

XXXVIII.

OUR SLAVES SHOULD HAVE THE BIBLE.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ABBEVILLE BIBLE SOCIETY,

AT ITS ANNIVERSARY,

JULY, 1854.

BY

ROBERT A. FAIR, Esq.

ABBEVILLE, S. C.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

ABBEVILLE, 11th *Sept.*, 1854.

ROBERT A. FAIR, Esq., *Sir* :—You will much oblige a number of your fellow citizens, and especially the undersigned, by furnishing us, for publication, a copy of the Address which you delivered before the Abbeville District Bible Society, at its last annual meeting.

Yours, Respectfully,

H. A. JONES,
A. L. GRAY,
WILLIAM HILL,
G. Mc. D. MILLER,
A. HADDON,
E. E. PRESSLY,
J. L. ELLIS,
D. O. HAWTHORN.

ABBEVILLE C. H., 12th *Sept.*, 1854.

GENTLEMEN :—Two considerations, the one pious and the other personal, incline me to yield to your request. The hope that some religious good may be accomplished, and the suggestion that my sentiments upon the subject discussed might be, indeed, that they had been, misrepresented, have influenced me to place the Address, alluded to in your note of yesterday, in your hands for publication.

Yours, Truly,

R. A FAIR

To Messrs. JONES, GRAY, HILL, and others.

ADDRESS.

THE religion of Jesus is not a selfish religion. There is no disposition, on the part of its possessor, to hoard its joys within his own bosom—no disposition, exclusively to appropriate its great benefits. But, on the contrary, as soon as the sinner is made to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, so soon does he feel within, a desire to proclaim the glad tidings—to tell of the wonderful mercy of God in Jesus, and to persuade others to taste and see that the Lord is good.

A deep anxiety for the spiritual and eternal welfare of others, on the part of its converts, is, indeed, a distinguishing feature of the Christian religion—discoverable in the history of the believer, just in proportion to the measure of faith communicated. It was this that led John, the appointed harbinger of the King of Glory, to a life of abstinence among the mountains and deserts of Judea; 'twas this that gave utterance to the cry, in the wilderness, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" 'twas this that provoked the rebuke, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come." This anxiety pervaded the bosom of the Saviour himself, when upon earth in the flesh. His interest in the great work of man's redemption was not absorbed by the mere object of its accomplishment; He was concerned, most deeply concerned, that the children of men

should be benefitted by His salvation—that they should come to a knowledge of the truth—that they should believe and be saved. Hence the touching appeal: “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” It was this anxiety, that forced the apostles “into journeyings often, into perils of waters, into perils of robbers, into perils by their own countrymen, into perils by the heathen, into perils in the city, into perils in the wilderness, into perils in the sea, into perils among false brethren: in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.” It was this that nerved Luther to the task of originating the great moral revolutions of the sixteenth century, which swept like whirlwinds over the face of society—of arousing the church from the dark thralldom into which she had fallen, and slumbered so long, and of preaching to the priest-ridden natives the free remission of sins without money and without price.—It is this that induces the missionary to cut asunder the dearest and tenderest ties, and go in quest of kingdoms and islands and tribes, unfriendly, unhealthy, and barbarous; to preach the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of the Son of God, to the perishing heathen. It is this that has kept, and is still keeping, in successful operation the beautiful system of a preached Gospel, with which we, in common with other nations, are so highly favored. It is to this that we are indebted for the organization of all the benevolent institu-

tions of the age; the beneficial results of which, it may be, eternity alone can reveal. It is this, we trust, that has drawn this assembly together to-day, to celebrate the anniversary of our own beloved Society, the origination of which, may likewise be traced to the same divine implantation in the christian's breast.

Upon an occasion, then, like the present, the anniversary of a society, the object of which is the distribution of the Bible—the free circulation of the Word of God, and the dissemination of the benign principles of the Christian religion, it might not be altogether out of place, or unprofitable, to inquire if this anxiety for the spiritual welfare of others, in the bosoms of christians belonging to the Southern portion of this great Confederacy, prompts them to an impartial inculcation of those benign principles upon all ranks—to inquire if *we* distribute the bread of life alike to all classes, giving to each its portion in due season.

