to himself, and of the particular central, guiding, and beautifying law of human society; both these forms of divine statute for our good, the act, precept, and habit of slavery, do utterly break up and destroy.

Then there is the nature of the parental relation, the sacredness of which is so ruthlessly violated, so annihilated, in making every new-born child the property of the master and owner of the parents, thus exasperating the boundless avarice of the slaveholder and trader, and exciting the eagerness, and increasing the demand of accumulating slave-power, by opening a perpetual channel of this wickedness in the breeding of slaves for traffic and gain, whose abominations are too gross and horrible even to be hinted at. The lamented Professor B. B. Edwards, of Andover, once said, in a public sermon, that it would be like shaving off five feet of earth from a

vast and festering grave-yard, if we should attempt to unvail those unspeakable moral enormities and horrors. To think of the possibility of a crime, and a system of crime, so horribly ingenious, and so ingeniously horrible, as to take these two divinely constituted forms of statute, personal authority, and domestic institutions, established for the purity and happiness of human society, and for its propagation and perpetuity in the same happiness, and to prostitute them into comprehensive commercial agencies of cruelty and depravity, obedient chartered commissioners of fraud and lust for the increase of property in human flesh, the very affections and passions of the human heart even in the enslaved being tortured into the diabolical service of inhumanity and avarice against themselves!

The Scripture statutes in regard to service, and for the protection of personal freedom, are among the most remarkable things in the Old Testament; the *judgments* of God for their violation are among the most remarkable things of all Time, and their voice is of Justice to Eternity. The characteristics of Hebrew law in behalf of servants, the jealous care with which the possibility of slavery is excluded, the combination of freedom, benevolence, generosity, and guardian-kindness, are sufficient, in a world of such raging depravity and despotism as shut in the Hebrew people when these statutes were made, to prove them of divine inspiration. And perhaps the most



impious perversion and libel in all ages ever uttered against God's truth is that of sanctioning or licensing the iniquity of human slavery. There never was such a thing as slavery among the Hebrews, nor ever any such thing as slave-legislation; they had no word in the language to signify a slave, nor did God ever permit any such word to be brought in; the heaven-taught dialect refused to entertain it. The word always and from the outset employed for servant is from the very word used to describe the occupation of our father Adam in tilling the ground; and labor was never disgraceful, but always honorable, among the Hebrews.

When they were about to be settled as a nation in Palestine, surrounded by heathen nations, that had among them the abominations of slavery, as of every other wickedness, in full blast, then, in preparation for such a settlement, and to guard against the temptation and the possibility of the introduction of slavery from abroad, it became necessary to prepare that body of jurisprudence, by which, in every respect, their policy was to be determined in regard to this fundamental matter in human society. And when it was perfected, it was not, and is not now, as many seem to imagine, legislation for the regulation or neutralization of slavery, as if any form of slavery had existed, or was permitted in their social system, but legislation *absolutely and entirely against it*, legislation in abhorrence of it, legislation condemning

and forbidding it under penalty of death. From the first grand statute, HE THAT STEALETH A MAN, AND SELLETH HIM, OR IF HE BE FOUND IN HIS HAND, SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH, down to the minutest specifications of oppression, and the forms of imprecation against it, such as, "Cursed be he that useth his neighbor's service, and giveth him not for his hire," "Cursed be he that defraudeth the hireling in his wages," these laws are a blaze of light against this mighty sin.

And the fugitive-servant law in these statutes is to be marked as in itself a shaft of lightning in reprobation of the same iniquity, and in protection of the poor oppressed servant against it; and it stands in such glaring contrast and condemnation against our own fugitive-slave law, that if a committee of politicians had been set to contrive a statute in the most direct and shameless opposition to that in which God's judgment is thus recorded, they could hardly have adopted any more efficient terms. God's statute is this: "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."

Nothing could be more absolute than the denial, by such a statute, of the possibility of property in man. And in illustration of this statute, as of all the rest, there breaks out such incidental light in the history,

that the study and comparison are interesting, convincing, and satisfactory to the last degree. In the statutes you find man-selling forbidden by the law ; consequently, in the history you never find a trace of any such thing as the selling of servants ; but the cases of man-selling always marked as crime. You find the restoration of servants forbidden in the statutes ; consequently, in the history you find servants running away, but neither marshal to arrest them, nor judges to judge them, nor bailiffs to distress them. For a runaway ox, ass, or all manner of lost, strayed, or stolen thing whatsoever, which a man challengeth to be his, there was provided a legal recovery before the judges ; for a fugitive *servant*, there was no such provision made, no process, no writ, no possibility of recovery, because a servant could not be *property*, could not be claimed as any manner of thing belonging to an owner.

The encounter between David and Nabal throws a flood of light on this matter. “ Who in the world is David ? ” said this surly, irritated prince of sheep-shearers, when David begged some sustenance for his followers : “ there be many servants, nowadays, that break away every man from his master.” The manner of the complaint proves the anger of Nabal to think that such a thing could be, and the servants get off with impunity. But no hint is given of any man undertaking, with marshals or otherwise, to recapture them, nor of any such thing as a *posse comitatus*

at the disposal of the master for this purpose, much less any advertisement of keen-scented blood-hounds trained to hunt them. Had there been such a thing as a fugitive-slave law *against* the servant, instead of one for his protection, Nabal's language would rather have been that of threatening than complaint. "You rogues, if you do not take yourselves off, I will have you arrested as fugitive slaves, such as you doubtless are, you vagrant rascals. I will have you lodged in the county jail, and, if your owner does not appear, you shall be sold to pay the jail fees." But Nabal's language is that of a son of Belial, who is furious because there is no help for such insubordination against tyranny.

If we had heard him excusing himself for not supplying the wants of David's company, by telling him that he had lost so much of his valuable slave-property that he no longer could afford to be generous; if we had heard him saying, My dear friend, you know what a hard winter we have had, and the Jordan being frozen hard over, a thing that has never before happened in the memory of man, our rascally property ran off by droves, and our plantations, if God should give another such frost-bridge for the slaves to get beyond the river another season, would not have servants enough left to gather the olives. 'Tis as bad as an underground railroad. I say, if we had heard such a dialogue as that, it would have been much more in keeping with the state of a country

where the laws recognized the right of property in man. If Nabal had lived on the banks of the Ohio south side, we should certainly have had him complaining to David of the ease with which his slaves could run away from him, by just crossing the river.

Now, I say, these statutes, so righteous in themselves, and expressed with such unmistakable explicitness and boldness, and illustrated so curiously and clearly in the course of the history, possess the still grander illustration of having great criminal trials decided according to them. They have the seal of God's own after-interpretation, in his tremendous judgments against the whole land for their violation. Nothing could be more complete and perfect than the chain of proof.

Then, in the New Testament, you are to remember that the whole nation, and all persons, both Gentiles and Jews, to whom the word of God came, stood in the full blaze of all this light in the Old Testament on this very subject, and therefore did not need to be taught anew the iniquity of slavery. Christian masters, when commanded to give unto their servants that which is just and equal, had no authority whatever in regard to what *was* just and equal, but this same Old Testament, by which they found and knew that property in man was an impossible thing, except as villainy and crime, and that to take the children of their servants, and claim them as their property, for whom they had never paid one farthing to any crea-

ture, was to commit the crime of man-stealing, punishable, according to God's law, by death. They found that everywhere, no matter in what latitude, under what sky, the holders, claimants, and traders of men as property were men-stealers, and that the essence of the crime runs on undiminished, from generation to generation, and not only undiminished, but increasing as it runs, so that an accepted inheritance of slaves, with the claim of their being property asserted, is the inheritance and proprietorship of guilt, and a curse from the Almighty. What need of one additional word in the New Testament, when the Old was so full of unmistakable demonstration ?

But then in the New, also, a flood of light breaks forth incidentally in the Epistle to Philemon. Paul had received Onesimus, a runaway slave, and instructed him in the gospel, and he was converted ; a proof, by the way, that not the thrusting of men into slavery, but their running away from it, is the missionary institute, and the means of religion ; as good a proof, at least, as any to be brought of God's appointment of slavery as the converting ordinance for Africa. Paul tells Philemon plainly, that he would have retained Onesimus, that is, freely, conscientiously, without the least scruple. *Whom I would have retained* ; could have done it, and would have done it, because these divine and generous old Hebrew statutes were right before his eye, and this glorious old fugitive-slave law, commanding him NOT

to return unto his master the servant that had fled from his master unto him ; and because, according to those statutes, Philemon had no more right of property in Onesimus than he had in the sun, moon, and stars, but the poor trembling fugitive belonged only to God and to himself, and Paul was bound to take care of him. But, suppose Onesimus to have been Philemon's *property* ; what then ? Why, Paul the apostle might as well have retained a bundle of bank bills, or a cask of Spanish dollars, belonging to Philemon. And Paul must have said, Whom I would *not* have retained on any consideration whatever, and never thought of doing such a thing, but have advertised you, brother Philemon, that you might prove your property, pay its charges, and take it away.

But Paul says, *Whom I would have retained.* What ? Paul the apostle, who was of such proud, incorruptible, and almost superfluous honesty, that he would not even receive a farthing for his preaching, but at this very time had his hands roughened and chapped with the toil of tent-making for his daily bread, and for payment of the rental of his own hired house, which he gave to the congregation for a meeting-house ; Paul, who had written, Let him that stole steal no more ; Paul, this apostle Paul, put his hand, as it were, into Philemon's pocket, and steal from him at least a thousand dollars ; detain from him the most sacred thing in the shape of property on his plantation ? Even the *intention* was a burglary.

