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RELIGIOUS

ORGANIZATIONS,

AND SLAVERY.

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BY REV. WM. B. BROWN, OF SANDUSKY CITY.

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ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

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# RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND SLAVERY.

BY REV. WM. B. BROWN,  
OF SANDUSKY CITY.

It is said that every age has its hobby. The hobby of the present age is slavery. No other subject is so hackneyed as this. It is the theme of remark and the bone of contention every where, and continually. While some are ever struggling to keep it out of sight, others are perpetually thrusting it into view; and there is no place where it is not. It stands in the senate-chamber and before the altar; it meets you in the highway and follows you to the domestic circle; it intrudes itself upon your hours of business and haunts you amid the slumbers of the night. There are no periodicals so trifling or so grave, no books so superficial or profound, no gatherings so literary or so vulgar, no institutions so sacred or profane as to exclude this "vexed question." It has become an old story, and most persons dread to encounter it; and were such a thing possible they would doubtless for a time, at least, banish it from view. In some circumstances it might have been a suitable theme for elegant writing and for literary display: but now it is too vulgar, too matter of fact, too common place.

But notwithstanding all, it is to be made in one of its aspects the burden of this article, and we beg to be heard this once before we are condemned for our presumption in the choice of a subject. If we can not promise a lit-

erary treat, we do promise to utter important truths, and truths that ought to bring the professedly religious and anti-slavery part of our population to a solemn pause. We do not promise to entrance the mind by an array of new, beautiful and brilliant thoughts, and glowing description; for we have another work to accomplish, more serious and more rational. It is to state truths new and old, clearly and strongly, and to make them so bear upon a single point as that duty in that direction should be no longer doubtful, and the point referred to is one of no common interest. At this day, as it respects the church of our land, it is the question of questions.

It is a well known fact that our principal ecclesiastical organizations, and leading religious institutions, are charged with being so connected with the sin of slavery as to have become unworthy of our confidence; and it is affirmed that those who act from high Christian principle and enlightened views, can not consistently co-operate with them. These charges are brought, not by the enemies of religion alone, but by many of its truest friends; not only by enthusiasts and those who make this a mere pretext for stabbing the church, but by sober-minded, honest, reflecting, devoted Christians. Indeed, the conviction in the minds of thousands is every day becoming stronger and stronger, that these institutions ought not to be practically sustained while their present position on the subject of slavery is continued; and these too, are persons who have long looked upon these institutions with the spirit of veneration not to say idolatry. They have not been led by their prejudices to think and feel thus, but against their prejudices. Some have already withdrawn such co-operation and many others doubtless will. Do they act wisely or not? This is surely an important question. If they have not good grounds for thinking, feeling and acting as they do, the fact ought to be known; and if they have it should be known also. The good of the world, the glory of God, requires that the truth should be spoken. If these Institutions are not guilty they have been greatly injured, if they are they are great injuries.

In the present article we shall take the position that they are guilty, and that enlightened Christians ought not to co-operate with them. This is the unpopular side of the question; and the side that no one could be justifiable in taking without having, after the most prayerful consideration, the deepest conviction that truth and justice demand-

ed it. In the light of that solemn declaration, "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God," we dare not take the other side, and we feel bound to take this. With that truth before us, when we see a worldly and temporizing spirit sapping the very foundations of our spiritual Zion; when we see religious institutions, and Institutions which combine immense learning, wealth and far-reaching influence, and who give a tone, character and direction to the operations of the whole church, bowing down to a corrupt public sentiment, and taking special pains to shape their entire course so as to accommodate immense systems of wickedness; when we see this course pursued with cool and studied deliberation year after year, and hear nearly all the people saying, amen; when the few who do not say amen are treated with cold suspicion, and often as the enemies of the cross of Christ; when the right of calling these organizations to an account or even of withdrawing from them is denied, thus evincing that the spirit of monopoly not to say of popery holds dominion there; when we see all this, our duty is plain. God and humanity require us to speak; yet would we speak with kindness, and caution, and candor. We would not deal in generalities or wholesale denunciations, but would state facts precisely as they are, and as most know them to be, and then draw our deductions from them.

With respect to most of these organizations there are several reasons on account of which we find it difficult to stand connected with, or to co-operate with them. They, with their complicated machinery seem so unlike those institutions, in their simplicity, which Christ and the Apostles established; they stand directly in the way of promoting the work of general reform, for these institutions never do, and never can give their influence in favor of an unpopular movement until it is mainly carried in the community, and all reform is at first unpopular; then there is a strong tendency in all large bodies of men to corruption, and when they become corrupt it is almost impossible to reform them, or to prevent their doing immense mischief. But these are not the grounds on which it is now proposed to urge objections. We shall speak alone, or mainly of the relations they sustain to the sin of slavery, and show that while this connection continues we can not consistently co-operate with them.