An unbiassed consideration of the facts, necessary to be noticed with a view to the solution of the inquiry just mooted, will conduct us, we fear, to the painful conclusion, that there is amongst us a class, to which, in the administrations of the Word we are parsimoneous—to which, our allowance in holy things is too scanty for the maintenance of vigorous, spiritual life, and upon which thousands are perishing; in brief, that there is amongst us a class of people, in whose bosoms lives the immortal principle, towards which, in religious matters, we are *derelict* in duty. Doubtless our allusion is understood—we mean our slave population.

Of the several particulars wherein consists this dereliction, we will specify but one—the discussion of which will be as much, we feel, as your patience will bear.

We are wanting in duty to our slaves in this, as a very essential particular—that we do not teach them to read the Scriptures of Eternal Truth. It is to this point, upon this occasion, that we would ask your attention.

We object, *toto cælo*, to the legislation of this, or of any other State, where such may exist, the effect of which is to exclude the slave from the light of the Bible, as reflected from its own pages; and to clog the free circulation of the Word of God, with fines, imprisonments and stripes. We object to all such legislation, wherever found, as enacts, that slaves shall not be taught to read.

We are aware of the process of induction, by which the conclusion is reached, that the slave should not be taught a knowledge of letters—and of the public good meant to be secured, by giving to this conclusion the form, force, and authority of legislation. Not intending to pervert the premises of the reasoner, or misstate the object of the legislator, we would avoid the insinuation, that this legislation, though objectionable, proceeded from the head or heart of the infidel—that it is the offspring of feelings unfriendly to the Word of God, or that it germinated in a desire to suppress a knowledge of the Bible, to be-darken its teachings, or to be-cloud its illuminations. That no blow to christianity, or disrespect to the Bible, or hostility whatever to the promulgation of its principles is in-

tended by it, we readily grant. But, the reasoning adopted upon the subject is short, and is this: It is taken for granted that slavery is most compatible with a state of profound ignorance; that it will not bear the least degree of enlightenment; and that just in proportion to their elevation and advancement, intellectually, will be the restlessness and dissatisfaction of slaves with their condition—thus originating the danger that this restlessness and dissatisfaction might lead to rebellion and insubordination—to the perpetuation of horrors akin to those of St. Domingo, or of tragedies similar to those formerly enacted in and about Stono, and to prevent the bloody occurrence of which, is the public good meant to be accomplished by the legislation referred to.

Such, we claim to be a correct representation of the premises of the reasoner, and a true statement of the object of the legislator. Neither would we misrepresent the positions of those who defend this legislation, as they allege, upon principles of political policy. Of them, it is but just to say, there are those who are willing to admit, and in fact, who do admit, that no danger whatever is to be apprehended from allowing our slaves to read the Scriptures; provided their reading could be confined to the Scriptures.—But they assert that this ability to read the Bible would be perverted and abused—that other documents, books and papers, would be sought and read, and that the information which would be derived therefrom, might, in its consequences, prove disastrous to the institution of slavery, and imminently dangerous and hostile to the safety of the master. But it is

not to be denied, that there are others who boldly assert and maintain, that the degree of mental improvement, derivable from the Bible itself and alone, would disturb the slave's contentment, and probably lead to the same fearful results—to prevent the possible occurrence of which, they all agree that slaves should not at all be taught a knowledge of letters, or even allowed to read the Bible—alleging, at the same time, (we will do them the justice to remark,) that for all the essential purposes of salvation, oral instruction from the Bible is amply sufficient.

We respectfully submit, that this reasoning comes with a bad grace from the lips of those who have been reared up amidst the privileges of a Gospel land, and in the light of a Gospel day—that this legislation is unbecoming the South—that it is unbecoming the statute books of our own chivalrous State—and that it is a slur upon the christian age in which we live.