But Paul really says, *Whom I would have retained*, and would not have sent back at any rate, except only as a freeman, *not now a servant*, no longer a slave, nor to be treated as one, but a brother beloved, who he was sure would be at once dispatched back to Paul himself, by Philemon, that he might minister to him in the gospel. And Philemon being a Christian, Paul would not even seem to suspect him of such an atrocity as that of claiming property in an immortal being, and a child of God. If he had had the least suspicion of Philemon having such a kind of Christian conscience, as would permit him to hold property in man, you would never have seen Paul intrusting one of his own converted children to such a man's tender mercies.

Now these things being so, and God's judgment against slavery standing out so prominently in both dispensations, Old and New, shall any man dare to conceal or withhold these utterances? Ought not the pulpits of our country to break forth in denunciation of this crime, if the people are seen plunging into it? Would you not expect a universal, spontaneous explosion, a line of batteries kindled into incessant, living fire against such wickedness? For what are God's watchmen set, if not to warn the people in such a crisis? Will politicians undertake to bring before the people the view of this wickedness in the word of God? A political speech made out of such materials, proof-texts from the prophets and the



books of Kings, would expose the speaker to a strait-jacket and a lunatic asylum. Will those do it, who say that religion indeed is a good thing in the abstract, but in politics it only makes men mad? Who *will* do it, if the ministers of God's word will not? And does not God distinctly say that the people should seek, and have a right to expect, the divine law at their mouths? Oh, Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain, and her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar.

Do the people desire such daubing? Degraded indeed must their tastes be, as well their moral sensibilities, if they do. We have a vulgar expression that answers precisely to the rude language of the prophet, and describes, in the modern pulpit, what made the prophet disgusted and angry with the old; it is *soft soap*, and the application of it is exactly this daubing with untempered mortar, instead of calling things by their right names. Suppose a man, anxious to avoid political offense, yet unwilling to finish the long prayer without some reference, in some way, to the iniquity of the times, should carefully arrange his language thus: We beseech thee to comfort and bless the class of laborers under *depression*, deeming even

the word *oppression* too bold, and quite inexpedient, lest it rouse up a political exasperation in the minds of the hearers; would not such carefulness be deemed contemptible, or can it consist with power, or can the thunders of God's word possibly make any escape, any development under it? No, my friends; and if you ever expect a clear sky, a firmament in which God's stars may shine brightly and peacefully down to bless you, if you ever hope for stars without stripes, then must the thunder have room to roar and reverberate, and the lightning must have free play; and if it seem to be a storm, it is only to give you a clear atmosphere, purified of its noxious elements, and an unclouded heaven above you to pour down light.

Here, then, we stand, and this is our vindication against the miserable cant, that like damaged fireworks, unfit for any noble purpose, sputters and snivels in some political and semi-religious newspapers against the turning of the light of God's word upon the nation's sins. But no vindication whatever is needed if men will but turn to the word of God itself, and for a moment confront the glaring blaze of argument and wrath against the wickedness of slavery. No man can put himself under that light, and any longer dream of innocently and safely evading the responsibility of utterance. The crime of the establishment of slavery, for which the Jewish kingdom was annihilated, having been so plainly marked with God's reprobation, and sealed with his retribu-

tive vengeance, standing out so plainly forbidden in his law, and comprehending not only the iniquity of personal oppression, but the huge, entangling, daring guilt, wholesale, national, of UNRIGHTEOUS LAW, fabricated for the mischief, and enforced by government; and the immediate action of God in regard to it being concentrated and bodied forth in a nation's ruin, that nation standing now in the sight of the universe, not only on the record in God's word, but trenched and scarred with God's thunder, a wandering omnipresent form, blasted and blackened, before the conscience of the world, as a terror and a warning, there is no excuse either for ignorance or inattention.

The demonstration has a voice like the sound of many waters. Predictions and fulfillments call to each other across a thousand years. "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee; the earth that is under thee shall be iron, and the Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; so that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone and salt, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his

wrath ; even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land ? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the Lord God of their fathers, the covenant which he made with them, when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.”

Can any thing be plainer than this ? What then shall we say as to the *application* of the *precedent*, and the light that comes down from it, upon our *own* sin, danger, and duty, when the iniquity specified, as the form of covenant-breaking not to be forgiven, is revealed as *precisely the same with that which it is now proposed to enthrone as the presiding genius of the United States government* ? A thousand years after these awful predictions, at the very point of their fulfillment, we find the Almighty himself referring back to *that same covenant*, and pouring out his unrestrained wrath for the last culminating violation of it, in the attempted establishment of SLAVERY ! “I made a covenant with your fathers, in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen ; but ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor ; behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine, and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth !” Is there no light here, nothing that stands in our way, nothing that constitutes an absolute authority, not to be questioned for a moment, and

a determination for us as plain as if God Almighty spake this very day from heaven?

Nay, these prodigies of corporate crime and its punishment, being so palpable, so that, wherever a roused conscience gazes, if in waking thoughts of national guilt and retribution, or in thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, the spirit of a dead nation passes before the face, and fear and trembling enter into the soul because of it, and in stillness, in silence, the voice of God is heard; these things being so, and the nations so solemnly warned, that an archangel floating across the firmament with a drawn sword in his hand could not be a more awful sign; the people, the country, the government, that shall now, under such demonstrations, take up this crime, repeat this iniquity, enshrine it as a sacred thing, set up this Dagon, this Baal, this Moloch, and weave its worship into law and policy, stand in a more defiant and impious attitude toward the Almighty, than any nation that ever existed on the face of the earth. And if this iniquity is sustained by the voice of the people, the nation is seen uprising in the sight of the nations, and proclaiming, O thou Sovereign of the Universe, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways! Well do we know that this iniquity is forbidden in thy word, and visited with thy vengeance, but as for us, we will practice it!

If God and his word be thus defied, it were absurd

to suppose that either the letter or the spirit of the freest Constitution upon earth will be in the least regarded. While this evil was growing, and in its days of struggle, the Constitution was brought in as a powerful locomotive to drag the heavy lumbering train up the inclined plain it had to encounter; but the moment it reached the summit, and began its descent on the other side, then the whole order of things was reversed, and now the train drives the locomotive, slavery drives the Constitution headlong, and if it stops, will go over it. The brakes are taken off, all regard to consequences cast aside, and we are rushing downward with a speed that begins to be measured by plunges, and rival despotic gambols, from one administration to another. Will nothing rouse us up? Will nothing rally us, to throw ourselves upon God's righteousness, and make our last impregnable stand there? Will not our land-marks removed, and compacts for freedom disregarded; will not the encroachments on our liberties; will not the most sacred doctrines of our Revolution made a laughing-stock, and the maxims of the rights of man a scoff; will not the outrages upon free speech in the Senate; will not the murders, usurpations, and infamous laws in Kansas; will not the bold iniquity of the proclamation that slavery is a divine and divinely-sanctioned institution; will not the proposition to re-open and restore the slave-trade, pronounced of all nations PIRACY; will not the imprisonment of men on false

accusations, for the exercise of the common feelings of humanity; will not the expulsion of free citizens from their homes and business, without law or trial, for the crime of a whisper against slavery; will not the trampling upon the sacred writ of liberty in *habeas corpus*, and the perversion of that shield of freedom and justice into a weapon of despotism and oppression?

What can startle us, if these things fail? Shall we sleep while the very floor is burning, and already we are half suffocated with the smoke?

There is a time, beyond which, if we pay no regard to principle, if we will not be moved by the most sacred obligations of truth and religion, we shall be roused by the demonstration that all is lost, by the shipwreck of our own interests, by the sword cutting through our own vitals, but roused too late. There must be something of principle, or when there is nothing but interest, God himself will desert us forever. The aggressions and iniquities, by which the fundamental principles and safeguards of our own Constitution, as well as the truths of the word of God, are scouted and beaten down, call for resistance *now*, tenfold more strongly than ever any thing of wrong or wickedness our revolutionary fathers had to endure. And the determination on the part of the slave-power is resolute, never to cease advancing, till, from being the creature of mere local and municipal statutes, expatriated and branded in the free States, slavery shall

be nationalized, shall have the whole catholicity of freedom, protected by national and international law, empowered for transit, and free to reside in Pennsylvania, in Maine, in all New England, as now in Alabama, in South Carolina, in Virginia; and then indeed shall the roll-call of slaves be sounded at the foot of Bunker Hill Monument, and the whole army force of the United States will be on hand, if necessary, to preserve the muster from disturbance.