But lest our true position should be misunderstood, it is important here, once for all, to state in their favor, that we believe they were originally formed by godly men and with the purest of motives; that they have already accomplished in the world immense good; that still there is a vast amount of true piety acting in connection with them; that in many points of view their influence is still excellent, and their usefulness great; and that they are not to be regarded as past hope of reform; but notwithstanding all this, while they maintain their present connection with slavery, we can not consistently, as enlightened Christians, while acting from high moral and religious principle, give them our countenance and support.

The argument which this article is intended to develop, is embodied in the following propositions or resolutions:

I. That American slavery, and consequently slave-holding, *in the light of this day* is enormous and unmingled wickedness, and can no more be reconciled with the spirit of the gospel than heaven can be reconciled with hell; they are direct opposites, and to give countenance to one is to oppose the other.

II. That the principle of ecclesiastical and religious organizations of our own land, including those churches and organizations which admit slave-holders to their communion, together with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Missionary Society, the American Tract and Bible Societies, the American Sabbath School Union, and perhaps some others, are exerting in different ways a direct, powerful and studied influence to harmonize slave-holding with their respective enterprises; they are giving countenance to the system and are partakers of its guilt.

III. That those who assent to the above propositions are bound, as men of principle, as Christians, and for the good of all concerned to withhold co-operation with these institutions till this unholy compromise is broken up.

The first of these propositions, it will be seen, relates to the intrinsic sinfulness of slavery. In remarking upon it, much stress should be laid upon the expression *in the light of the present day*. The degree of guilt which attaches to this, as to all other sins, is graduated by the amount of light which may have been elicited in relation to it. The time has been when the sin of slave-holding was immeasurably less than it now is. It is urged by some, and with



the show of reason that the time has been when slave-holding did not necessarily imply sin. Before sin can be affirmed as a *necessary* accompaniment of slavery, the idea of the *inherent right of self-ownership* must be developed in the mind. Without that idea it is impossible to declare slavery to be in its *essential nature* sinful. Now, we are told that the time has been when this idea was not developed—when not a single individual upon the whole earth was in possession of it. The Bible itself as understood by those who held it, did not reveal the inherent right of self-ownership. If the grand truths and principles which it announced, in their logical deductions involved this, those deductions were not drawn, and this conclusion was not seen. Nor was it necessarily the fault of men that they were ignorant. The abuses of slavery they could understand; but that the fundamental element of the system, the relation itself was sinful, they could not know unless God should assert it in positive and unmistakable terms, terms at the time and to those addressed unmistakable or unless, it should be developed in their minds by a series of discipline, experience and reflections through which they had passed. Now it is claimed, or at least might be, that the time has been when neither of these conditions existed. If some portions of the Bible seemed to condemn slavery, others appeared to countenance it.

It is true that our Savior gave us the golden rule, saying, "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you," and this rule as we view it condemns the vital element of slavery; but as it was understood when first announced, it struck only at its abuses; it taught masters not to give liberty to their slaves, but simply to treat them as they would wish to be treated were they slaves themselves. In that day nothing had occurred to develop in the minds of men the inherent and fundamental rights of humanity, and they were not developed. In such an age the inherent right of self-ownership was not recognized, and perhaps it was not the fault of those who then lived that they were ignorant.

Now let all this, and surely no one will claim more, be granted, and what follows? We answer nothing by which slavery can be justified in our day, unless it can be made out that the idea of the inherent right of self-ownership is not yet developed. If this could be shown, slavery in its moral aspects might be a very different

thing from what we now regard it. It might stand where persecution for conscience's sake stood hundreds of years ago, before the idea of the inherent right of conscience in matters of religious faith was developed. Then persecution in its sternest forms may have been a less crime than it now is, even in its mildest features; and perhaps there were cases when it was no sin at all. So when the right of self-ownership was not recognized as inherent, (if there ever was such a time,) slavery was one thing, but now in the light of that great truth it is a very different thing. In those days of ignorance God may have winked at it, but now he demands repentance.

We think no one in our day will deny man's inherent right to himself, except as that right is forfeited by crime. It is one of the great truths of reason, which when once developed the mind knows absolutely; when once apprehended by the world can never be lost again. Whatever may have been true in past ages, or may still be true in some countries, every American has this idea as fully revealed as are the ideas of the existence of space, of duration, or of his own existence. If there are any exceptions it is because they are willfully blind, (and such blindness does not lessen responsibility and guilt,) or, because they are semi-idiotic. This is not a truth that we arrive at by a course of intricate reasoning; it belongs to that class of first truths, which, the moment they are announced, and the statement is understood, are seen and known to be true. It is a truth, which, in our day no one will deny, and which many think has always been known.

Now let us proceed a step further. This truth—the inherent right of self-ownership—is not only seen to be a truth, but it is by far the most fundamental and important truth appertaining to man in his relations to his fellow man. It is the central pivot on which all the others turn; the inner fort to which all the others in the extremity of danger flee, and are defended. Strike down this truth and man has nothing left. If you deny him the right of self-ownership, he can have no rights whatever. His case is helpless, hopeless, intolerable. Grant him this right and he need scarcely ask for more; "he has all and abounds." There flows from this, by stern necessity, the right of contract, the right of property, the right of domestic relationship, the right of conscience, and the right to be treated in all respects as a man and a brother.