The fear to put the Bible into the hands of the slave, argues, in the first place, a want of confidence in the efficacy of its divine teachings, which no man, especially no Christian, should allow himself to feel or acknowledge. It is a fact, that in all our reasonings upon this subject, the *effect* of the Bible, as read by himself, upon the heart of the slave, is entirely overlooked; no allowance whatever is made for this,—it never once enters into the calculation. We look at its influence upon the *intellect*, and argue learnedly and plausibly therefrom; but no view of its influence upon the *heart*, is entertained for a moment. We base our calculations upon its *outward*, not upon its *inward* teachings. We reason from its effects upon the

outward, not from its effects upon the *inner* man. We gaze with trembling and alarm upon the *natural* man, as he stands with his Bible in his hand and reads, dreading the rising of a mighty tempest of rebellion in his breast, as he drinks in knowledge, and his mind opens up to the realities of his physical condition, and of the world around him. But never, with opposite emotions swelling the bosom, do we allow ourselves to gaze upon the *spiritual* man, as he stands with the same inspired volume in his hand, and reads, awed by its commands, humbled by its teachings, and led by its promises, as *he too* drinks in knowledge, and *his* mind opens up to the realities of his condition in the sight of the great God, and of the world beyond him.

It is strange, that when the question is, as to placing the Bible in the hands of the slave, we are inclined to ascribe to its teachings a reverse influence to that usually claimed for them. We argue as though the Bible, in the hands of the slave, would metamorphose him into a demon—a blood-thirsty insurrectionist—a midnight assassin. Not so when the question is, as to placing the Bible in the hands of the China-man, the Hindoo, or the inhabitants of the Isles of the sea.—Then we are loud and long in praise of its power upon the human heart—to melt it, to humble it, to subdue it, and to disgorge it of everything that is fierce, angry, turbulent, rebellious, or that is at all hostile to the peaceful sway of Immanuel's sceptre. It is passing strange, that when the question is, as to placing the Bible in the hands of the slave, we reverse our opinions as to the importance of an ability to read the word, and argue the ample sufficiency of oral Scriptural

instruction, for all the essential purposes of salvation. Not so when the question is, as to placing it in the hands of the heathen. Then we argue the perfect impotency of oral instruction, aside from an ability to read the Scriptures, and call loudly for the school-house and the printing press, even at the cost of immense expenditures. But to me, the strangest thing of all, is the fact, that the very same Christians—followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, who invoke the prayers of the Church and of Christendom, for men and means to put the Bible into the hands of the idolator—should invoke legislation, and use the strong arm of the law to wrest it from their own slaves, members of their own families, nurses of their own children.

Does the feature of slavery justify the distinction made, or destroy the palpable antagonism in the reasoning? If the teachings of Holy Writ were at war with the institution of slavery, and we were struggling to maintain it in opposition to those teachings; or if the proposition was, to put the slave in possession of a knowledge of the arts and sciences—to confer a high degree of intellectual culture—fully to educate him—we might be disposed to yield the point. But, how stands the case? Why, that the teachings of the Bible are not only not unfriendly to the institution of slavery, but that it is in them the institution is most amply recognized; it is upon them that we triumphantly rest its defence; and the proposition is, not to educate, but simply to teach the slave to read the Bible—*nothing more*.

Does the accessibility of the slave to other books, documents and papers, in the libraries, and upon the

tables of the master, and his exposure to the baneful influence of pamphlets and tracts, from the hands of designing and intriguing men, justify the hard decision that he is to be denied the privilege of reading the Word of God? If we had no confidence whatever in the conservative nature of the influence of divine truth, operating upon the heart, and could be made sensible of the possibility of danger from this source, still we would say, give the Bible to the slave—release it from the embargo of legislation—and would urge, by all means, to provide against the danger in some way, other than by muzzling the oracles of the living God. Might not all cause of alarm from apprehensions of this character, be removed, by some degree of care and particularity on the part of the master, and the enforcement of stringent regulations to counteract the influence of the moral incendiary?—Let the key be turned upon the library, as it is turned upon the coffer, the grocery room and the granary; let the slave know, and be taught, that he will be as certainly and as surely punished for purloining from the former, as he always has been, and will be, for purloining from the latter; and let the movements of the suspicious be watched with the greatest vigilance—and these stringent measures, in all their force, be brought to bear, upon the slightest deviation from conduct of the strictest propriety, in reference to our slave population. It occurs to us, that in this way, the danger, if any, might be avoided.