But will there be peace? Will the perfecting of this despotism give us quiet? Ah, there is a force, that neither we, nor the roll-callers of their property in human flesh, have calculated, or ever can calculate. There is the word of God, breaking in clearer and clearer light, the clouds of misinterpretation dispersed, the perverse sophistry that has distorted these glorious scriptures abandoned, and the intense blaze of God's attributes against oppression acknowledged. Then, there is the might of conscience, struggling the more violently the more it is insulted and oppressed; a pent-up fire, that will break out, and then, meeting a savage opposition, will kindle the whole country into flames. This land will be the scene of sufferings such as no nation under heaven ever passed through since the Jews perished from their inheritance, if the people make choice of slavery as the presiding genius of their policy. In garments rolled in blood comes on the day of decision, if *that* be the election of the people. With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to



you again. The injustice and cruelty, which, with such thoughtless selfishness you have dealt out to a helpless race, and which you determine to make the ruling policy of new empires, and of millions on millions in generations to come, foredoomed by your determination, will be a treasure of wrath to yourselves and your children. Whatsoever a man or a nation soweth, that shall they also reap. Swiftly is the harvest gathered in these latter years, and rapidly the causes of retribution do their work. Hardly three hundred years have elapsed since Spain was the very first and proudest among the nations; and Spain set the first example of enslaving Africans in this hemisphere, and in her colonial possessions never has abandoned this guilt; and to what a gulf of degradation has she descended, and through what misery groped! But if retribution be measured by the light sinned against, then the cup of wrath which we must drink, if, instead of repenting of our sin and shame, we glory in it, will be more dreadful than God ever put to the lips of any other people.

We had fondly hoped that God had chosen us, as a people, to perform a great work of freedom and benevolence on the earth, and by the spread of the gospel to break every yoke, and give liberty to the oppressed all over the world. But instead of God's priesthood to a world, to raise up the foundations of many generations, we propose to become the slave-owners, slave-breeders, and slave-traders of mankind,

and this to be our Christianizing mission ! To think of a nation, trained as ours has been, to watch the steps of God's patient, rich, generous discipline ; to look back to the little company in the Mayflower, and see how God kept the most remote possibilities of this sin out of the compact there, out of the first foundations, and set personal liberty as the corner-stone ; to see the gradual growth of little communities by that principle, to see the development and guardianship of personal responsibility in the town-meetings, and the training of representative freedom in the churches, and the passing of these principles and habits into governments, in republican simplicity and liberty ; to see the feelings and opinions, thus nourished and fixed, breaking out in our revolutionary struggle and sustaining it ; to see the sense of the preciousness of freedom, as every man's birth-right, steeled in that fire of suffering ; to think of the voice given to it for all mankind in the immortal Declaration of Independence (now called, by some of the greatest traitors to freedom the world ever saw, a rhetorical flourish and an abstract lie) ; to see the enlargement and flourishing of commerce, industry, wealth, and every kind of power, political, social, civil, religious, on these foundations ; to see the beginning of Christian efforts and measures abroad, in preparation for the accomplishment of the mighty mission of religion and humanity for which God has been training us, and the doors of which he has thrown wide open before us, with the

offer of a mightier power over the world, than from the beginning of time any nation ever wielded; to trace all this, to *see* all this, to have the grandeur and magnificence of the mission and the call demonstrated even by philosophers in the study of the configuration of our globe, and the very shape of our continent, and our commanding position upon it, with all the springs of righteous and irresistible influence under our touch, and the very mountains, mines, and rivers, with all the compass of inventions and discoveries arrayed at our disposal, and breaking forth into hallelujahs beforehand, in earnest of the predicted manifestations of the sons of God, to deliver the whole creation that has been groaning and travailing in pain together until now; to behold all this, and then witness this wonderful people, chosen thus, and marked for such a mission of mercy to mankind, turning upon themselves, as if seized with a fit of national lunacy, and thrusting the sword of human slavery through their own vitals!

Did the heavens or the earth ever witness such madness! What is to prevent (Bishop Butler once asked), what is to prevent a whole nation from becoming mad, as well as individuals, except God keep them? Was there any anomaly or enormity in the French Revolution more astounding than this? To behold such a people, madly renouncing this pomp and prodigality of God's grace, and, in the sight of those nations of the Old World, that are struggling

for the bare life of liberty, and gazing toward us with interest, anxiety of desire, and hope, contradicting and repelling the very first elements of liberty, and in defiance of God, and in scorn of the whole world's prayers, denying the principles on which all our greatness thus far, and the possibility of its continuance, and of the world's freedom and happiness, are founded, and applying the whole force of government, and the will and sovereignty of the people, to the ESTABLISHMENT OF SLAVERY as the *missionary method of Christianity*, and most perfect form of social and civil existence in the world! Oh! pass over the isles of Chittim and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath ever a nation changed gods, which yet are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit! Oh, ye heavens, be astonished at this, and thou earth, be horribly afraid! And, indeed, how is it possible that the nation should not start back in horror and affright from the gulf of such iniquity and ruin?

As often as I think of this subject in this light, there rises before my mind the sublime and glowing picture of our future destiny as a nation, if happily we be found obedient to God, drawn by the venerated and now sainted Secretary of the American Board, Jeremiah Evarts, the last gift of his devout spirit to his loved country. I remember his computation of the future teeming millions of the West, and of the

amazing responsibility of those who now decide the nature of their institutions, and the molding of their character. Would to God that such an appeal could come now, this very moment, to the heart and conscience of every elector. Look earnestly, steadily, at what is depending. The Territories over which you now deliberate for extending slavery, or excluding it from them, will have, in the progress of two or three generations, more than a hundred millions of inhabitants. Think what it is to set slavery there, to fasten this cancer at the heart of a hundred millions, to inoculate their domestic and civil institutions with this plague! If only what it has been at the South, are you ready to fasten even *such* a measure of blasting and of misery, where otherwise there might be such unbounded prosperity and happiness? Little more than two centuries have passed since slavery was planted among us, and to-day enough land has been worn out by it to make ten States as large as Massachusetts. Will you fasten *that* process on these fair and virgin Territories? But what is that to the doctrines that accompany it, and the corruption of morals, and the perversion of truth, and the reign of terror, and the repression of freedom of opinion and of speech, and the despotism of an oligarchy of the worst principles on which ever yet any oligarchy under heaven was grounded, the principles of property in human flesh. An oligarchy of commerce, of landed property, of political power by rank or title,

any thing the world ever saw, is more endurable, is less odious, concentrates less of cruelty, immorality, and injustice. And by what hallucination can any man avoid seeing and knowing that this is the cancer and the plague which it is proposed to fasten on the vitals of our new and growing empire? Have not all these miseries and evils been realized, and are they not all increasing, where slavery has been tried, and is now the ruling policy? And by what process of self-deception, or false reasoning, or imagination, can any man suppose that these same results will not follow and be perpetual, if by law we extend this iniquity of slavery over the vast domain in regard to which we are now called to determine the policy?

Are there any new causes to come in hereafter, to prevent, subdue, or neutralize it? Has not every thing been tried—divine truth, economical demonstration, the remonstrance of the world, the religious conscience, the array of inevitable consequences? Will God interpose? Does He not say that, in a plain case like this, where he has been warning, and commanding, and intreating, and forbidding, for centuries, rising up early, and sending anew his prophets, and making the demonstrations in his word every day more cogent, he will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh? As to the *experience* of evil, misery, and immorality in the system, will *that* work any cure a generation hence? With all that experience, is not the class in power,

the despotic oligarchy, for whose sake, through the entanglement of your property-interests with theirs, and the debasement of your moral principles *by* theirs, you are willing to hazard such experience for a new generation—is not that class, whose selfish continuance in power depends on the continuance of that very immorality and misery, increasing along with it? And are not the prices of slaves, and the temptation to slave-breeding and trading, increasing at the same time, along with the conviction of the necessity of still *extending* this power, in order to *save* it? Where is the element, either of conscience, or opposing fact, or resistance, to come in, with any more hope of success, fifty years hence, than now? What imagined potency have you in reserve, what wand or talisman that you can wave, and think that, among a hundred millions of men under the dominion of this iniquity, you can subdue it, or turn it back, if now, with all your light, and conviction, and means, you are unwilling or unable to stop the awful experiment? What form of exorcism do you mean to rely upon, to put down the devils you will have called up, a thousand then, to a hundred now? There never was such madness. And if any among us as a people go into it *without* reflection, without thoroughly considering what it is we are doing, then, such infamous and cruel carelessness, such selfish gambling with the interests of future and present millions, thrown upon

our responsibility for guardianship, only makes the crime ten thousand times worse.

Then, too, we have had at our command already the greatest forces of resistance and defense for freedom that we ever can have. Our Declaration of Independence, hitherto the hugest colossal maul, under God's word, that the angel of freedom himself could swing against the thrones of tyranny, and beat upon the heads of the ferocious and cunning despots of humanity, is no better than a feather dipped in olive-oil. You have already traitors among yourselves to belie its principles, and scout and scorn its noble truths and sentiments as idle vaporings and abstractions. The very scaling-ladders, by which you had risen to the conquest of a citadel of freedom for the world, the enemies of that freedom, running up by means of them under the guise of friends, and conquering the garrison in their turn, have flung backward on the groaning and terrified multitudes crushed by them. They take your very doctrines of popular sovereignty, and convert them into a network of usurpation and of tyranny, more subtle, more knotted, more implacable, and in league with the power put at their command, constituting a despotism more hopeless, because the vaunted principles of your democracy have been perverted into its support, than all the Nimrods, or Napoleons, or even houses of Hapsburg in Austrian sublimity of oppression, ever invented. Your senators are ready, and still will be,



to enforce laws, which they themselves have declared to be infamous, barbarous, unconstitutional, and fit only to be broken; ready to enforce them, under the pretense that they *are* laws, unrepealed. And your executive will still be ready, sustained by the Senate, and with the United States army put at his control, and the power of selecting and commissioning his own creatures to do his bidding, to enforce obedience to a pretended Territorial Legislature, constituted by open violence and fraud, and demonstrated by the House of Representatives to be a monstrous usurpation, branded as such by them in their official governmental capacity. Your executive will be ready to compel obedience to that usurpation, because elected on that very assurance, and asserting that Legislature to be the existing government, and because the people on whom it is enforced are forcibly prevented from expressing their rejection of it. And under the protection of the executive the tools and agents of this slave-tyranny, the framers of this usurping Legislature and its laws, will still insert and maintain, in the very body and heart of them, provisions of law *rendering their repeal impossible*, except on pain and penalty of treason, making it a crime against the State, either to express opinions against this tyranny, or to hold conventions of the people to deliberate upon it, and by constitutional and peaceful means repudiate and throw it off.

