

E 449

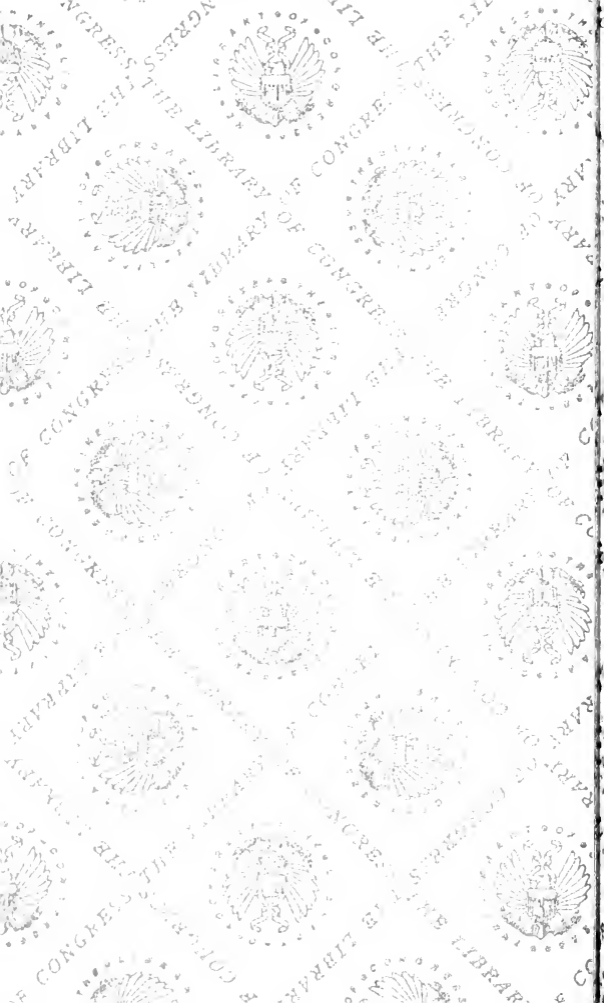
.W571

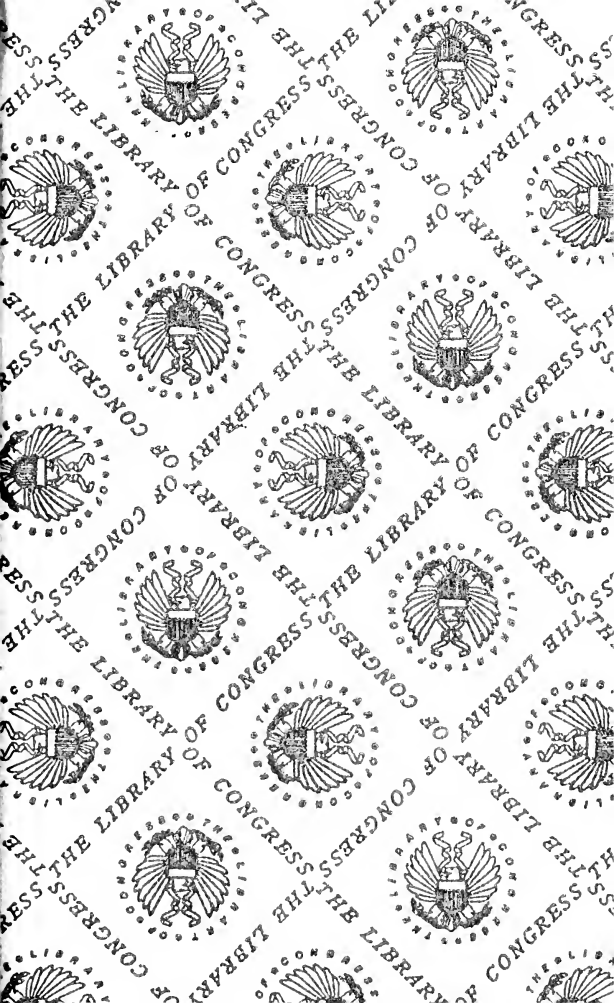
Copy 2

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00001738963







7
S L A V E R Y

AND THE

American Board of Commissioners

FOR

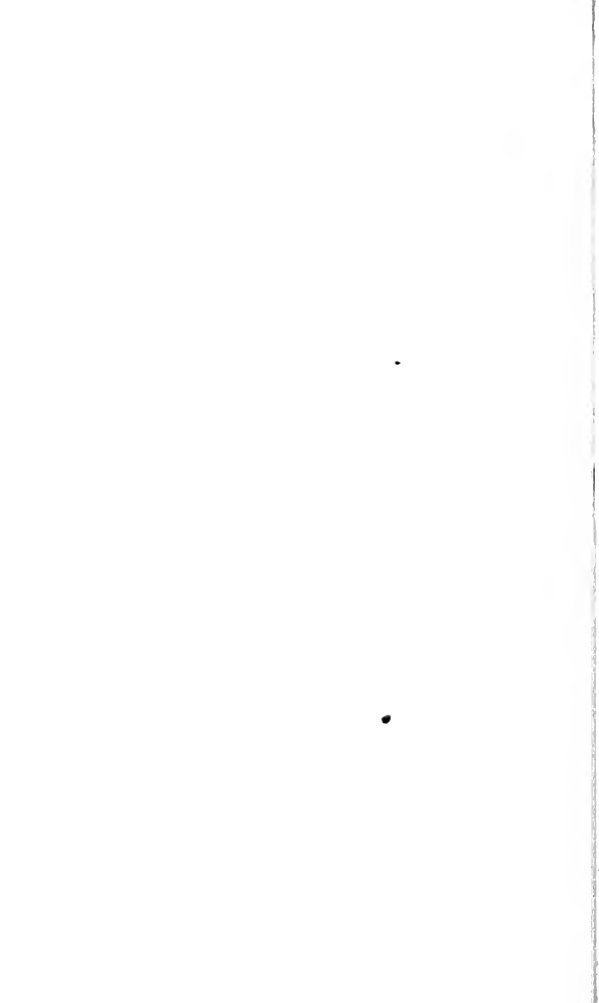
27-5
FOREIGN MISSIONS.

NEW YORK:

AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, 138 NASSAU ST.

BOSTON: 21 CORNHILL.

1859.



W. C. 1875/11

The American Board of Commissioners FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

This Association, instituted in 1810 for the diffusion of the Gospel among foreign heathen nations, now consists of two hundred and five Corporate members, and more than ten thousand Honorary members. Its receipts from the religious public, having pretty steadily increased from the commencement, amounted last year to more than \$370,000.

From the year 1840 to the present time, the Board have been urged at almost every annual meeting, by various petitions and memorials, to withdraw the support and countenance which they were affording to slavery. Their utter indifference in regard to that subject before it was forced upon them from without, is shown by the facts that they not only then (as now) freely admitted slaveholders to their churches, as Christians, but that several of their *missionaries* in the Cherokee and Choctaw nations were *slaveholders*, and others extensively used the hired labor of slaves, paying therefor, not the laborer himself, but the pretended owner of the laborer, and thus participating in that system which defrauded the actual laborer of part of his wages. Moreover, they were

so far from discouraging slavery by church discipline, that Mr. Treat, one of the Secretaries of the Board, represented the increased number of slaves in the Cherokee and Choctaw nations, and the general preference there felt for investing money in this 'species of property,' as one of the results of 'the doctrines of the Gospel having exerted their appropriate influence.' [*Missionary Herald*, the official organ of the A. B. C. F. M., October 1848, p. 349.]

We propose now to show, by ample quotation from the language of the Cherokee and Choctaw missionaries, (as given in the Annual Reports of the Board,) and from the acquiescence of the Board in the continuance of the course of policy indicated in that language, that both these parties hold a pro-slavery (and thus an anti-Christian) position.