But does the fact, that the slave lives in a land of Bibles and of Bible institutions, and enjoys the benefit of the reflected light of the Gospel, justify the as-

sumption of responsibility, upon our part, to withhold from him the written Word? We admit the possibility of the slave's salvation with the lights now before him. We go further, and admit that many of them are saved by the use of the instrumentalities now enjoyed. But, are we prepared to say, that many more of them would not be saved by means of the reading of the Word? This is the question for our consideration, and a grave one it is. Are we satisfied that the spiritual interests of not a single individual of our slave population would be promoted by means of reading the Bible? If we are not, isn't it a fearful responsibility we have assumed? We should see to it, that we stand not in the way of the salvation of souls—yea, of even *one* soul.

In the second place, this fear to put the Bible into the hands of the slave, argues either a want of confidence in the *Scriptural propriety* of the institution, or a want of confidence in the *propriety* of our own conduct, in reference to the institution. We are either afraid for the light of the Bible to shine upon the institution, or for it to shine upon our conduct as slaveholders. We are either afraid for the slave to bring his condition to the test of *Bible authority*, or we are afraid for him to square our conduct towards him as his master, by the plumb of *Bible injunction*. Which is it? We deny all want of confidence in the entire propriety and morality of the institution; we know that it is recognised and authorized in the teachings of Holy Writ; we feel that it can be successfully and triumphantly maintained and defended upon Scriptural grounds; we have not the slightest misgivings up-

on this point. We cannot, and do not fear, therefore, to exhibit to the slave our warrant for holding him in bondage—to unfold to him the broad parchment upon which is written our right and title to his obedience and service, sealed with the seal of Him who rules and reigns on high. Can it be, then, that we are afraid for the light of the Bible to shine upon the manner in which we, as masters, fulfil the conditions and covenants also written upon this parchment, for our observance, and of which we would keep the slave in the dark? Can it be, because the practical operation of the system is, in many respects, far below the Bible standard of duty imposed upon the master, and we would dislike for the slave, by the light of its teachings, to be enabled to discern, day by day, our glaring defalcations? Is it information and knowledge of this character, that we fear the slave will derive from the perusal of the sacred pages of the Bible, to render him restless and dissatisfied with his condition—to fill his heart with rebellion against the authority of the master, and to impel him to deeds of bloody daring? If so, from what source arises the impediment in the way of putting the Scriptures into his hands? From the Bible, or from the master? Is it to be found in the teachings of the Bible, or in any thing connected with the Bible? Or, is it to be found in the conduct of the master? Is the Bible the author of the difficulty, or is the master its author? We have seen that the Bible is not guilty of the charge; if the master is, let the guilt be wiped out, and then the difficulty will be removed.

But be the facts and the opinions of others, upon this point, as they may, and what they may, it is our deliberate conviction that this is, in truth and verity, the only impediment or difficulty in the way of the slave's access to the Scriptures. The Bible has done its duty most fully, in reference to the institution of slavery: it recognizes it from beginning to ending; it authorizes it from the plain and legitimate inferences of its teachings. It does more: it speaks to the slave; it tells him that he is a slave; that he has a master, and solemnly enjoins him to render obedience and service to that master. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." "*Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; for this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." This is the language of inspiration—these are the duties imposed upon servants, and this is the service exacted of them by the master, to the strict letter of the law, if, in many instances, it is not transcended.