Never, in the history of mankind, was any en-

croachment on men's liberties, or any form of usurpation, under the sanction of a boasted free government, so clinched, and clamped, and guarded. It is a prison, with the doors barred and locked, and the keys inside. It is a combination-lock of tyranny, on the despot's safe, with the Constitution itself shut up in it, *from* the people, not *for* them; and the boldest pick-locks can not draw the bolts, because the whole construction bristles with United States bayonets, defending it, and it is treason even to attempt the rescue. And when you say that popular sovereignty is as good and just for freemen as for slaveholders, and that under it you will yourselves enter this contested land, and settle, with *your principles*, the expression of your principles is treason, even if you get there; but you can not get there; the slave-owners may go there, and carry and work their slaves, but you can not go there and work your principles; their slaves are a property more sacred and inviolable under these accursed laws, than your principles; their *slave-properties* are *the* principles of the whole usurpation, and they mean to make them the principles of the nation, with universal right of transit. But your *principles* are a contraband article, and there is no free highway or river in this vaunted country of the free, on which you will be permitted to sail or to travel, if freedom be your known purpose, and if, in obedience to the article in your own Constitution, you maintain the freeman's

guarantied and inseparable right of personal liberty—the right to bear arms. Without process of law, by the agent of your own executive, your weapons shall be taken from you, and you shall be put under arrest. The United States army itself, in this case, is only not a band of *Border Ruffians*, because it has *got into the heart* of the country, and is become a band of settled, legalized, commissioned ruffians, under the great seal of the usurpers at Washington.

Now do we think these things have begun, and in the face and under the fear of a contested election, and of all the appeals to the people, and all the glaring light of demonstration and opprobrium thrown upon this wickedness, have still been pushed, and are advancing, with desperate resolution, with implacable, unfaltering purpose and energy, at so much hazard, and that they will suddenly stop, if we throw our votes to sustain them, as we inevitably do, if we vote for any party whose platform they are, as we deliberately do, if we vote for the principle of that party, the extension of slavery? Was there ever a usurpation of this kind that turned backward, or revolutionized itself in the moment of complete success, or when the voice of a corrupted, besotted, mad people, accepted it, and sanctified it? In the nature of things, in the nature of despotism, above all, a slave-despotism, there can be no pause, nor faltering, and there will be none. If the people of the United States say, by their popular vote, that they will have

slavery (already thus thrust upon their bleeding Territories) *nationalized*, be sure that they *will* have it, with a vengeance. There will be no more let or hinderance to its power.

And our Constitution, as well as our Declaration of Independence, will have lost its sacred protecting influence. We might have appealed to that in season; but if, under it, we admit that our government has the right to establish and enforce slavery in the Territories, belonging to us, we cut ourselves off forever from the use of that instrument, and from all appeal to it, in behalf of freedom, as any more sacred in its rights than slavery. We can never ground a revolution anywhere, no more here, or in Maine, than in Kansas or Missouri, on the instrument which we admit, by our own votes, if we vote for the extension of slavery, gives the government authority to establish it. We make slavery national, the moment we record this vote. And of this power, and concerning this all-devouring gulf to which we are advancing, it may be said, it has been proved, that it never takes a step backward, *nulla vestigia retrorsum*. Onward you go, if you give way at this juncture, and no power on earth can stop you.

And if the religion and conscience of the country can not make you firm now, to stand where you are, and hold your own, what hope is there, especially if the conscience is becoming every day more and more warped, and the religion more corrupt, as no man

can deny that it must be by the progress of slavery, what hope is there, that you can rely upon it at any future time, when things get worse and worse, and the iniquity is more and more sanctified by law, and under law defended by the perversion of Christianity itself, what hope, to resist, to revolutionize, to make head against the evil? If you wait for experience to convince, to alarm, to resolve you, experience will indeed come, and *will* convince, and *will* alarm, but in the same instant will *consume* you. When it comes to that, that the pressure of this despotism *is felt upon us*, and *because* we feel it on *ourselves*, we are ready to resist it, though we could not resist it *for others* who pleaded for our help, but on the contrary would vote to fasten it on them, then it will be too late. God's vengeance for such selfishness will have come, and we shall receive, and God himself will compel us to drink, the poisoned chalice we have commended to the lips of our groaning fellow-beings. Out of such selfishness men may call upon God, but he will not hear them; for while he called upon *them*, out of mercy and justice to show mercy and renounce oppression, they would not hear *him*, but trusted in oppression, and stayed themselves thereon. Therefore shall this very iniquity be your ruin. And when in the time of your trouble you are compelled to cry, Arise and save us, then will God answer, as in the same case of old, Where are thy gods that thou

hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble!

But we do not intend to be caught with such a despairing outcry. We seek God now while he may be found, and we call upon him while he is near. He has given us an impregnable vantage-ground and battery of resistance in his word, against the extension of slavery, and here we plant ourselves resisting, and here we stand, and here will we stand resisting, and if we seem to suffer a temporary defeat, it shall only be as the recoil of our own ordnance, a step backward, to command a new onset, and a new fire. We had rather go down with liberty, than sit upon the throne with slavery. And fervently we sympathize with the declaration of the noble patriot, Lord Erskine, that we would rather die upon our knees, thanking God that for the protection of the oppressed, and the safety of our country, we had been made the instruments of denying and reprobating this wickedness, than live to the age of Methuselah for letting it pass unexposed and unrebuked.

# A DISCOURSE

ON

THE DIVINELY-APPOINTED FREEDOM OF THE  
PULPIT, THE SENATE, AND THE PRESS,

FOR THE

Preservation of Freedom to Mankind.

DELIVERED IN NEW YORK IN JUNE, 1856,

AND REPEATED IN BROOKLYN, WILLIAMSBURG, FLUSHING, NEWPORT, R. I.,  
PROVIDENCE, R. I., AND SALEM, MASS.





## DISCOURSE.

Deliver me from the oppression of man, so will I keep thy precepts.—PSALM cxix. 134.

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free.—JOHN viii. 32.

THE answer of these two texts, one from the Old and one from the New Testament, is as if from different quarters of the heavens we heard the morning-stars chanting responsively across the firmament. How beautiful, how glorious, how divine! Deliver me from the oppression of man, so will I keep thy precepts. Keep God's truth, and you shall be free, and no oppression can harm you. We praise God for these texts, and for the celestial experience of men, and, to some degree, even of nations, in which they have been illustrated. And here we remark, by the way, before entering on the discussion of that freedom of thought and speech which God has made our birth-right, that in this grand old prayer put by divine inspiration into the heart of the psalmist there is contained an argument of irresistible annihilating power against the sophistry that seeks a sanction of slavery and tyranny in the word of God. God himself teaches us to pray for deliverance from human op-

pression, that we may keep his statutes. And is it to be imagined that God would install the worst of all oppressions under the sun as a divine institution, and at the same time teach us to pray against it, as the grand enemy of our piety? Men that deal thus with the word of God do their utmost to set their fellow-men in the high road to infidelity; by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of, and through covetousness with feigned words they make merchandise of you.

Let us now consider the necessity of the freedom of truth for the permanence of our free national existence. If the knowledge of truth is essential to man's freedom, then the freedom of truth is essential to man's knowledge. If the truth be hidden or suppressed, freedom can not exist; the very nature and essential elements of freedom will remain unknown.

In proportion to the preciousness of truth will be, at times, the danger of its announcement. In all ages men have been imprisoned, tortured, fined, beheaded, burned, martyred, for possessing the truth, and for speaking it to others. A free Bible, the very beginning of all freedom, has been gained only at the cost of incessant strife, and blood, and martyrdom. Men have waded to this prize through seas of suffering, through centuries of persecution. The English Scriptures were translated and published in continual danger and frequent experience of imprisonment and death. John Wickliffe's own pen came near being

dipped in his own heart's blood; and the noble Tyn-  
dale's types, and fair-printed pages, by which he ful-  
filled his promise to bring God's word within reach  
and reading of every plow-boy in his native coun-  
try, cost him his life, and his last prayer at the stake  
went up that God would open the eyes of the king of  
England. So, what is to-day our commonest and yet  
most priceless treasure, is baptized, almost every  
letter of it, not only in the blood of Christ that bought  
it first, but in the suffering and blood of dear chosen  
followers in almost every age, in whom the remaining  
afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the  
church, are filled up.

