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GOD OR OUR COUNTRY.

REVIEW

OF THE

REV. DR. PUTNAM'S DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED ON FAST DAY,

ENTITLED

GOD *AND* OUR COUNTRY.

"But true hearts a'—gae work awa'—
"We'll make the world better yet!"

BOSTON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED, BY I. R. BUTTS,

No. 2 SCHOOL STREET.

1847.



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SOPYK



REVIEW.

NEITHER the delivery of this Sermon by Dr. Putnam, nor its publication at the request of his congregation, is any matter of astonishment to Abolitionists. They are altogether too familiar with the many similar instances, on the part of ministers, either of incapacity to see the truth or faithlessness in its utterance, to be astonished at the course followed by Dr. Putnam on this occasion. They well remember that one eminent clergyman defends *capital punishment* from the command "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" — and that another — an eminent Bishop, from the command "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," supports the system of *slavery*, and argues to the poor ignorant slaves that *God* requires them to serve their masters faithfully and honestly, and never to murmur at their condition!

Though not astonished, we see many reasons for regretting the position assumed by Dr. Putnam. Aside from his influence upon the opinions of others, — for his own reputation we regret that a man of his acknowledged goodness of heart, should have been unable

to see anything but rashness, thoughtlessness and bad temper in the cry that is so common — “No union with slaveholders,” (p. 21.) We think an examination of his Sermon will show that he himself was guilty of rashness and thoughtlessness in making the assertion.

The great question of the day is thus stated by him. “*May we as Christians properly recognize and support a form of government, or a national compact, when that government or compact adopts courses, and recognizes and maintains institutions, which are in themselves at variance with the spirit and precepts of the Master, Christ, and the divine law of love and justice?*” (p. 4.)

The solution of a nobler question has never yet, in the providence of God, been committed to any people. The question is simply this; may we as moral beings support a national compact which sustains institutions clearly at variance with the moral law, — or what is the same thing — can we as moral beings support immorality?

There is, it is true, “a widely active disposition in our community, at the present time, to apply moral tests to national measures and institutions, and to examine them in the light of the Christian religion.” (p. 5.) It is a source of profound joy that such is the fact.

“Of course, it is found, on applying the strict test of the gospel to national proceedings and institutions, that they will not bear that test at all points. At many points there will be shortcomings, and at some points a flagrant violation of that perfect law. There is no nation on earth, nor has there ever been one, that will

bear that test. Our own will not bear it. And in view of this lamentable fact, what shall we say and do? What ground shall we take? There are two *ultra* methods of settling this last question, — two forms of ultraism upon the subject. One is that which excludes moral tests and Christian considerations entirely from a man's view of public and national affairs." (pp. 5, 6.)

This method of course is rejected.

"The other and opposite kind of ultraism is that which expresses itself in such language as this:—'No union with slaveholders'; 'We will not be parties to a constitutional compact which recognizes and sustains a great iniquity'; 'The country which wages an unnecessary or unjust war (and many will say that all wars are unjust and unnecessary), that is not *our* country. We are Christians, and will not own it. Let us separate. Let us dissolve the Union. Let us form a new and smaller one, or else live in righteousness and peace without one.'" (p. 7.)

We will not object to these extracts, though they do not present in any very clear light, the reasonings of abolitionists. We will only say "we have no quarrel with the constitution, because it is the basis of a confederated union of states; but *only* because we see in it an alliance offensive and defensive between those states for the perpetuation of *slavery*, and consequently the greatest of obstacles to its abolition as long as its obligations are in force. It is not the constitution, nor the union, any more than it is the church that abolitionists desire to destroy; but *ONLY the national crime which has made them its citadel and its sanctuary.*"*

* Report of the Managers of the Mass. Anti Slavery Society, Jan. 27, 1847.—(p. 85.)