Now, if, as masters, we would only do our duty— if we would only study the full import of the text; "Masters give unto your servants that which is just

and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven ;" if we would meet the full measure of duty imposed upon us, when we exacted the fulfillment of the measure imposed upon our servants—if more were not exacted upon the one hand, than the Bible authorized, and less rendered on the other, than it required ; or, in other words, if the scriptural view of slavery were allowed to prevail,—that is, a reasonable obedience and service on the part of the servant, and humanity and kindness on the part of the master, upon the mere operation of the simple principle of human nature, aside from any influence of the Bible, as an inspired volume, we would have nothing to fear from putting it, or, in my opinion, any other book, into the hands of the slave. He would be drawn towards, and bound to the master in the strongest bonds of affection, and by the ties of a friendship that no influence could sever.

Show me the man who looks upon the institution of Slavery, as an institution affording mutual benefits,—advantages to the slave, as well as advantages to the master—a man whose bearing towards his slave is uniformly kind and humane—who sympathises with them in sickness, in their bereavements and petty troubles—and I will show you servants whose devotion to their masters would not only prompt them to a willing and faithful obedience and service, or manifest itself in expressions of the most heartfelt sorrow at affliction and bereavement in the masters family, but even to cause them to sacrifice their lives in behalf of their master, or any member of their master's family. The truth of this is verified by every-days observation and experience. We have seen the slave with a smiling face, a buoyant heart, and a nimble foot, fly in cheerful obedience to the commands of a kind master ; we have seen him immersed in the

very bitterness of sorrow, at the occurrence of a master's death, or the death of a master's child ; nay, we have seen him jeopardise his life in defence of his master and his family ; and all this, too, under the operation of a system which puts the Bible in the background, so far as they are concerned, and when the rays of its light are but feebly reflected. How much might this happy state of things, between master and servant, be enhanced, by the genial influence of the light of Revelation beaming broadly upon it—each with a copy of the law in his hand, learning well his duties, the one to the other, and to his God, and each inspired with a holy determination faithfully to discharge them ? Why, to such an extent, as to put the stability of the institution beyond the possibility of cavil, or of a doubt—as to make it perfectly impregnable.

But, on the other hand, show me a man who looks upon the institution of slavery as a *one sided* affair—as an institution *alone* for the benefit and advantage of the master—a man who regards the slave as he does the mule or the ox—a beast of burden ; whose mind is ever revolving the problem, the greatest amount of labor at the least expense of food and clothing—who visits the slave in sickness, as he visits the sick horse, with a drench, hoping to witness its remedial effects in his speedy return to toil—whose cupidity impels him to drive him, under the point of the lash, from earliest dawn to latest eve, to promote his own selfish purposes—to accumulate the riches of this world for the luxurious rioting of himself and family—and I will show you servants whose hearts and feelings are utterly estranged from their master, and in whose bosoms rankle a hatred and an antagonism towards their master, and towards the institution of slavery, as deadly as the reptile's poison. And, moreover, I will show you a man who ever lives in fear for

his own life at the hands of his slaves, and in constant dread of an insurrection; who is ever harping his doubts as to the stability of the institution, and calling loudly for stringent measures to secure its perpetuity; and who is ever ready to stigmatize the man, who does not fully subscribe to his own cowardly and tyrannical whims, with an odious epithet; to whisper into the ears of the community the hint, that his sentiments would better become the atmosphere of a high northern climate. A state of affairs like this, between master and servant, would not bear the light of the Bible, we confess. It is in such a state of affairs that the fear to put it into the hands of the slave would not be out of place. It is just such a state of affairs, if allowed to continue, as will ever keep it from him. Besides, it is just such a state of affairs as will weaken the institution, by destroying the confidence of the master in its stability, and of the slave in its propriety and justice—as will expose it to the shafts of the enemy, and ever keep it tottering to and fro.