At this day, in our own country, there is a more  
gigantic, deadly, and iniquitous proscription of the  
truth, and conspiracy against it, and persecution on  
account of it, *in one particular form*, than in any  
other country under heaven. Truth in regard to  
freedom, as opposed to slavery, truth in regard to  
that which is the very object of truth, is not permit-  
ted to be promulgated, and if promulgated, it is at  
the cost of misery and death. Under these circum-  
stances, it is high time to look into our authority for  
the free publication of the truth, and to see how far  
duty to God and man commands us to speak out or to  
be silent.

I affirm, and it can not be contradicted, that the  
permanence of our free national existence depends not  
on the concealment or repression of the truth, but on

its universal freedom. Let us see what fixtures of truth and freedom have been given us of God, and how they form the foundations of our country's worth and greatness, and how the unimpaired, unrestricted freedom of truth is essential to them all. God has given us a Free Bible, a Free Church, a Free Pulpit, Free Suffrage, Free Schools, a Free Judiciary, a Free Legislature, and a Free Press. These gifts of God, these gradually-perfected gifts of his providence and grace, constitute our vast estate of freedom, that magnificent and priceless heritage received from our fathers, and which we are bound to transmit unimpaired to our descendants. And any thing that goes against any of these agencies and elements of liberty, goes against the freedom of mankind.

Now, then, let us mark in this matter, first, the divinely-appointed authority and duty of the church and the ministry; second, of the Legislature; and third, of the press; to sustain, defend, and practice this freedom, as the essential, if not the only security of our very existence as a nation; our existence, at least, on any terms, in any manner, on which existence is worth having. Better, a thousand times, that all North America should be obliterated by a concurrence of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as a dead, revenging sea over buried cities, than that we, after all our light and liberty, should live only by renouncing the truth that gave us being, or should set the example to a terrified and struggling world of a na-

tion claiming and daring to exist only by sustained and sanctified oppression.

I say, then, first of all, if the freedom of the word of God is essential, the freedom of the church and of the ministry is necessary in publishing and proclaiming it. The whole truth must be published, without respect to persons, and no part of it kept back.

For this very purpose, for the freedom of the church in this her work, Christ Jesus has constituted the independence of the churches in the New Testament. Holding forth the word of life, fighting the good fight of faith, contending against spiritual wickedness in high places, earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints; these are some of the descriptive forms under which the mission of the church is presented. If men are to be made free by the truth, it is necessary that the truth be made free to men, and come in living and experimental freedom to their hearts and consciences. The church of Christ, for this purpose, is made up of those who have the word of God living by the Spirit in their hearts, and are set on fire by it, to set on fire others. You can not conquer or shut up a church that thus lives in Christ, and has his word abiding in it. When the Philistines barred the great gates of Gaza upon Samson, they thought they had securely imprisoned him; but he carried away the gates, bars and all, upon his shoulders. There is no limiting the Holy One of Israel when he pleases to pour down his

Spirit, and when his people trust in him, and are faithful to his word. His word must convince men *of* sin, if they are ever to be made free *from* sin. And for this very purpose his church must be a testifying church *against* sin, and the more proud and imperious the sin, the louder the testimony.

To deny this characteristic object, mission, and duty of the church, is to deny its very essence; for that which keeps men in bondage, is error and sin, nothing else. All forms of error and of sin are therefore to be exposed and rebuked, and especially those forms that prevent obedience to God's law, and take from other men their freedom to obey God. Deliver me, prays the Psalmist, from the oppression of man; so will I keep thy statutes. If, therefore, oppression in any form whatever keeps man from spiritual freedom, the light of God's word is to be turned upon it, and the thunderings of God's word are to be directed against it, and the church is to maintain that testimony. The light of God's word is to be turned on all forms of iniquity, in law as well as custom. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? The church and the ministry are God's appointed court to bring both law and fact in the works of men under examination at the bar of his word. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Instruction in the truth is the way of recovery out of the snare of the

devil for those who are taken captive by him at his will. For this purpose, then, both the church and the ministry should be a perpetually testifying activity and power, breaking down Satan's stratagems of lies, and tearing away the vail of his delusions. They are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to rebuke them. No church and no ministry can throw off this responsibility; neither do difficulty and danger in bearing it constitute a release from it. On the contrary, the more alarming and critical the juncture becomes, the more earnest and instant the church and the ministry must be to meet it. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall consume them as it doth a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wood; but my righteousness is forever and ever, and my salvation shall be everlasting.

The law for the publication of the gospel forbids all concealment of it, and all minglings of a selfish expediency with it. The law for the publication of the gospel requires openness, fullness, freedom, impartiality. It is laid down by Paul in two great passages. Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH commending ourselves to every man's conscience, not to every man's sense of convenience,

or custom, or business, or employment, or plans of gain but, to EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE, and to conscience not in the sight of human opinions, or statutes, or governments, or compulsions, or judgments, or moralities, but to every man's conscience IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. And in that other great passage, in which the business of the gospel is illustrated in detail, as working along with the law. "For the law was not made for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, FOR MEN-STEALERS, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other things contrary to sound doctrine, ACCORDING TO THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD, which was committed to my trust." No man can truly preach this gospel, and no church truly hold it, or truly preach Christ crucified, and at the same time shield any form of iniquity from the searching light of the law *and* the gospel, condemning all sin. If they shield or favor any form of iniquity, or conceal it from the light, it is a conspiracy against the souls of men; for the object of the gospel is to bring men out of darkness into light, and out of sin into holiness, and if they continue in sin and darkness they perish.

Hence the terrific woe against those who pervert the gospel, and put darkness for light, and light for dark-



ness ; evil for good, and good for evil. Hence the command, Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart ; thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbor, but shalt in any wise rebuke him. For, indeed, you can not hate a man more infernally, more malignantly, than by concealing his guilt from him ; that is the devil's own hatred ; that is Satan's own game. If you know your enemy to be in the prosecution of courses that will certainly lead him to ruin, the greatest injury you can do him is to conceal from him the sinfulness and danger of those courses. If you let him know, if you dispelled the delusion of his innocence, you would give him some chance of escape ; but by concealing from him the wickedness of his career, and encouraging his passions and his sins, you hermetically seal him with his crimes for perdition. You could not preserve a rattle-snake in spirit with more certainty for dissection. And thus are men often sealed up, and nations also, and the air of truth excluded. Thus are men and nations buried in falsehood, wound round with grave-clothes. And hence the tremendous adjuration, He that saith to the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him. If any church or any minister dare thus pervert or conceal the light of God's word in regard to human guilt, it is just as if they put out the light ; it is just leading men to perdition. They may be tempted to do this by vast and mighty bribes, by the pressure of a nation's

anger, by popular fury in behalf of cherished sins; but they had better incur the wrath of all mankind than the wrath of God.

And therefore the Lord Jesus was ever telling his disciples, Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves, and ye shall be hated of all for my name's sake. But fear them not; but what I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Pain, agitation, wrath, fury, persecution, are no excuse for concealing or perverting the messages of God's word. If men persecute you in one city, that gives you no commission to cut out or withhold that part of the gospel that goes against their sins; but you may flee to another city, and preach the whole gospel; but you must preach the whole wherever you preach, for you are not at liberty to diminish a word. When John the Baptist preached to Herod, he did many things, and heard him gladly, but that furnished no excuse to John for not attacking Herod's favorite sin. When Jeremiah was charged with God's messages, their very tenor made him a man of strife and contention, and the object of wrath and cursing, but that gave no permission to Jeremiah to cease preaching, or to choose for himself what he would preach, and what not. He tried the experiment of silence, but it would

not do ; he could bear the wrath of men much better than the indignation of the Lord.

Now, these faithful and fearless old Hebrew prophets were, by the Lord Jesus himself, set before the preachers of the gospel as an example of courage and of faithfulness. Our blessed Lord never intimated that the gospel could be preached with any less opposition than the law, nor that his disciples could escape persecution, and still be faithful to the truth. If they persecute *you*, fear them not, for so persecuted they the prophets before you. Wherever ye are, therefore, speak the truth, no matter where ; before kings, governors, councils, before synagogues, rulers, mobs ; fear not, and keep not back the truth, but proclaim it. Living or dying, proclaim it. Men die, but principles live.

Boldness is the rule, not timidity ; and plainness is the rule, not sophistry ; and sympathy with the poor and oppressed is the rule, not with the despot and the oppressor. Men may pervert the word of God by sophistry, and they may consent to keep back part of its instructions for fear of rousing men's prejudices. But this is fearing men, and not God ; this is being ashamed of Christ and of his words ; and this process, in particular junctures, may involve the guilt of moral forgery, and of being accessory to the ruin of a nation.

There is a great authority in navigation, whether plain-sailing or otherwise, an authority of world-wide

reputation and confidence. It is Bowditch's Charts and Navigator. Now, suppose that any person could get these into his own hands, with the power of keeping or of perverting the information at his pleasure; and, suppose there were lying on a coast a dangerous sunken reef, and that a great company of wreckers on that coast made a vast annual revenue by decoying vessels upon that reef;—what should we say of a proposition, backed with wrath and threats on one side, and enormous bribes on the other, to expunge all notice of that reef in the Navigator and Charts, and to make the world believe that, though to be sure there is a splintered, ragged ridge there, just as there is a bottom to the ocean everywhere, yet there is also depth of water enough for the biggest ships in the world to ride over in safety? Suppose the expounder and keeper of the charts should consent to this fraud, and excuse himself by saying, that the people in that coast and country would not suffer him to tell the truth, that they would not bear it; does this mitigate his villainy? Or, suppose he could prove to you that great good was done by the money obtained out of those shipwrecks, would that sanctify the wrong?