Proceeding to “examine candidly” this second kind of ultraism Dr. Putnam, continues :

“The doctrine here stated is revolutionary. By many it is openly and honestly held as such, and is always obviously such in its tendency. Well, there is such a thing, certainly, as a right of revolution. The only question is, What circumstances will justify the exercise of that right? There are very grave considerations that should enter into the solution of this question.”

“In the first place it is to be considered that God ordains civil society. He puts men together, and has so constituted them that they must live in societies. He ordains nations. National compacts or societies are not arbitrary and artificial. They grow up necessarily. Their form and extent are determined in each case by a great variety of circumstances, events, and affinities, over which a high Providence presides,”

* * * * * “And then such societies, nations, if they must exist, must have governments, — that is, such customs, laws, institutions, and terms of union, as grow up out of the origin, circumstances, and character of the particular nation. So that government itself, inasmuch as it is an essential element of national society, which is a divine institution, — government must itself be regarded as a divine institution.”

* * * * * “Then, further, a society constituted as a nation necessarily is, must include all sorts of men, and of course many that are deficient in sound knowledge and moral principle. And, of necessity, the latter sort of persons will have an influence, more or less, according to numbers and other circumstances, in producing bad or imperfect customs, laws, and institutions, vitiating more or less the

public acts and relations of the body politic. Then the question arises, Are the moral, Christian members of the society morally implicated in the evil thus produced and done? No, certainly, provided they employ such action and influence *as the institutions of the country enable them to use*, to prevent the evil. 'They are not implicated.'" (pp. 8, 9.)

Here we differ. God as a *good* being cannot *ordain* anything *bad*. He implants in the human heart the feeling of brotherhood — he surrounds us with the ties of home and kindred; and these influences lead to the formation of societies and nations. In a limited sense, therefore, it is true that God *ordains* societies and nations, but it sounds strangely to hear the minister of a *good* being speak of his *ordaining bad* laws or institutions. *God is not the author or ordainer of evil*. The Being who formed of one blood all the nations of the earth, — whose chosen messenger taught us to love one another, desires that all men should live together as brethren, but does *not ordain* that one portion of the race shall oppress another, or make slaves of them. Hitherto he has *permitted* the existence of evil, but he has never *ordained* its existence.

A man is morally implicated in the evil produced by society so far as he *voluntarily supports* it. He may *submit* to a great deal of evil, but he cannot *voluntarily support* it without being an *evil-doer*, and, consequently, without being morally wrong. He is not, in resisting a social evil, to rest satisfied with employing only such amount of action and influence as the institutions of the country permit him to use. The institutions of a country are *not* the work of

God, but of man. They are the outward embodiments of the ideas and habits of the people. If these ideas and habits are bad, the institutions will be bad also. But God does not ordain the good and evil in the ideas or habits of any man, otherwise there could be no such thing as human responsibility. God does not therefore ordain the good or evil in the ideas and habits of any collection of men — of a nation or society. Consequently he cannot be said to ordain the particular institutions or laws we find around us. These are *human* productions — the embodiments of *human* passions and *human* thoughts. So far as these laws and institutions are right and good, God may be said to sanction them, but it cannot without irreverence be said that he sanctions or ordains any idea, habit, law, or institution which is bad.

It is morally wrong, therefore, for a man to rest satisfied with employing in the prevention of evil, merely such amount of action and influence as the institutions around him enable him to use,—because these institutions are merely the manifestation in part of *the very evil which he wishes to overthrow*. He is to take for his standard of action the law of God, not that of man. He is not to adopt as his rule of right and action, a standard *necessarily* imperfect, and most likely to be *wrong on the very point where action is needed*.