The missionaries favor slavery in a three-fold manner; first, by entirely abstaining from the rebuke of slavery, though an aggravated form of that wickedness is prosperous and flourishing in the very region where they pretend to exercise the function of ministers of the Gospel; next, by taking, and openly proclaiming that they will continue to take, the men who are stained with that wickedness into full membership in their churches; and, lastly, by appealing to the Christian Scriptures in justification of this course of policy, and claiming God's approval of it, thus perverting that very Christianity of which they pretend to be the ministers, and teaching another heathenism to the people whom they claim to have converted from heathenism. Here is their language:

Extracts from the letter of the Cherokee missiona-

ries on slavery, signed by Elizur Butler, *Moderator*, and S. A. Worcester, *Clerk*:—

‘In regard to the question of rejecting any person from the church *simply* because he is a *slaveholder*, we cannot for a moment hesitate. For (1) we regard it as *certain* that *the Apostles, who are our patterns, did receive slaveholders to the communion of the Church*; and we have not yet been able to perceive any such difference between their circumstances and ours as to justify us in departing from their practice in this respect. And (2) our general rule is to receive all to our communion who give evidence that they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and we cannot doubt that *many slaveholders do give such evidence*.

‘Nor can we even make it a test of piety, or a condition of admission to the privileges of the Church, that a candidate *should express a determination not to live and die a slaveholder*.’—39th Annual Report, 1848, p. 93.

‘*Occasional exchanges of masters are so inseparable from the existence of slavery that the churches could not consistently receive slaveholders to their communion at all, and at the same time forbid all such exchanges*. We regard it, therefore, as IMPOSSIBLE TO EXERCISE DISCIPLINE FOR THE BUYING OR SELLING OF SLAVES, except in flagrant cases of manifest disregard to the welfare of the slave.’—p. 94.

‘In regard to the separation of parents and children, we must first remark, that it is one of those things which are not forbidden by any *express INJUNCTION OF SCRIPTURE*.’ * * * ‘It is impossible, in our circumstances, to make it a general rule that the separation of parents and children, by sale or purchase, shall be regarded as a disciplinable offence.’—pp. 94, 95.