Now, whensoever any church, or minister of God's word, conceals the truth, or by sophistry turns it into a lie, or into the support of unrighteousness, there the very life of men and of nations is attempted. If watchmen upon towers, and sentinels at the gate of nations, and God's appointed heralds of salvation do

this, then will men and nations not only go to ruin in these indorsed and sanctioned ways of oppression and of crime, but the example of such double and false dealing by the guides will be imitated by the people in all things, till church and nation perish in their sins. Nation after nation has been ruined by such abominable sophistry, and by following such sophists, as are even now at work in our own country, endeavoring to make us believe that the jagged reef of slavery is only a righteous ridge of God's constituted bottom for the ocean, only an element of necessary permanence, over which there is deep and smooth sailing into the harbor of eternal rest, and out of which comes the highest good of the race, and glory of God forever. But by such sophistry we perish, and if we hold the truth itself in unrighteousness, there is no hope for us. There must be truth, and not sophistry—the truth as the truth is in Jesus. It is as essential to our existence as the air. And there must be free ventilation of the truth; if not, then all the wasting, the weakness, the destruction, the morbid secretions, and the active miseries, of atrophy, marasmus, consumption, and a lingering death.

II. The freedom of truth and of discussion in our representative and legislative assemblies is also essential. It is as much more essential here, in our country, than anywhere else under heaven, as good laws are more essential to our well-being, and bad laws

more pernicious, ours being a government of law. "Bad laws," Edmund Burke once said, "are the worst sort of tyranny. In such a country as this," he added, speaking of England, "they are of all bad things the worst, worse by far than anywhere else; and they derive a particular malignity even from the wisdom and soundness of the rest of our institutions." How true is this of our republic! How solemnly true applied to such execrable laws, such diabolical tyranny, under pretense of law, as that which is being enforced with fire and murder in Kansas. And hence the necessity of the most unlimited freedom of examination, disputation, and conflict of opinion, sacred and inviolate, or the life of liberty is gone. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? The very argument for patience under oppressive legislation, is the assurance that our representatives will look into it, and redeem us from it. But, if despotism can bring the terrors of assassination into the arena of public debate, there is no longer any possibility of legally resisting it, and a reign of terror is inaugurated all over the country. If anywhere under heaven there should be perfect freedom of deliberation and discussion in the light of divine truth, and for the sake of equity and liberty, it is here. Any attack upon it, any outrage against it, any attempt to set up the reign of dueling, murder, and violence, is a repetition of the worst wickednesses of the French Revolution.

But the records of all history can not show, on the whole, so mean, brutal, and dastardly an attack, as that of which our national Senate-chamber has recently been the scene. In the annals of English history, never has there been such an instance; never were bullies with bludgeons pitted against the nation's noblest orators. Chatham, Pitt, Lord Erskine, Burke, Curran, Mackintosh, Canning, and others, have let loose their storms of withering sarcasm and invective, and from the days of Chaucer and the Duke of Lancaster down to the time of Lord Brougham, the centuries have witnessed conflicts of angry eloquence, but never was the British Parliament disgraced by such a mode of worse than savage warfare. The criminals in Newgate would have been ashamed of such poltroonery. That a man of courteous manners and classical attainments, an eloquent scholar, an orator on the side of freedom, not a man pleading for oppression, not a man prostituting his talents in support of usurpation, or to sustain a fraudulent monopoly, or to make the worse appear the better reason, but advocating the cause of the oppressed, and the claims of liberty and humanity against violence and fraud; that such a man, in such a cause, should be attacked and struck down, unawares, helpless, writing at his desk, in the feeling of perfect security, without the least warning or challenge, merely because of the freedom and power of his argument and sarcasm against slavery, is an atrocity, which, up to the time

of its perpetration, the whole world would have said is impossible. The possibility of such an outrage in the Senate of a free country, and of the criminal going unpunished, and the Senate renouncing their own power of punishment, and refusing to condemn the crime, on the plea of not finding a precedent, will need to be accompanied, like the most incredible ghost story, with affidavits, or it will not be believed in history. Is this the inauguration of a policy that the people will submit to? Shall the renewed attempt to install murder as a law of honor, and bludgeons and pistols instead of argument as the rule of legislation, be successful?

It is rare that public attempted assassination, and open glaring usurpation and murder, find advocates and apologists. A man in public life, under all its accumulated bonds and responsibilities for good behavior, has committed an outrage on the life of a senator, that, done against any citizen in private life, would instantly have brought him to prison to be tried by the laws of his country; but the Legislature sanction the crime! Not only the man's public bonds and responsibilities, but common law for the protection of common society and life, are defied and disregarded, and the Senate and House of Representatives, in refusing the demanded retribution, and letting the criminal go at large, sanction the crime. They infect the air of our common justice, by such impunity, with taint and poison. How long can any



country stand such an infusion of evil principle? When God says, He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him; how long will it be before they discover that when the powers that be do themselves sanction wickedness, and by shielding it from punishment, sustain it, *they* are among the highest and properest objects of the curse of God and man? How madly is a government digging down the foundations of its own reverence, and destroying its only claim to obedience, when it pursues such a policy, acts upon such maxims, legalizes such iniquities, and protects such sinners, that, reversing the very terms of God's appointment and sanction of the magistracy, it becomes a praise to evil-doers, and a terror to those who do well!

And here I must say that I fear we are chargeable before God—the church and the ministry are chargeable—for not doing all in their power to prevent that corruption and violence which have been so rapid in their progress. They have suffered themselves to be deterred, by fear of the reproach of carrying politics into religion, from the just and righteous work of carrying religion into politics. Mark what I say; we are guilty for not carrying religion into politics. The carrying politics into religion is the devil's work, and the union of Church and State, and all ecclesiastical despotism and corruption spring out of it. The carrying religion into politics is Christ's work,

and he will go on with it, till he makes all men his freemen by the truth; and the kingdoms of this world shall become his kingdom, for he has promised that those who keep his truth, and the freedom that rests on it, shall have power over the nations.

And in this effort to conquer the world by the truth, the first requisites after a sincere reliance on him, are boldness and thoroughness. We need always to bear in mind the great remark of Burke, that "good works are commonly left in a rude unfinished state, through the tame circumspection with which a timid prudence so frequently enervates beneficence. In doing good, we are generally cold, and languid, and sluggish, and, of all things, afraid of being too much in the right. But the works of malice and injustice are quite in another style. They are finished with a bold masterly hand; touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions, that call forth all our energies whenever we oppress and persecute."

Suffer me to illustrate the manner in which some persons force their politics into religion, who are nevertheless very wrathful if religion be carried into politics. The anecdote was related to me by a venerable aged man now living, whose father-in-law was a distinguished minister of the gospel in the days of our Revolution. The charge of preaching politics was one day brought against that minister by a prominent parishioner. The person to whom he was vent-

ing his complaint declared that it was not true, and demanded of him to point out any instances. Well, said he, if he does not preach politics he prays politics, which is just as bad. Again it was denied, and demanded to show instances. Why, said the man, I heard him say last Sabbath in his prayer that when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn. Well, said the other, I don't see any politics there; how can you make politics out of that? Plain enough, said the man, for I know who he meant; he meant Jefferson. This is a very good example of the manner in which politicians sometimes see and hear through the medium of their own prejudices, and torture the least pithy application of truth into an attack against their own opinions. But these difficulties form no just apology for keeping back God's truth. That must be spoken, let it strike where it may; for though the clamor and the strife of tongues sometimes produced by it is evil, the withholding and concealment of it would be a greater evil. Christ's own gospel, he himself declared, would set households at variance, and there are few evils greater than such strife; but yet the withholding of the gospel would have been a greater evil.

The proclamation of the gospel set households at variance indeed, but it saved some, in the very fact of such variance. The withholding of the gospel kept households indeed in the unity of sin and Satan, but

carried them together in that unanimity down to hell. It is better to have dissension and salvation, than an icy politic stillness and death. It is not to be expected that the fearless proclamation of truth, when it comes against grand and gainful cherished and organic sins, intrenched and citadeled in men's hearts, men's purses, men's business, men's interests, families, hereditary revenues, national enactments, and powerful oligarchies, can be maintained with the shouts of popular applause, and all men cheering you on, and speaking well of you. As easy as a summer's Mediterranean sail in Cleopatra's barge, or Vanderbilt's steam-yacht, would be the preaching of the truth, with the soft breezes of a personal popularity always fanning your temples. Men like to hear the truth in pleasant and eloquent essays, and even in stormy harangues, so long as you do not trouble their own preferred private or public investments in pleasurable and profitable sin. Easy enough it is to preach with all your congregation in full sympathy; but the moment you come to close quarters, making your applications in such wise that irritated consciences wince and fret under unexpected exposure, and your hearers begin to cry out, He means me, away goes all your popularity. There is a region of rhetoric like Paradise itself, where everlasting spring abides, and you may lead your hearers up and down in such green pastures, and beside still waters, and never trouble any man's conscience in so doing. But whether such

preaching can be always faithful to the truth, and saving to the soul, is quite another question.