“How am I implicated,” asks Dr. Putnam, “supposing that I am a thorough Christian, and have always advocated and voted for good measures,—how am I implicated in the evil that exists or is done in the nation as such? I did not ordain the nation to be, but God ordained it in his high providence. I did

not have the forming of its ideas, usages, institutions, character. I did not become a member of the nation from my own choice. I was born into it, put into it, by the Creator.* I cannot help, therefore, being associated with some bad men in the national society, and so witnessing, perhaps suffering from, some bad institutions and measures. I cannot escape from this relationship. God holds me to it; for no call of duty requires me to expatriate myself; and if I did, I must adopt some other country, where I should find social evil also, either in the same or a different shape. I am not implicated. Society must exist, and my nature and the laws of God require me to be a member of society. There are bad members in it, and I cannot help it. Social evils exist and will arise, and I cannot help it. I can neither disown society, nor can I make it perfect. I am not implicated in its unchristian acts and institutions.

“We are responsible only for those which we approve individually, and vote to establish or perpetuate.” (p. 9, 10.)

True it is that “no call of duty requires me to expatriate myself.” God has placed me here, and imposed upon me the duty of acting rightly here. I am surrounded with institutions which call upon me and others to act immorally. It is wrong for me to rest satisfied merely with opposing such immoral acts just so far as such institutions will permit. A law higher far than any human law or institution must govern my actions. If the law of God, written on each man’s heart dictates one course, and the law of man written in the statute-book points out another, every man who

* This argument really leads to this result. *I did not make myself a being prone to sin. I did not surround myself with incitements to sin. God did these things. God is then the author of and inciter to evil!*

desires to act rightly must obey the former. We are implicated in and responsible for, not only those immoral acts and institutions which we approve individually, but also for those which by any *voluntary* act on our part we tend to strengthen or support. The plea, that God ordains society composed of bad and good men,— and consequently institutions made up of bad and good elements, will not avail as a defence for any voluntary support of the evil contained in them— *because the plea is not true.* God does not ordain anything to exist which is not good. If he did *ordain* the existence of evil.— he would be the author of evil. All human responsibility would be at an end, and each one of us in the anguish of his spirit, might say with perfect propriety—

“ All good to me is lost ;
Evil be thou my good :—”

“ In the second place, when anything like a revolution is contemplated,— it ought to be considered whether the moral evils which belong to or spring from the existing national organization are really intolerable or enormous, relatively to the general condition of civilized and nominally Christian nations ; and whether those evils are greater than might be expected to result from the moral imperfections of the people as individuals, taking into view all the untoward circumstances in which the present generation finds itself placed, and the usages and ideas handed down from its predecessors. It is also to be considered whether those evils are likely to be removed, and for the future prevented, by a subversion of the national organization,— and if that is likely, then, whether there is good ground of assurance that the fact and process of a political and social disruption, in connection with the bad elements

of character previously extant among the people, are not likely to produce other and equivalent or greater evils? When all these questions may be answered in the affirmative, revolution is justifiable; but never otherwise. We have no moral right to do or say anything to induce disunion and revolution, *upon moral and Christian grounds*, until we are deliberately and dispassionately convinced that the public sins and social evils under the present organization are greater than might be expected from the character of the people, and that a better average state of society for the whole country might and would be created out of the same materials, the same men, the same ideas and customs, the same amount of christian principle and mental light. For we can have no materials more or better than these out of which to form a new society, and these, however bad, will all remain to be disposed of as much after as before the dissolution. We have no moral right, in a fit of spleen or disgust, mortification or anger, or any unfounded and presumptuous-idea of responsibility,—we have no right, on such grounds and in such a state of mind, to say a word or take a step to shake the pillars of the time-hallowed fabric of society which Providence has erected around us and placed us in, and by which and in which he gives such an unbounded sphere for outward welfare, for enjoyment, and for personal duty and holiness. The plea of humanity cannot sanctify a rash trifling with things so sacred as the providential bonds that hold society together, in such a degree of peace and amity as the human lot admits of.

“There is such a thing as the right of revolution; and there are occasions in the progress of human affairs, in which it may be righteously exercised; but he who lightly provokes or anticipates the occasion, neither obeys Christ nor serves his race,—is false both to Cæsar and to God.” (pp. 11, 12.)