Extracts from the letter of the Choctaw missionaries on slavery, signed by C. KINGSBURY, ALFRED

WRIGHT, CYRUS BYINGTON, E. HOTCHKIN, C. C. COPELAND, DAVID BREED, Jr., H. K. COPELAND, and D. H. WINSHIP, with a signature of dissent from J. C. STRONG :—

‘ We have endeavored as a mission to keep aloof from the abolition movement.’—p. 98.

‘ We feel that the Bible contains all that we have need to know or teach. And we prefer TO USE THE PLAIN LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE, just as it is, UPON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.’—p. 98.

‘ We wish to touch briefly on the history of our connection with slavery. *We have been and are connected with it in two ways*; by employing slaves as laborers, and by admitting them *and their masters to the Church.*’—p. 98.

‘ Several masters have given evidence of piety, and were received into the Church, BECAUSE THE APOSTLES HAVE SET US PLAIN EXAMPLES.’—p. 100.

‘ As a civil relation, it [slavery] exists by virtue of the constitution and laws of the land. We are taught in the Bible our duties as citizens. It may be deemed our duty by some to adopt a train of measures which shall *aim in their object* directly to countervail the whole system, and in the end undermine the entire fabric which human legislation has framed in regard to slavery. *We do not feel that we are required to adopt such a course.* Nor do we regard this as our work.’—Ib.

‘ As slavery, with various modifications, has for a long time had an existence *in the Church of God*, it is proper for us TO INQUIRE HOW THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD IN OLD TIME WERE TAUGHT BY HIM, AS WELL AS HOW THEY CONDUCTED IN REGARD TO IT.’—p. 101.

The Cherokee and Choctaw missionaries have held this ground, and acted upon it, ever since 1848, when

these letters were published. And yet the Board continue, to this day, to employ and support, to recommend and endorse them, as Christian missionaries, as ministers of the Gospel.

To approach more nearly to an adequate conception of the guilt of the American Board of Foreign Missions in this matter, we must bear in mind the following facts:—

1. The Cherokee and Choctaw Indians were slaveholders when the Board first established their missions there. The Board knew that they were sending their missionaries—that is, the men who were to execute *their* work, and to represent the character of *their* association, and also to represent Christianity—into the midst of slaveholders. They knew perfectly well that the question would come up, whether the religious system which those missionaries were to teach would favor slavery or oppose slavery. And yet they left them without a word of direction, or even of suggestion, as to how they should meet this momentous question. This does not justify, nor in the slightest degree extenuate, the pro-slavery course which the missionaries pursued; it was their imperative duty to make it clear to the ignorant and vicious people among whom they were laboring, that slaveholding was no more permitted by the Christian system than murder, theft, adultery or drunkenness; they had the whole matter in their own power from the beginning; if they kept these last-named vices out of the Church, why did they let slaveholding into it? If they let slaveholding in, why did they keep these out? They are as utterly inexcusable as a Hindoo missionary

would be who should expressly reserve to his converts the right of worshipping Juggernaut.

But equally inexcusable is the conduct of the Board, in not helping their missionaries to be faithful in this important matter by express instruction, warning and admonition, addressed to this very point. They knew not only that slaveholding was a prominent and easily besetting sin of the heathen people in question, but that, in neighboring regions, the Christian name also was prostituted to the allowance of it. It was their imperative duty to have fortified their missionaries beforehand against this danger ; to have lightened the odium which Christian faithfulness would assuredly have brought upon them, by express instructions and an absolute prohibition of complicity with slaveholding or toleration of it for one moment in their Church-communion. This was the Board's *first* violation of duty in this matter.

2. After the missionaries had entered into complicity with slavery by *holding* slaves, and *hiring* slaves, and *freely admitting slaveholders into their churches, without a word of protest against the system*, the Board still kept silence. They made no objection to either of these forms of sin. And the whole history of the transaction shows *why* they made no objection ! It was because they *felt* none ! It was because they were perfectly willing to see slavery taken under the protection of their churches, and to see the Christian name abused to the extent of becoming its bulwark ! They remained silent and indifferent, even after this wickedness had been exposed to the public gaze by the Abolitionists ; and it was not until the subsequent

echoing of this remonstrance by some of their own contributors, who had been converted by the Abolitionists, that they did any thing whatever in the premises. Their silence gave consent to the sin, so long as it was possible to remain silent.

3. Before the Board finally disposed of the pro-slavery letters of the Cherokee and Choctaw missionaries, and of the temporizing reply of Mr. Treat, *by leaving them all in the hands of that Prudential Committee of whom Mr. Treat had been the mouthpiece*, Rev. Dr. Blanchard, of Illinois, moved the following resolutions by way of amendment:—

‘Resolved, That this Board distinctly admits and affirms the principle, that slaveholding is a practice which is not to be allowed in the Christian Church.