III. But again, God has given us that other mighty agency of freedom, a free press. The instinctive malignities of Satan and of despotism are always directed against it, just in proportion as its spirit and its issues are free and right. Here, then, again, if the truth make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

For the freedom of the press, both habit and statute are requisite, for until it began to be known, the rulers of the darkness of this world made it to be dreaded as an unmitigated evil. It was regarded as a monstrous and dangerous abuse, until an example was seen of it. It was to be chained like a wild beast; a quarantine was to be maintained against it, as against the pestilence. It only got on step by step, under a heap of indexes *Expurgatorius*, *Admittiturs*, *Imprimaturs*, stamps by authority, fines, imprisonments, and battles against power. The freedom of thought and speech have been invaded by the tyrants of the world even in unfinished and unpublished manuscripts; and the noble Algernon Sidney lost his life for written arguments in favor of freedom, the contents of his ransacked private closets. The freedom of publication is essential to the freedom of thought. There are abuses of all these blessings; but the abuses are rather to be endured than the blessings annihilated. Let the war of thoughts and

words go on, and the world is safe; for never yet was there a fair field and fair encounter, and never will be, between truth and error, freedom and slavery, but truth and freedom must prevail. Truth is the natural ally of freedom, and freedom of truth; but if you repress free thought, and its free interchange and expression, you produce apoplexy, or the bursting of arteries, you explode the machinery, you break up the best constituted society and state. If you introduce violence instead of truth, if you apply the tyrant's plea, expediency, and the oppressor's argument, power, you have, in the long run, the constitution of the race against you, as well as the edict of God's righteousness. And you insure earthquakes if you keep down all volcanoes.

The messages of truth are like the lightning on your telegraphic wires, beneficent while you let it flow freely, but streaming with angry and electric fires the moment you set yourself against it. The freedom of truth belongs to our constitution, as that electricity to the air we breathe; explosive only when you force it under a *posse comitatus*, or imprison it in company with fire-damp. The element and agency of life in freedom, it is destruction and death if you keep it pent up. Agitation, the conflict of opinion, the freest comparison and battle of thought, is what we need. But if every thing is to be kept close and quiet, it may be a stagnant despotism, but never a LIVING STATE. If evils are to be met, they must be

examined. If festering wounds are to be cured, they must be probed. The preventing power of truth, in its utmost freedom, is better than the penal power of imprisonment and capital punishment. If the licentiousness of the press is sometimes causative of crime, its perfect freedom is much more preventive.

The Legislature and the press are both, under God, the possession of the people; and the freedom of truth is essential for both; they must speak out, responsible to God. The Senate is the people's tongue by their representatives; the press is the people's tongue by themselves. The Senate is always in danger of pressing to an extreme the rights of government; the press is the defender of the rights of the people. The Senate is the people's heart under deliberation, but too often under political management; the press is the people's heart under impulse; and oftentimes, when the heart under political intrigue was going wrong, the heart under impulse may step in and carry it right. This is always likely to be the case, in proportion as the press is in more immediate contact with the altar and the fireside, the Bible and its living truth; and hence the press, made free by the truth and for the truth, may be described as the most important co-ordinate branch of a free government. It is important for its powerful action on all the others; an action which is felt even from the judiciary to the ballot-box; important for the instruction of the people and the utterance of the people's voice, during the in-

tervals, sometimes long and critical, because of the rapid plunges of the government toward despotism, between the appointed occasions when power constitutionally returns to the hands of the people, by the great foundation machinery of free voting.

These efforts and advances toward the increase of executive patronage and authority, and the consolidation and preponderance of governmental power, by which, gradually, government is changed from a servant of the people to a despot over them, have been continually going on, and every year more rapidly. The sovereignty is being taken from the people, and held in the government for its own sake, and not for their sakes. And were it not for the wondrous frame-work of our State and general governments, by which there is such a constitutional, biennial, triennial, and quadrennial return of power to the real sovereigns, the elective commonwealth, the freedom of our government would not last twenty years. Every thing would be sacrificed to power. And therefore it is that I have called the press a co-ordinate branch of our free government, and therefore it is that perfect freedom and eternal vigilance are necessary in it by day and by night from year to year. It is our great safeguard. It is, of all the branches and forms of our government, the least liable to corruption, and the most open to direct instantaneous control by the people. Through it the people may make the most despotic government feel their



power, and tremble at it; may make even its tools hesitate and falter in the execution of its edicts.

Now, in view of these inestimable franchises and blessings, these agencies and powers of truth and freedom, which we have received from God through our fathers, and are bound to transmit unimpaired to the generation to come, what is our one grand duty? It is to speak out, and to act out, freedom and truth, as given us of God. It is to love the truth, and to contend for it, and to send it forth in its freedom and purity, throwing ourselves for success on his grace who gave it, and gave us the commission to stand by it and to spread it. If the truth prevails, we prevail, and are safe. If the truth prevails, freedom prevails, if not, tyranny and slavery. That which thou hast already, hold fast till I come. In the hour of danger stand firm.

If you contend that your only lawful and Christian weapon is the truth, then use that weapon. If you abjure Sharpe's rifles, let us at least see the flashing of the sword of the Spirit in your hands. When a great sin is like to swamp us, we are bound to testify against that sin. But there are not a few, whose only talk is against the rebuke of sin, and against Sharpe's rifles. If it is the truth only that can make us free, then are we bound to proclaim the truth for such freedom. The church of Christ, far from shrinking away behind paper constitutions to evade this testifying obligation, far from alleging the letter

of limitation in constitutional power as an excuse for not speaking out when the Spirit demands it, when equity demands it, ought gladly to embrace every such juncture, to utter a voice that should ring through the world like a trumpet on the field of battle. Here in this Book of God is the constitution of the church, commanding her to testify, and to keep the tabernacle of this testimony wide open. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord. It is when the enemy cometh in like a flood, that the Spirit of the Lord lifts up the standard against him, and this standard is not made out of the old reiterated rags or relics of the testimony of former generations. As well might the Jews claim heaven on the ground of being the children of Abraham, as we claim to have done our duty in a great and difficult emergency by referring back to a testimony of our fathers in 1818, and ourselves maintaining a politic silence. The word of God is ever new, ever young, fresh, living, and no second-hand utterance of it will answer for our duty, nor are we released from the duty, nor defrauded the privilege of applying it anew, because our fathers applied it fifty years ago. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth in brightness. The watchmen on the walls are never to hold their peace, day nor night.

Not long ago, I saw an account of the installment of the old bones of St. Quietus to a place of honor in

some church that believes in the efficacy of old bones, with the pope's benediction, rather than in the proclamation of fresh living truth from the word by the Spirit of God. For people who think that the adoration of old bones may atone for new sins, this was all natural. But for Protestant churches that have tongues of their own, on a question of difficulty and in a crisis of danger, to evade a present burning utterance by referring back to the relics of old testimonies, to the skeleton forms of past resolutions, is just making a St. Quietus out of them, just exhuming and glorifying them by way of apology for their own silence. We all have our own responsibility of fresh testimony in every age, and can not avoid it. A singular spectacle it would be if the oppressed freemen in Kansas, instead of uttering their own indignations in thunder-tones at the usurpation forced upon them, should get together, and gravely reaffirm the resolutions of the old continental Congress in regard to the righteousness of resisting tyrants, or the declarations in Massachusetts, in regard to the old Boston Port Bill. A mute reference to a church assembly's records of forty years ago, may be a very convenient mode of giving a quietus to the conscience in shrinking back from the duty of an outspoken boldness; but even St. Quietus's bones will fail to convince the people that there is no occasion for life, no need of any thing but bones.

We are bound by the gift of God's truth to keep

the love of freedom in men's hearts sanctified, Christianized, and to see to it that it be not crucified or put to shame by a Christian desertion. The love of freedom for others, as well as for ourselves, needs eternal vigilance to be kept burning in our hearts. It is a Christian grace, a Christian duty, and to be without it, or afraid of it, is an unchristian baseness and cowardice, that God abhors. God loves freedom and hates slavery, and he loves to behold the most intense love of freedom in his creatures, and the most unmitigated hatred of slavery and oppression in all its forms. The enthusiastic, energetic, unceasing defense of freedom is a thing that belongs, by the right of blood-bought truth and liberty, to Christian souls. Events full of tyranny and outrage have been just now stirring men's minds for a season, so that the coldest were roused; but the danger is great of sinking back into lukewarmness and apathy, and Christians must speak and act boldly as well as pray, and keep up these fires and this salutary alarm and excitement, from a holier altar than any mere demagogue ever visits. Every Christian man, everywhere, should speak out, should show his colors; every church should do it, every preacher should do it. We have a trust for others. Open thy mouth for the dumb. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and ready to be slain, if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not;—doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth

not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? We have no right to renounce or relinquish the defense of others. We might, perhaps without blame, lay down our own necks, and permit the oppressor to ride over them without resistance; but we can not innocently keep silence or refuse help, when tyranny and slavery are forced on others, who cry to us for protection, and claim to be defended under the same Constitution that shields ourselves.