The revolution sought by the abolitionists is not one of violence but of principle.— *We expressly repudiate the idea of using force to attain our purpose.* We would not accomplish our end to-morrow if we could do it merely by shedding the blood of one man. On the contrary, we rely on the exercise of moral power alone. We seek to effect such a MORAL *revolution* as, in its course, shall be powerful enough either to relieve the constitution from all taint of slavery or to break it in pieces. We seek to change the hearts of the people, to make them really feel that all men are brethren. When they feel thus, their acts will be in accordance. We rely with perfect confidence upon the power of truth alone, feeling sure that so long as God is just, ultimate success is certain. But when the people are ready for *our* revolution, we shall not, as Dr. Putnam says, have the same men, the same ideas and customs, and the same amount of christian principle to deal with in forming a new nation. Regenerated men, more elevated ideas, nobler customs, and a more exalted christian principle will present themselves.

Before commencing this moral revolution, (even though a dissolution of the existing national compact must necessarily attend our success,) we are not to sit down and decide whether our national sins “are really intolerable or enormous, relatively “to the general condition of civilized and nominally christian nations.” Because other nations are steeped to the lips in iniquity is no reason why we should be,— is no excuse for our remaining so. If *all* “moral evils” are not “really intolerable” under all circumstances, we would like to ask what “moral evils” are tolerable? Is the

Christian to refrain from denouncing as sinful our slaveholding national compact, and calling all men to cease yielding it support, simply because the sin of slaveholding is not really enormous when compared with the sins of other “*nominally*” christian nations? This *comparative* christianity is altogether too easy to be *real* christianity.

Dr. Putnam refers to “two circumstances which tend at the present time to disaffect the minds of many towards our national compact, and which give rise to many feelings, many words, and some acts, which, as far as they go, go to weaken the bonds of union, and to hasten the time when they will be severed; namely, the existing war with Mexico, and the institution of slavery.”

The war considered by itself, simply as an unjust and wicked act, and not as a direct result of the compromise, on the subject of slavery, contained in the national constitution, has never, so far as we are aware, been considered by abolitionists as constituting any ground for calling for a dissolution of the national compact. Many of us consider all wars to be wrong. We cannot agree with any one in thinking that even this war is “not unjust towards Mexico”—or that “she deserved chastisement and can “claim no sympathy.” Considering, as we do, that this war originated in the desire to extend the curse of slavery, we shall confine our remaining remarks to Dr. Putnam’s suggestions on the subject of slavery.

What ought a Christian to do and think about slavery? asks Dr. Putnam. The answer is,—

“ In *the first place*, let the Christian citizen not overlook the bad moral character of the institution, or become indifferent to its many evils, nor let him do any thing, by action or neglect, to promote its extension or continuance.” (p. 21.)

It is then an *ultraism*, to suppose that the first duty of a christian is to be *active in removing* an institution of “ bad moral character !”

“ In the second place, let him preserve his reason, his equanimity, his temper, and learn to look calmly upon an institution which Providence has permitted to exist almost ever since the first formation of civil society, and which the same Providence seems likely to suffer to exist for some time longer. That is no reason why we should not use all fair and legitimate influence to shorten its days ; but it is a reason why we should not suffer ourselves to be excited and angry, or to hate those portions of the country on which, by their fault or their misfortune, this evil presses, or why we should wish to be separated from them.” (p. 21.)

We are glad to see that Dr. Putnam does not say that Providence has *ordained* the existence of slavery. And yet there is really little cause for joy. If his position is true that “ government, that is, such customs, laws, institutions and terms of union as grow up out of the origin, circumstances and character of the particular nation” “ must be regarded as a *divine* institution,” has not Providence *ordained* the institution of *slavery*?— and, if so, does it not necessarily follow that, in the opinion of Dr. Putnam, God is the author of evil?— For, if *any* custom, law or institution *can* be said to have grown up out of the circum-

stances and character of a people, then has the institution of slavery thus grown up.