‘Resolved, That it is, in the judgment of the Board, the duty of our missionaries in the Cherokee and Choctaw nations to discontinue the practice of hiring slaves of their owners to do the work of the missions; and, in the reception of members, to act on the principle laid down by Mr. Treat and the Prudential Committee, that slaveholding is *prima facie* evidence against the piety of the candidates applying for admission to the church.’

This amendment was unanimously rejected; but afterwards, in consideration of Dr. Blanchard’s consent to withdraw it, the rejection was reconsidered by a vote of forty to thirteen, and the following compromise ended the matter. Dr. Blanchard withdrew his resolutions, and the Board agreed that they might be entered on the records of the meeting.

4. When the Board were forced, by the increased number of remonstrances from their contributors, and

the prospective danger of withdrawal of contributions, to do *something* in regard to slavery, that something was manifestly directed to a removal of the reproach, and of the agitation consequent upon it, rather than of the sin. It was plain, alike from what the Board did then, and from what they had refrained from doing before, that they did not care for the oppression suffered by the slaves, nor for the sin of authenticating that oppression by the admission of its perpetrators to their churches. They wanted merely that which would serve to avert agitation, and to continue the contribution of cash to their coffers. They wanted, in relation to slavery, just what their dear brother William A. Hallock, Secretary of the Tract Society, wanted, in relation to the rejection, by that body, of Rev. Samuel Wolcott's tract, entitled, 'The Sin of Oppression'—namely, 'TO LET THE MATTER REST WITHOUT NOISE' ! We say they *wanted* only this, because they *acted* as if they wanted nothing else. And this is what they did.

When it was no longer possible to keep silence without losing men and money, the Board changed its line of policy, and used pious talk instead of silent indifference as a shield against agitation. Their Prudential Committees, and their Special Committees, and their Special Agents, between the years 1844 and 1850 wrote voluminously (though by no means luminously) about slavery—'about it, and about it.' They specially avoided giving *instructions* or *directions* to their missionaries, but they made an immense amount of pious dissertation, exhortation and amplification, into which were infused all sorts of remon-

stances, queries, hints, suggestions and insinuations, which plainly meant—like the whispered stage ‘aside,’ the wink, or the nudge, which the double-dealer privately gives to one party, while the other side of his face presents a profound seriousness to the other parties concerned, and to the throng of spectators—‘*Can’t you get this confounded thing out of our way?*’ They mixed these substantial and designed-to-be-effective ingredients of their communications (varied by fine shades of gradation from open remonstrance to wink-like suggestion) with an immense mass of plausible matter adapted to quiet the doubts of their own remonstrants and of the public. They wrote pages upon pages of indefinite pious phraseology, and as much more of pious phraseology particularly directed to the subject of slavery. They wrote against slavery very hard and severe things, indeed almost every thing that was bad, *except the decision that it was unfit for admission to the Christian Church.* They used again and again language which would have been quite sufficient for the utter condemnation of slavery, *if it had not gone side by side with the suggestion of excuses for that sin, and the express admission that the pro-slavery missionaries were, after all, to have their own way in the matter, and take as many slaveholders into their churches as they chose.*

There were, however, two classes of pro-slavery men who were dissatisfied with this double-barrelled arrangement of the Reports of the Board. The more ignorant and stupid of the slaveholding church-members of the South were not satisfied to have any alloy of anti-slavery talk mixed with the liberal al-

lowance of pro-slavery life and practice which the Board had conceded to them. They wanted their 'peculiar institution' praised as well as allowed, and they took umbrage at those pious generalities of the Board which spoke ill of slavery in the very act of allowing it. The complaints of these people, (who were so stupid as not to know, or so ungrateful as not to care, that the Board was doing the very utmost in its power for them,) enforced by the complaints of the missionaries themselves, brought out a new statement from the Board in 1849, defining its own position.

The missionaries also took umbrage, and not without reason, at the wounds that had thus been given them in the house of their friends. They knew that the Board, *which itself included slaveholders among its members*, had no intrinsic objection then, any more than formerly, to their admission of slaveholders to the mission churches; they knew that the pious talk against slavery in the Annual Reports was put there only 'for Buncombe,' and was brought out only by the pertinacious inquiries and remonstrances of a small minority of the contributors to its fund; and they very naturally felt aggrieved at the large amount of verbal *censure* of slavery which the Board had incorporated with its continued *allowance* of slavery. Therefore they also complained, and in the Annual Report for 1849, the Board published the following explanatory and deprecatory clauses in relation to the letter above mentioned, written (by direction of the Prudential Committee) by Rev. Selah B. Treat, one of the Corresponding Secretaries, to the Cherokee and

Choctaw missions, and published in the previous Annual Report, pp. 102—111. The *italics* are those of the Report.