It is an interesting and characteristic anecdote of the Duke of Wellington, that on one occasion in India, when the country was full of disturbance and violence, a deputation of English missionaries came a long way to wait on him for counsel and advice as to whether they could do any good by advancing to their post and occupying it in the then state of the country, and whether it was not too dangerous an enterprise to undertake at a time of so much terror and confusion. When the deputation presented their case for consultation, the Duke's only answer was, Gentlemen, what are your marching orders? They had but just one, Go, preach. Well, then, gentlemen, I can do nothing for you. I can not interfere with your commander's orders. So with us, What are your marching orders? When God gives the truth, he gives it to be spoken, and the consequences of it he takes upon himself. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my

word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. The wheat God will take care of, and the chaff shall be scattered as with a whirlwind.

The time has come, even in our own country, when God is looking round for Ezekiel's gap-men, to stand in the gaps, and make up the ranks in the day of battle. Every generation to the end of the world will continue to need them, and the country is lost when they can not be found. Of all the illustrations in history, of such grand and noble patriotism, none is more thrilling and impressive than that of the Swiss patriot, Arnold Winkelreid, throwing himself on the spears of the Austrians, to *make* a gap in the otherwise impenetrable phalanx, through which his countrymen might rush to victory. Wordsworth has shrined it in immortal verse :

He, too, of battle-martyrs chief,  
Who, to recall his daunted peers,  
For victory shaped an open space,  
By gathering, with a wide embrace,  
Into his single heart a sheaf  
Of fatal Austrian spears.

It is most interesting and solemnly instructive to look back through the whole history of the world, and to see how often the whole fortunes of truth and liberty have been thrown of God upon single decisions and courses of such noble soldiers, and sometimes single acts of heroism. It is solemn to think how often the whole cause of truth and righteousness

must have failed by the failure of one man's courage and faith in such perilous junctures. Where would have been the principles of righteousness and liberty, and what would have been the fate of truth, and what the state of the world, if men appointed of God for the conflict had conferred with flesh and blood, instead of enduring as seeing Him who is invisible?

If Enoch, the seventh from Adam, had withheld his terrible sermons, and if Noah, warned of God, had not condemned the world, if Abraham had not renounced his native country for God's truth, if Moses had not forsaken Egypt, but had feared the wrath of Pharaoh, and refused to plead for the oppressed on the ground of not mingling in politics; if Samuel had yielded to the despotism of Saul; if Elijah and Elisha had withheld their testimony against the tyrant Ahab, and the statutes of the house of Omri; if Micaiah, brought before kings and threatened with death, had yielded the word of the Lord to be proclaimed only at the bidding of the monarch and his cringing prophets; if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had obeyed the law of Nebuchadnezzar; if Daniel had shut his windows and concealed the worship of his God; if Jeremiah had kept back his testimony, when they bribed him and threw him into the most horrible of all dungeons; if Isaiah had been so intimidated by the multitude and fierceness of his opposers, and by the bloody despotism of Manasseh, as to falter and withhold his withering rebukes; if Amos had list-

ened to the courtly, cringing sophists that came to him from the king's cabinet, telling him to forbear, and drop no more of his words against the nation's sins, or in the king's chapel. The king's chapel is it? And thou, the king's hireling priest! darest interdict my prophesying at the commandment of the King of kings. Now, therefore, because thou dost presume to interfere between his word, and those to whom it is directed, hear thou the word of the Lord. For, from the Lord God I tell thee, thou thyself shalt die in a polluted land, and thy wife shall be a harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and the whole nation shall go into captivity. Where would have been God's truth, or any grand decisive truth, and the examples of its fearless utterance in danger, examples so much needed, if these men had acted on the principles of expediency, conservatists of their own property, peace, and reputation?

And in the New Testament, if John the Baptist had consented to wink at Herod's adultery, provided he could relieve his conscience by a virtuous indignation against Herodias's dancing, and if in order to save his own head from the axe of the tyrant, he had kept back part of the truth, and only preached on those subjects, in regard to which he heard him gladly? And if the Lord Jesus had not, in all his instructions, and in all his preparations for the new and freer dispensation, bade his disciples, commissioned



with the truth, to lay aside all fear of man, and all respect to persons and to sins, and to stand, if need be, against the whole world, with a *thus saith the Lord*, as their only argument and weapon?

A new era of divinest liberty and light, and new triumphs of boldness and faith, were thus inaugurated. And at the very outset we see Peter and John, their whole being and character seemingly transfigured as in angelic stature and grandeur, their oratory as when seven thunders utter their voices, arraiguing priests and people as the murderers of the Lord of glory, and appealing to their very judges to justify them for spurning their commands of silence; whether we ought to obey man rather than God; whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye? And then we behold a still more startling exhibition of fearlessness and power in Stephen's eloquence, full of the Holy Ghost, and, with holy energy and fervor, cutting the whole council to the heart, so that they gnashed on him with their teeth, while he charged them as stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, resisters of the Holy Ghost, the children of persecutors, and themselves the betrayers and murderers of the Just One.

Was the freedom of Stephen's indignant heart and tongue to be restrained, lest it should wake up the angry passions of his hearers? Was he to stop in the fierce career of his eloquence, and carefully meas-

ure the form and manner of his invectives, and usher in his terrible accusations with courteous apologies, with honeyed palliatives? And when the church heard of his death, or angels saw it, think you there was one creature so mean, on earth or in heaven, as to excuse the murderous revenge of his enemies, by alleging the imprudent and fiery severity of his own speech? Did the brethren make any question in regard to his prudence? Did they apologize for the malignity of his murderers, by supposing that they were provoked by his injudicious personalties? Did they say that it was just what Stephen might have expected, if he would use such severe and cutting language? And that though his murderers were to blame for their violence, yet that they had, after all, some excuse for their anger, being rebuked in so terrible a manner, and accused with such tremendous charges? Certainly, it is not unlikely, if Stephen had been more quiet and courteous, that *they* would have been less passionate and furious; at least, they would probably have put him to death without so much outrage. And could he not have been less personal and severe, and more tender and gentle in his language? Ask, if you will, that Divine Spirit, whose truth he spake, and that ascended Redeemer, under whose eye he acted. And if you judge his temper on these tremendous denunciations, judge it also by his dying prayer of forgiveness for his murderers.

And then we turn to Paul, who watched the clothes of Stephen when he died, but soon wore the mantle of his own piety and eloquence, and we see him also with uncompromising boldness proclaiming the whole truth, and contending for it against those who counseled a politic silence, to whom he gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might remain with you; and again, defending his own rights as a Roman citizen; and again, filled with the Holy Ghost, setting his eyes on one of his malignant opponents, and exclaiming, Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And to John, with the trumpet-note from the Lord Jesus, Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, but be faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life; recounting afterward the souls that were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held, and disclosing to us the thrones in glory, and those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God. And to Polycarp, continuing his testimony against the atheists and idolaters, even to the flames; and to Cyprian, asked by the Emperor to deliberate whether it were not better to save his life by just one grain of idol incense, and answering, There needs no deliberation in the case; and to John Huss, What I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood; and to the martyr Galearius, Death is much sweeter to me with the testimony of truth, than

life with its least denial ; and to the church of the Waldenses, Ever burning, yet still testifying, and not consumed ; and to Luther, Had I four hundred heads, rather would I lose them all than retract my testimony ; and to John Bunyan, If I were out of prison to-night, I would preach Christ to-morrow, so help me God ! and to John Rogers, All the laws of men can not rule the word of God, but must be judged thereby ; neither my conscience, nor any Christian's conscience, can be satisfied with such laws as disagree with that word ; and to Latimer, I am bound in conscience to utter such things as God hath put into my mind. He will not have his faith defended by man or man's power, but by His word only, in a way far above man's power or reason. And, when the fire of his martyrdom was lighted, Be of good comfort and play the man : we shall, by the grace of God, this day light a candle in England which I trust will never be put out. And to this day that light is burning ; and from that time onward, all English history and literature is consecrated by it. This is by the grace of God.

And now if I were to add to these words only a few similar testimonies, even from the natural heart of man in its noble enthusiasm for truth and freedom, notices scattered in the history of all countries and in all times, it would be a volume. And these martyr words and sayings, wrung out from human hearts and consciences by suffering, and danger, and death, are

the very life-blood of history. There is that element in suffering for truth, which embalms the truth forever and forever. These lights are set as stars in the firmament; all history besides might perish, but many of these battle-words and martyr testimonies would still lighten the traditional memory of mankind from generation to generation. They are the intensest historic radiances of humanity itself. They are as great lights let down behind a vast transparency, and lighting up the whole surrounding scenery, which otherwise would be chaos and darkness. The disciples and the church of Christ must have lost not only that Christian savor, which should make them the salt of the earth, but even the common spirit of that love of freedom native to our race, if they renounce and disown the opportunity and responsibility of kindling such lights. If they refuse to bear testimony to the truth, when the truth is in danger, and its defenders are stricken down in blood, and will venture a timid utterance, only where it is all applause and security, where can men turn for hope, or where on earth can they look for refuge?

Let us then esteem it one of the noblest of all privileges to be engaged in such a service. Let us hold up the banner of truth and righteousness, and fling its folds to all the winds of heaven. Let us hail the opportunity of the defense of freedom on religious grounds. Let nothing drive us from our citadel in

God's word, and our refuge in prayer, and nothing need terrify us, nor can any thing overcome us, for the cause of truth and freedom is God's cause, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

THE END.

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