In other respects we fully agree with the sentiments expressed in this extract. We should be sorry to think that abolitionists *hated* the Southerners for any reason. We do not seek a separation, because slavery exists at the South as a *State* institution simply. It is because we are implicated in its support, so long as the present bond of union remains, that we seek a separation.

Dr. Putnam continues :

“ I cannot see anything but rashness, thoughtlessness, and bad temper in the cry that is so common,— ‘ No union with slaveholders ? Suppose we should separate and break up our country ; will that abolish slavery ? Why, they at the South talk quite as loudly about dissolving the union for the purpose of perpetuating slavery. No union with slave-holders ? And why not ? Because they are sinners, you must say ; for we are now considering only the position of those who desire dissolution on moral grounds. No union with sinners ! What shall we do ? We cannot, then, have a Northern union of States, for there are sinners here of all sorts ; and among other sorts of sin, there is a great deal of sympathy with slaveholding, and a readiness to help the South in perpetuating and extending it. There has never been a public measure adopted in favor of slavery without the aid of Northern votes. No union with sinners ? Why then we must dissolve all compacts,— that of the commonwealth, the county, the city ; we cannot trade with men, or do any business with them, for many of them are great sinners, and all of them more or less. We must dissolve our families, for there is sin there. The Christian must break all bonds and stand literally alone ; nay, according to that principle,— no union with sin,— al-

most every man would have to tear soul and body apart, for one or the other of them he will find stained with some sin. (pp. 21, 22.)

The reason why Dr. Putnam could see nothing but rashness, thoughtlessness and bad temper in the cry—No union with slaveholders—is a simple one—he *did not understand its meaning*. No abolitionist ever yet refused to co-operate with slaveholders, when he could do so without countenancing or supporting slavery. Dr. Putnam should have examined the anti-slavery productions a little more carefully, and conversed with anti-slavery men a little more freely before being guilty of the rashness and thoughtlessness of making this charge. That such are really the sentiments of abolitionists is well known to all who read their publications. For the benefit of those not thus acquainted, we will present the following passages taken from a pamphlet written by Wendell Phillips, entitled “Can Abolitionists vote or take office under the United States Constitution?” The name of the author is sufficient guaranty of the quality of the anti-slavery doctrine — whilst the design of the pamphlet was to explain and defend this very cry “No union with slaveholders.”

“*Nobody disputes,*” says Mr. Phillips, “*that we may rightly assist the worst government in doing good, provided we can do so without at the same time aiding the wrong it perpetrates.* (p. 22.)

“If I have joined with others in doing wrong, is it either presumptuous or unkind, when my eyes are opened, to refuse to go any further with them in their

career of guilt? Does love to the thief require me to help him in stealing? *Yet this is all we refuse to do.* We will extend to the slaveholder all the courtesy he will allow. If he is hungry we will feed him; if he is in want, both hands shall be stretched out for his aid. We will give him full credit for all the good that he does, and our deep sympathy in all the temptations under whose strength he falls. *But to help him in his sin, to remain partners with him in the slave-trade, is more than he has a right to ask.*" (p. 29.)

It is a *mistake*, therefore, on the part of Dr. Putnam, to suppose that abolitionists mean no union with slaveholders, in anything, or for any purpose. All that we mean by the expression is, that *we will have no union in slaveholding* — that we will yield no voluntary support or countenance to the institution, but on the contrary that we will use all the moral influences within our reach to destroy it.

What makes this mistake the more striking is the fact that Dr. Putnam proceeds thus :

“The only sense in which we can say, without absurdity, that we will have no union with slaveholders, or with any other class of sinners at the North or the South, is this, — *that we will not take any part in their sin, nor encourage, nor countenance it. And this the Christian may and should always say.*” (pp. 22, 23.)