‘The letter sent by Mr. Treat to the mission had not that authoritative character which some have attributed to it. It expressed *opinions*, then and still entertained by the Committee; but not in a form which made those opinions *decisions*, or *instructions*. The Committee have given no *instructions* to the missionaries in relation to slavery; they say expressly that they address their brethren ‘*with suggestions and arguments.*’ The distinction between suggestions, opinions and arguments, on the one hand, and decisions, rules and instructions on the other, though necessarily familiar to the conductors of missions, seems to have been overlooked by some who have written on this subject.’ p. 72.

* * * * *

‘This distinction is vital to the proper understanding of Mr. Treat’s letter to the Choctaw mission; and for want of attention to it, very erroneous constructions have been put upon that letter. With this practical distinction in view, moreover, it will be seen that the Committee and the Secretaries have done nothing inconsistent with the letter or spirit of the two fundamental principles recognized by the Board at Brooklyn; namely, that credible evidence of piety is the only thing to be required for admission into the Churches gathered among the heathen; and that missionaries and their Churches are the rightful and exclusive judges as to the sufficiency of this evidence.’
Ib.

* * * * *

‘Nor have the Committee preferred any ‘*charges*’ against the mission. On the contrary, they would repeat the sentiment in the letter of Mr. Treat, expressing their undiminished “confidence in the integrity and faithfulness of these servants of Christ.”’
Ib.

The first of these paragraphs is an admission, on the part of the Board, that the pious talk unfavorable to slavery in their Reports was *merely* talk, and not designed or expected to modify the action of the pro-slavery missionaries.

The second paragraph gives us the theory by which the Board undertake to justify their tolerance of slaveholders in the Mission Churches. They, the Board (they say), are not the persons to examine and decide upon the claims of candidates for membership in the Mission Churches! Oh! no, certainly not! 'The missionaries and their Churches are the rightful and exclusive judges' of that matter; and so, if a missionary and his Church, in a slaveholding country, mutually agree that slavery shall be supported by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Board must acquiesce, however different may be their *opinion!* Say you so, gentlemen of the Board? Then answer us this question. If a missionary and his Church, in Hindostan, shall agree together to admit to church membership those who annually join in the Juggernaut procession, and claim it as a Christian right still to do so, will you *then* content yourself merely with the expression of an adverse *opinion?* Will you *then* refrain from giving *instructions*, while at the same time you continue the pecuniary support of such missionaries and such Churches? We have a right, and the public have a right, to look for a reply to these questions.

The third paragraph above quoted from the 40th Annual Report of the Board contains their full authentication of their pro-slavery missionaries among the Cherokees and Choctaws as *Christian* ministers.

These missionaries had shown as much complaisance in regard to the *suggested* 'opinions' of the Board as could reasonably be expected. They had, in an early stage of the controversy, yielded so far as to discontinue slaveholding in their own persons, and to abridge, at considerable sacrifice of personal convenience, the amount of their *hiring* of slave labor. But when it came to having their own peculiar battery of pious talk turned against themselves—when the very bulletins that contained the allowance of their slaveholding Churches were pieced out with whole pages of unpleasant reflections upon the character and influence of slavery—when the very men whom they *knew* to have approved the beginning and the continuance of their pro-slavery work now pointed disparaging 'opinions, suggestions and arguments' at them before the eyes of men—they could not bear it! Human nature could hardly be expected to bear it! So, upon the point that slavery, however bad it might be, was good enough to be received into their Churches, they made a firm stand, taking the ground (as we have shown by their own words, written in 1848, and quoted at the commencement of this article)—

1. That slaveholding was authorized by the New Testament.

2. That, therefore, they were fully determined not to make slaveholding a ground either for the expulsion of a church-member or the rejection of a candidate.

3. That they would not exercise discipline in the Church either against the general buying and selling of slaves, or the sale of children away from their parents.

4. That they would not adopt any train of measures which should even tend '*in the end*' to overthrow slavery.

The missionaries, we have said, planted themselves firmly upon this ground. But since the Board—while allowing them to retain this position, and to shelter slavery in the Church as thoroughly as they pleased—continued the practice of using pious *quasi* anti-slavery talk in their Annual Reports, six of the seven Choctaw missionaries, in November, 1855, sent in a letter of resignation. The Prudential Committee of the Board, having really no objection to the position and course of policy of the missionaries, desired them to recall their letter of resignation; and to this request the six missionaries replied, under date of Lenox, Choctaw Nation, Sept. 6th, 1856. The whole letter is given in the *New York Observer* of Dec. 2d, 1858. After rehearsing their pro-slavery ground, the six missionaries say:

'If, with the foregoing views—which are known by the people among whom we labor—the Prudential Committee should deem it wise to continue our support, we are willing to try to remain in their service. Accordingly, we have estimated our expenses for the ensuing year. If, on the other hand, the Committee should not think it best to retain us, we shall not expect them to grant us the estimates.'