But, thirdly and lastly—this fear to put the Bible into the hands of the slave, argues a want of confidence in the faithfulness of the God of the Bible, to protect and defend his people from all harm and danger, when in the conscientious discharge of their duty. If our argument in defence of the institution of slavery be correct—if slavery is right in the sight of Heaven, we should not hesitate for one moment to give the Bible to the slave, as a light to his feet, and a lamp to his path, and trust the consequences to God. If it is his will and purpose for one portion of his intelligent creatures to live in bondage to another portion of his intelligent creatures—to serve another, to be slaves to another—he will never allow harm and dismay to result to the one, as a *consequence* of the faithful discharge of so plain and obvious a duty as teaching the other to

to read and meditate upon his Holy Word ; but will maintain the institution, and bless and chasten it to the mutual benefit, advantage, and happiness of both master and servant. The idea, supposition, or fear, that the converse of this would be the result, is contrary to the import and meaning of Revelation ; it is at variance with all just conceptions of the attributes of the Deity, and is at war with the whole scheme and spirit of the Christian Religion. Yet, our conduct in the premises, forces us into this position, it puts into our mouths the argument, that if we teach our slaves to read the Bible, however humbly and prayerfully we discharge the duty, in hopes that it will make them better and happier here, and redound to the honor and glory of God, in the eternal happiness of many of them in the world to come—still, we fear that God will not sanctify the means of the reading of his Word—one of his own appointed means, to the conviction, conversion, and salvation of our servants. We *even* fear that he will allow the information derivable from the Bible—the scriptures of Eternal Truth, his own Word—to stir up rebellion in the hearts of our servants, or permit the ability to read his Word, to be perverted and abused, to the utter destruction of the institution, amidst the terrible scenes of a bloody insurrection. Therefore we will leave God, and his Word, and his superintending and protecting providence entirely out of the question : we cannot trust him ; we will take the whole subject into our own hands, and depend upon our own arm and strength to maintain the institution and to protect and defend ourselves and families ; we will pass by the legislation of Heaven upon the subject, as weak and inefficient, and look to human legislation as amply sufficient, and all powerful to insure the stability and perpetuity of the institution. We will not resort to moral appliances in aid of the institution—as argument, to convince the slave that his

condition is right in the light of Revelation, of reason, and of a liberal philanthropy—persuasion, to render him contented therewith—exhortation, to receive from him a willing and cheerful obedience and service; but we will make use of physical appliances, the gibbet and the lash, to compel him to be contented with his condition, whether he believes it to be right or wrong, and to extort from him obedience and service, whether or not he is willing to render them. We will have nothing to do with the Bible, by way of enabling us to manage and govern our slaves; for this purpose it is worthless, utterly worthless; we cannot trust it's God. A position resting upon sandy, crumbling foundations—an argument abounding in fallacies and absurdities—a conclusion fraught with the greatest danger.

There is enough between the lids of the Bible, upon the subject, fully impressed upon the mind and heart of the slave by human and divine instrumentalities, to guarantee the stability and perpetuity of the institution of slavery, without one line of legislation, upon our part, looking to the accomplishment of such an end. So rooted and grounded are we in the faith of the entire Scriptural propriety of slavery, from the fulness of the Bible upon the subject, we cannot discard from the mind the belief, that it is by means of the teachings of His Word, in justification of the institution, operating by divine influence upon the heart of the slave, and we may say of the master too, the Almighty intended to secure its perpetuation. If so, we should trust Him for the accomplishment of His purposes, and look alone to these means in hopes of maintaining the institution; for it is by them alone that it can be maintained.

But we have wandered afar off from this view of the matter. It seems to be a part of our system to keep the teachings of the Bible, upon the subject of

slavery, entirely out of the sight of the slave—to keep him in profound ignorance of them. The effect of the legislation of which we complain, is certainly to suppress a knowledge of them, at least, so far as such knowledge can be obtained by reading. As to their promulgation, the Pulpit is dumb. As to their inculcation, the master is mute. We have yet to hear the first sermon, presenting to either the master or servant, an argument in defence of slavery. We have yet to hear the first sermon, explaining and enforcing the relative duties of master and servant. 'Tis true, occasionally these duties are alluded to, incidentally, in discourses explaining and enforcing the general duties and obligations appertaining to the Christian religion; but, from some cause, our ministers are indisposed to face the naked, abstract subject in mixed congregations of masters and servants, or when discoursing to either alone.