We should think that the glaring absurdity of any other meaning than this, would have led Dr. Putnam to doubt the correctness of any other. A moment's investigation would have sufficed to show to him what

was our true meaning. But notwithstanding this, although ample means for ascertaining the truth were all around him, on a mistake caused by his own want of thoroughness, he has asserted our idea to be "at once foolish, selfish and unchristian" and that there is neither "humanity nor religion in proposing it"! Still it is very gratifying to us to learn from his own lips, that all christians should adopt the cry, "No union with slaveholders," in such a truly abolition sense. We may hope that at some day, not far distant, we may not differ so entirely as to what acts amount to taking part in the sin of slavery or encouraging or countenancing it.

Thus far the course of the Christian, as marked out by Dr. Putnam consists in not overlooking the bad moral character of slavery, or becoming indifferent to its evils, or doing anything to promote its extension or continuance, and in keeping calm and preserving his equanimity. One and only one specific course of *action* is recommended, — namely — resistance to the creation of new slave states.

"It is the right of the Free States, and I wish it were more extensively felt to be their sacred duty, to oppose by their votes, and all legitimate influences, the creation of any *new Slave States*, especially out of any territory, Mexican or American, that is now free." (p. 25.)

Dr. Putnam concludes his sermon in the following vein :

"Whatever be the course of events on this and

kindred subjects, I see no occasion for passionate excitement. Let us use our influence for the right,—use it soberly, in good-nature, unprovoked, without threats and without alarm; and in the mean time, let God’s providence work on, and work out its great designs, as it surely will, in its own good time.

“We cannot but deplore the moral evils of all sorts that fester in the hearts of the people, and get embodied in institutions, and sometimes break out into war. We will deplore them, and do what we may in our little spheres to cure them, or lessen their growth. But still be calm. They are nothing new. They have not arisen in a day, and will not be cured in a day. They are not more or greater than they have always been among men, but rather less. We must learn, not to be idle, not to be indifferent, not to assist and countenance wrong, but to be patient with it. God is patient. He is long-suffering. He takes a great deal of time for the removal of evil, and the accomplishment of his plans. *We cannot hurry him, we cannot take the work out of his hands. We can only co-operate with him, and wait his time.*”

* * *

“Let us not childishly, petulantly, grow angry and impatient, and clamor for national dismemberment, when things go wrong, as they often will in this world, — but have faith in God, and brotherly kindness towards our fellow-men, and possess our souls in patience. If the holy God can have patience with his froward children, how much more should we, who share their imperfection and perverseness, and are in our various ways, it is likely, as bad as the rest!

“Who are we, sinners every one, who cannot live in the nearest relations of life without sin, nor even plead for righteousness and Christian love without losing often the very spirit that we desire to spread,— who are we, to say to any class of our fellow-citizens, or any

portion of our country, ‘Stand aside; let there be no fellowship between us, for we are holier than ye’? (pp. 27, 28.)

The obvious tendency of remarks like these is to render men indifferent to all reform. God, in his own good time, it is said, will remove the evil of slavery. Let us therefore possess our souls in patience, and in the mean time, do what we may in our little spheres to lessen its growth! Still, however, do all that we may, we cannot hurry God, we cannot take the work out of his hand. Slavery will not be abolished, do what we may, or *neglect as much as we please*, one instant sooner than he wills!

Very true it is that God governs this world, — but in removing evils he does not personally interfere. He removes them solely through the agency of man; and man has the power to overcome evil, otherwise it would not be his duty to act rightly. If I have not the *power* to resist evil successfully, it is not my duty to resist it at all. Doubtless this power of resistance is from God, but still it is a power clearly possessed *by every morally responsible being*. God has entrusted to *man* the work of removing sin from the world. He has given to man the power to accomplish this work. He calls upon us all, daily and hourly, to exercise this power. He is continually urging us to resist evil to the uttermost. We are not to rest contented with anything short of continued warfare. We cannot hurry him, it is true, but he urges us. We cannot take any work out of his hand, but he has given us this work to do. Unless we faithfully perform this work, *as beings*

having the power to perform it, we are false to the great trust committed to us ;—we bury our talent in the earth.