The *Observer* gives the signatures to this document as follows—

C. KINGSBURY,
C. BYINGTON,
E. HOTCHKIN,

C. C. COPELAND,
O. P. STARK,
J. EDWARDS,

and it adds:

‘The Prudential Committee took the subject into consideration, and, *with this letter before them, made the usual appropriations.* The missionaries, being thus left at liberty to pursue their work in their own way, have continued to prosecute their labors with their usual success.’

The statement of this transaction in the succeeding Annual Report of the Board (for 1856) illustrates so perfectly the pious trickery of reservation, misrepresentation and insinuation with which these documents are made up, that we quote it in full from the 195th page :—

‘In the month of November, four brethren of this mission forwarded a letter to the Missionary House, expressing their wish to be released from their connection with the Board. The Prudential Committee, conceiving that these brethren had misapprehended the true state of the relations existing between them and the Board, directed an answer to this letter to be prepared and forwarded by the Secretary having charge of the correspondence with the Indian missions. A reply to this communication has recently been received, in which the missionaries intimated a willingness to continue their relations to the Board, awaiting the issues of further correspondence. Under these circumstances, the Committee have informed them that, upon receiving their estimates, which they propose forwarding, for the current year, the customary appropriations will be made. The Committee apprehend that a publication of the correspondence pending at the present time would be detrimental to the interests of the mission ; experience having shown that, while negotiations are in progress between the Committee and missionaries, a public discussion of the subject tends to hinder the parties from coming to a harmonious result.’

Thus, in the ingenious phraseology of this Report, the wish of the Board (like that of the 'Tract Society, and of the 'business men's prayer-meetings') to let the subject of slavery 'rest without noise,' is set forth as an apprehension that publicity would be 'detrimental to the interests of the mission'; the six missionaries whose names are signed to the letter published by the *Observer* are compressed into 'four brethren of this mission'; the threat of these 'brethren' that they would leave the Board, unless its *quasi* anti-slavery talk should be counterbalanced by a distinctly renewed license to their pro-slavery position, becomes, by this process of 'free translation,' a conception of the Prudential Committee that these brethren 'had misapprehended the true state of the relations existing between them and the Board'; and finally, that yielding of the Board to the missionaries' demand which closed the negotiation is felicitously veiled by the phrases—'the missionaries intimated a willingness to continue their relations to the Board,' and 'under these circumstances the Committee have informed them that the customary appropriations will be made.'

In the Annual Report for 1857, the very year after this renewed settlement of affairs upon a pro-slavery basis, the Committee say respecting these missions :

'We cannot too highly appreciate the perseverance, the *faithfulness*, and the cheerful and self-denying labors of our missionaries. The Committee see dangers threatening; but they are of such a nature as can be warded off *only by divine interposition*. THEY SEE NO CHANGE TO RECOMMEND, unless it be to suggest to our brethren the inquiry whether there may not be

more attention directed to the training up of natives for teachers and pastors.'

This is as if a Temperance Committee, being called to report on the state of the various eating-houses in this city, should gravely state that 'They see no change to recommend, unless to suggest the inquiry whether there may not be more attention directed to the training up of young men for bar-keepers'!

Lastly, in the 49th Annual Report, published near the close of 1858, the Board still allow the complicity of the missionaries with slavery to pass without either rebuke for the past or prohibition for the future. But the *manner* of allowing an undisturbed continuance to this pro-slavery position—the method by which they let the subject alone, in the very act of seeming to attend to it and regulate it—is so peculiar, and so illustrative of the *indirection* with which this whole matter of slavery has been managed by the Board, as to be worthy of careful scrutiny.

In the first place, the Report proper of the Prudential Committee (extending from p. 23 to p. 147 of the Annual Report of the Board) contains not one word about slavery, good, bad or indifferent, though it certifies, in general, the 'fidelity' of the missionaries, and gives a particular detail of efforts and successes in the cause of 'Temperance.' Moreover, the Resolutions introduced, (p. 18) in behalf of the Prudential Committee, by Rev. Dr. S. I. Pomroy, one of the Secretaries, contain not the slightest allusion to slavery.

The preceding portion of the Forty-Ninth Annual Report (pp. 3—22) is occupied by 'Minutes of the

Annual Meeting' of the Board, and on pages 16 and 17 we find the following report of a special committee, to whom had been referred that portion of the Report of the Prudential Committee which related to the Cherokee and Choctaw Indians :—

'The committee to whom was referred that part of the Annual Report entitled 'North American Indians, No. 1,' have had the same under consideration, and respectfully report :

That the missions included in the document which was referred to this committee, are the mission to the Dakotas and those to the partially civilized nations in the Indian territory.