In the family circle, around the fireside, or at the table, in the presence of our servants, all allusion to the subject is carefully avoided. Even when the subject is under discussion, and a servant, in the discharge of some duty, makes his appearance, the finger is instantly placed upon the mouth, and all is as silent as the grave—as still as death. The master never assembles his servants and opens his Bible for the purpose of selecting therefrom and presenting to them, passages in proof of the Scriptural propriety of the institution of slavery—convincing them from the Scriptures that their condition is right in the sight of God, and persuading them to be contented with it—or of instructing them in their duties as servants, from texts also extracted from the pages of the Sacred Record—the very authority of which would have a chastening and salutary influence upon their hearts.

In consequence of this course of policy, there is a prevailing ignorance upon the subject of slavery, on

the part of both master and servant, by no means congenial to the health of the institution. We would not be startled at the announcement of the fact, that two-thirds of our slave population did not know or believe that the subject of slavery, or their condition was ever alluded to in the Bible; that two-thirds of them are in utter ignorance of the authority by which we essay to hold them in bondage, or demand at their hands obedience and service. To such, how galling is the yoke—how bitter the bondage. Nor would we be startled at the announcement of the fact, that many masters were ignorant of a Scriptural view of the subject—of the true grounds upon which to place the institution, and of their duties as masters—which ignorance betrays them into many errors and abuses, the tendency of which is to undermine the institution.—Now, relieve the minds of both parties of this darkness and ignorance, and thoroughly educate and indoctrinate them into clear, sound, intelligent, Scriptural views of the whole subject, and of what an immense weight will the institution be relieved; and of what a burden will the bosoms of slaves, and the minds of masters also be relieved.

But, in view of the gross ignorance and superstition of our slaves in all things pertaining to religion; in view of the utter indifference of the great mass of them upon the subject of religion; in view of the degrading vices, immoralities and pollutions prevailing amongst them; in view of the vast disproportion in the numbers of those who even profess a hope in Jesus, and are found within the pale of the Church, and those who know him not and are found without; and of the disproportion in the number of blacks and whites converted to religion—if these are the results of denying them the privilege of reading the Word; one of the appointed means for the conversion of the world—

should we not rather fear and tremble, lest God in His anger would use them as instruments in His hands, to execute upon us terrible judgments for the assumption of such responsibility? And can we say that these results are not attributable to this cause? To what else can we attribute them? Not to the Church; for it is our boast that the negro, with the white man, has an equal right to all the privileges of the Church—that they enjoy, in common, all the advantages of the administrations of the Sanctuary. Not to defects in the moral discipline of the family; for it is one of our favorite arguments in defence of the institution, that the slave is blest with the religious instructions, counsel and encouragements of the christian master. We ask again, to what else are they attributable? If the Church and the master are not fearfully and awfully deficient in duty, the conclusion is irresistible. Would it not be wise, then, to pause and examine well the foundations of the position we have taken—to study profoundly the tremendous import of the responsibility we have assumed? and never, *never* cease to ponder the subject until we are satisfied, in our minds, hearts and consciences, that there is no fallacy in the argument which excludes the slave from the light of the Bible, as reflected from its own pages. Risk the dangers of the thunderbolt—risk the dangers of the tempest—nay, of the bloody-plot—of an indiscriminate massacre; but risk not the danger of the wrath of an incensed God. *Tamper* not with the woes denounced against him who adds to, or subtracts from the law. *Tamper* not with the responsibility of detracting, in the slightest degree, from the fullest influence of the written word. It is better, by far, to trust the faithfulness of God, than to run the risk of stirring his anger. Better to suffer the utter destruction of the body, than that the soul should dwell in eternal burnings.