As to the charge of a pharisaical spirit, contained in the latter part of this extract, it is sufficient to observe that it is no more pharisaical for us to say to the slaveholder, we will have no fellowship with you *in slaveholding*, than it is for the repentant thief to say to his former comrade I will no longer unite with you in thieving.

We hasten to bring these remarks to a close. Dr. Putnam admits that no Christian can take any part in the sin of slaveholding, or encourage or countenance it. Does he come up to his own standard? Does he give this institution of “bad moral character” no support or countenance? We aver that he is both willing to support it himself—and that he actually in this sermon advises others to support it!

The whole sermon is devoted to opposing the idea of abolitionists, that the national constitution should be dissolved. He is not only in favor of supporting it himself, but he urges all others to support it also.

Now what is the Constitution of the United States? *It is a compact which was devised to support the institution of slavery, and which for over fifty years has in fact supported it!*

“By Art. 1, § 2, we offer a *bounty* upon slaveholding: because it provides that the freemen in the Slave States, *solely because they are slaveholders*, shall have greater political power than the same number of freemen in the Free States. *We tempt them by the promise of political power and honor to increase the number of their*

slaves by all means. We say to the slaveholders, ‘Gentlemen, true, we consider slaveholding to be an institution of “bad moral character,” but nevertheless, go on, increase and multiply your slaves; and in the proportion of three-fifths of your immorality we will give you political strength, to wield in favor of slavery and against the cause of freedom. To use the words of John Quincy Adams, the effect of this clause has been “to make the PRESERVATION, PROPAGATION, AND PERPETUATION OF SLAVERY THE VITAL AND ANIMATING SPIRIT OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.”’

“By Art. 4, § 2, we declare that there is no spot in all our country, this so much boasted land of freedom where the runaway slave who has followed that blessed light of God, the North star, may rest himself in safety — *no spot from which his master may not retake him — no spot from which we will not aid to tear him!*”

“By Art. 1, § 3, and Art. 4, § 4, we *freemen*, declare that if the slaves rise, as our fathers did of yore, and strike for *freedom*, *we will do battle against them*— that we will present to the world the spectacle of *freemen fighting against freedom*.

This is the compact which Dr. Putnam not only countenances, but *which he is solicitously anxious to support!* He argues through a whole sermon in defence of its support! Must we not say to him — Physician, heal thyself! If as a Christian he cannot even *countenance* the sin of slavery, how can he, as a christian, support the Constitution which obliges him to return a fugitive slave to his master?

One other suggestion and we will close. Dr. Putnam proposes to elect such representatives to Congress

as will use their influence to prevent the spread of slavery over new territory. He advises this course. He is eloquent in its praise. He has therefore no objection on moral grounds, so far as the question of slavery is concerned, to becoming a Representative himself, or sending another person as his Representative.

And what must be the first act which he does as Representative? He must call God to witness that he “will *support* the Constitution of the United States” — not that he will *submit* to its exactions — not that he will support *some* of its parts — but that *he will support ALL of its provisions*. *He promises before God to support* the return of the panting fugitive to his master — to *support* the suppression of slave insurrections by the national government — to *support the offer of a bounty upon slaveholding!* Are these acts consistent with his duty as a Christian? Does not such a Christian Representative “overlook the bad moral character” of the institution? Does he not “become indifferent to its many evils” if he is willing to swear to support it? Does he do nothing to promote its continuance?

This “reasoning” may *seem* to be “mistaken” — *but it is not!* — This “moralizing” may *seem* to be “morbid” — *but it is not!* — It is neither “a false nor a foolish plea, that we must dissolve the union on Christian grounds, to avoid the responsibility” of countenancing slavery. We may be false to Cæsar, — but, according to the moral light which we possess, we are not false to God. Traitors we may be to our country — traitors we are not to God.