At Hartford, in 1854, the views of the Board were clearly and definitely expressed in regard to certain laws and acts of the Choctaw government, which were designed to restrain the liberty of the missionaries as teachers of God's word. All the action of the Board since that date, and, so far as we are informed, the action of the Prudential Committee also, has been in conformity with the principles then put upon record. (a)

Your committee have reason to believe that the position of our missionaries among the Choctaws is one of much difficulty and peril. Among the various religious bodies in the States nearest to the Choctaw nation, there has been, as is well known, within the last twenty-five years, a lamentable defection from some of the first and most elementary ideas of Christian morality, insomuch that Christianity has been represented as the warrant for a system of slavery which offends the moral sense of the Christian world, and Christ has thereby been represented as the minister of sin. Our brethren among the Choctaws are in ecclesiastical relations with religious bodies in the adjoining States, the States from which the leading Choctaws are deriving their notions of civilization and of government. In those neighboring States, and

in the Choctaw nation, the missionaries are watched by the upholders of slavery, who are ready to seize upon the first opportunity of expelling them from the field in which they have so long been laboring. By the enemies of the Board and of the missionaries, our brethren are charged with what are called, in those regions, the dangerous doctrines of abolitionism. At the same time they are charged, in other quarters, with the guilt of silence in the presence of a great and hideous wickedness. (b)

It seems, to your committee, desirable that the Board should be relieved, as early as possible, from the unceasing embarrassments and perplexities connected with the missions in the Indian territory. Surely the time is not far distant, when the Choctaw and Cherokee Indians and half-breeds will stand in precisely the same relations to the missionary work with the white people of the adjacent States; and *when the churches there will be the subjects of home missionary more properly than of foreign missionary patronage.*' (c)

On the whole, your committee, with these suggestions, recommend that the Report of the Prudential Committee, as referred to them, be accepted and approved. (d)

The chairman of the special committee which made this Report was Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon of New Haven. Since he had been active in complaints of the pro-slavery position of the American Tract Society, he seems to have thought it necessary to mention the subject of slavery here. To what purpose, and with how much effect, it is mentioned, a little examination will show.

The paragraph marked (a) seems (does it not?) to express satisfaction in the action of the Board at Hartford, in 1854. *What was that action?*

On turning to the Annual Report for 1854, we find a long special report, presented by Dr. Pomroy (pp. 25—32) containing not one word about slavery.

We find also (p. 24) the following resolution (reported by a committee of which Dr. Bacon was a member) adopted by the Board :

‘ Resolved, That the Board acknowledge, with gratitude to God, the *wisdom and fidelity* with which, so far as appears from the documents submitted to them, the Prudential Committee are advising AND DIRECTING the missionaries among the Choctaws, in conformity with the principles asserted by them in their correspondence with those missions, reported to the Board in 1848.’

We find also, in the official ‘Remarks upon the Meeting,’ (p. 45) this statement respecting the *meaning* of the above resolution :—

‘The debate which grew out of the Report of the Choctaw mission, awakened a general and absorbing interest. The question was ultimately narrowed to a single point, namely, ‘Shall the general principles of the letter addressed by the Prudential Committee to the Choctaw mission, in 1848, receive the *express* sanction of the Board?’ It was admitted that these principles had received an *implied* sanction. In fact, there could have been no controversy on this point. A committee on this letter and other documents recommended to the meeting of 1848, ‘that the whole subject should be left for the present’ ‘in the hands of the Prudential Committee;’ which recommendation was adopted by the Board. Nor was this all. The Prudential Committee were all re-elected at that meeting; and they have been re-chosen annually, except in case of death or removal, from that time to

this. They have felt, therefore, that their views must be considered as having the *implied* sanction of the Board ; and they have acted accordingly.'

Both these documents, the Resolution and the Remarks, refer us back to the action of the Prudential Committee in 1848. To find out what these *mean*, therefore, and to find out what the Rev. Leonard Bacon means by his approval of the action of the Board at *Hartford*, in 1854, we must turn back to the Annual Report for 1848.

The Report for 1848 is the very one from which we have quoted at the commencement of this article, containing, 1. the letters of the Cherokee and Choctaw missionaries, declaring their settled determination still to admit slaveholders to their churches, and, 2. the temporizing reply of the Prudential Committee through Mr. Secretary Treat, respecting which a disclaimer (above inserted) was placed in the next Annual Report, saying that Mr. Treat's letter 'expressed *opinions, but not decisions or instructions*'—and that 'This distinction is *vital* to the proper understanding of Mr. Treat's letter.'

That course of policy, therefore, of the Board, which Dr. Bacon seems to approve in the paragraph marked (a), is a systematic allowance that their missionaries may receive slaveholders, as Christians, into their churches, pleading the Bible as their warrant for this most efficient support of slavery.

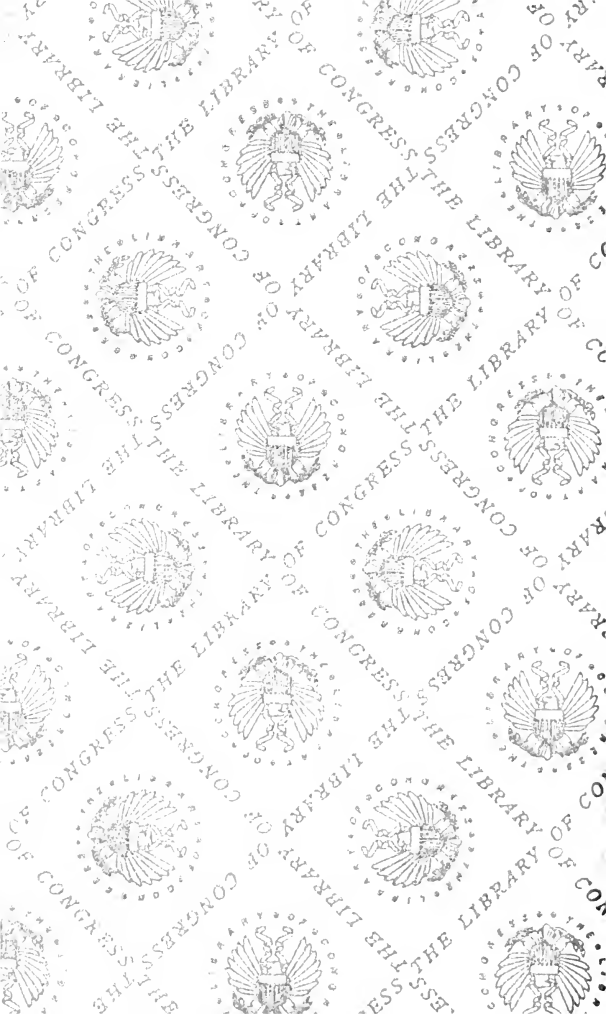
Dr. Bacon's paragraph marked (b) presents as an excuse for the missionaries that which is really an additional crime on their part—namely, the maintenance of fraternal ecclesiastical relations with the slavehold-

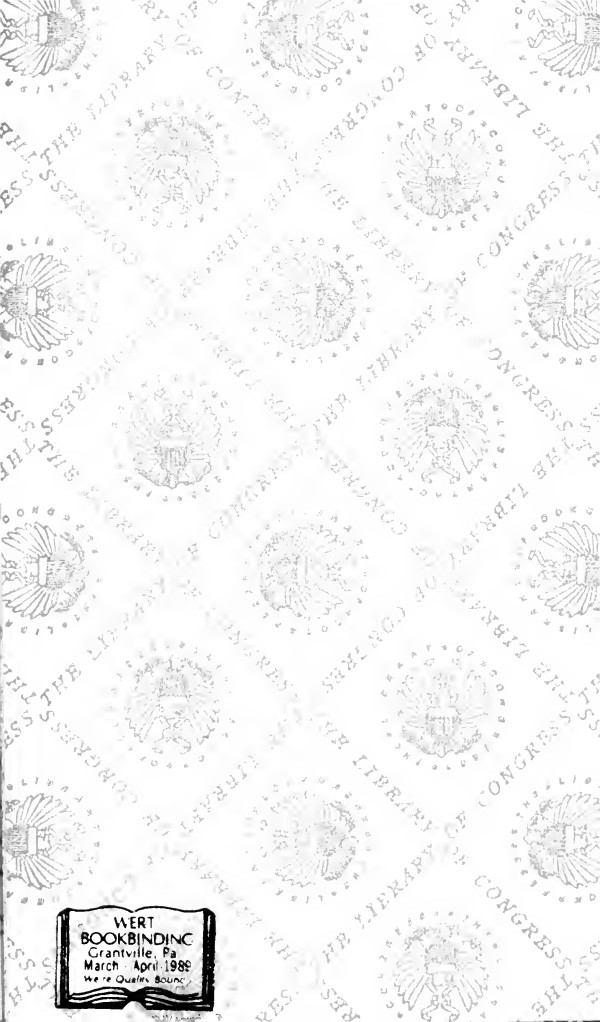
ing churches of Texas, Arkansas and Missouri. It further presents that dislike of the missionaries which is undoubtedly felt by the profane, intemperate and brutal propagandists of slavery in those States, as presumptive evidence that those missionaries hold a right position on the subject of slavery.

Thus far in his Report, Dr. Bacon has proposed to the Board no action whatever to check the fraternization of their missionaries and mission churches with slavery. He proposes none in the whole course of that document. But, (amazing as it may seem in a man who is reputed to be farther advanced towards anti-slavery than the great majority of the churches) in paragraph (c) he anticipates with pleasure, as the means of relieving the Board from the embarrassments and perplexities which a pro-slavery policy has brought upon it, the speedy application of these converted Cherokees and Choctaws for admission to the Union as a slave State, the success of which would, as a matter of course, transfer them from the Foreign Missionary to the Home Missionary department; and he closes, in paragraph (d), by recommending to the approval of the Board that Report of the Prudential Committee, which utterly ignores the subject of slavery.

Such is the position of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. And such it has permanently been, from the commencement of its missions among the Cherokees and Choctaws, to the present moment.—C. K. W.







WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa
March - April 1989
We're Quality Bound