The grand inference for which we are now prepared, is, that whoever disregards, or tramples upon this inherent right of self-ownership, commits the highest crime against his fellow mortal that he is capable of committing. If that right is more sacred, and more important than all others, then to violate it is the greatest possible crime. Indeed it involves within itself every species and degree of wickedness which was ever committed by one man against another, unless murder be an exception. It involves fraud, extortion, stealing, robbery, injustice and cruelty in every form, and in the superlative degree.

What now is slave-holding? It is the practical denial and contempt of this right. It makes *man* a mere *thing*, an article of merchandize. It is therefore "the vilest system that ever the sun shone upon," "the sum of all villainies." In point of guilt and meanness, common stealing and robbery bear no comparison. With the great principle, man's inherent right to himself distinctly in view, we speak calmly, and wisely, and correctly, when we pronounce the inmates of our penitentiaries to be, as a class, gentlemen, benefactors to the world, and almost saints before God, in comparison with the great mass of slave-holders at the south, and many of their abettors at the north.

We repeat then the position with which we started; namely that slaveholding *in the light of the present day*, is enormous and unmingled wickedness and can no more be reconciled with the spirit of the gospel than heaven can be reconciled with hell; they are direct opposites, and to countenance one is to oppose the other. If slave-holding in the light of this day may be reconciled with the gospel, then there is no sin in the universe that can not; and if to countenance slaveholding is not to oppose the gospel, then man is incapable of opposing it. And if giving it countenance, is opposing the gospel at all, it is opposing it in its application to the rights of man entirely; for slavery is at war with all those rights. Besides, the spirit of the gospel like the spirit of the law is one, is a unit, and we can not partly oppose it and partly sustain it at the same time. We may appear to do this in the sight of men, but not so in the sight of God. "We are for Christ or against him." "He that is guilty in one point is guilty of all." "We can not serve God and mammon"—God and slavery.

This part of our subject has been dwelt upon thus long, because we have always noticed that those who attempt to

justify our ecclesiastical bodies, and other religious institutions in their relations to slavery, have invariably attempted this by really justifying slavery itself. They may, and commonly do admit in general terms that slavery is a great sin, but the moment you press them on this point, they will turn and tell you that slavery is not so great a sin as it might be, that the people are ignorant, that the system was entailed upon them by their fathers, that it is hard to ask them to give up their property without compensation, that there are many good Christian slave-holders at the south, that the slaves are better off in bondage than they would be if free, that if you let them loose they would cut the throats of their masters, and all this. Now if these excuses mean anything, they are an attempted justification of slavery. But if our positions thus far have been sustained, they are based in delusion and falsehood—slavery is an unmitigated sin, which neither deserves nor can have any apology. Yet if all this be true, those organizations can not be justified, as we shall soon see, even for a moment. Indeed this, by those who attempt their justification is felt to be true, hence their arguments for slavery; hence too, the necessity of setting this matter in its true light before we proceed further.

We come now to the second proposition, which is, that the principal, popular religious organizations of our land, embracing those churches and organizations which admit slave-holders to their communion, together with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Missionary Society, the American Bible and Tract Societies, the American S. S. Union, and perhaps some others, are exerting in different ways a direct, studied and powerful influence to harmonize their respective enterprizes with slave-holding; they give countenance to the system and are partakers of its guilt.

These are grave charges, and in considering them we shall not labor to make out a case, but shall speak of such facts as are within the reach of all and generally before the community.

There are three questions in this connection to be proposed and answered. 1. What position ought they to occupy? 2. What position do they in fact occupy? 3. Does this position imply countenance of the sin and participation in its guilt.

What position ought these Institutions to occupy in their relations to slavery?

We answer, not one of neutrality. This is the position they have labored hard to sustain, but under the circumstances they can not be neutral, and if they could they have no right to be so. These Institutions incorporate within themselves the principal part of the professed Christianity of our country, and exert the great portion of so-called religious influence. Now, we ask, with such mighty power in their hands, when they see one sixth part of our countrymen held in the cruel grasp of slavery; when they see this hell-born institution exerting a powerful and successful influence to corrupt both church and state; when they see that the question of liberty and slavery has become the great question of the age, a question that is pressing itself upon their notice, and staring them in the face at every turn; when they have reason to know that their indifference and attempted neutrality is understood to be a sanction of the system, is bringing reproach upon the religion of Christ, and driving thousands into infidelity; when they know it is encouraging, if indeed it is not intended to encourage, the slave-holder in his crimes, while it is leaving his helpless victim uncared for; when they know that the power is in their hands by which they might bring this curse to a speedy termination if they would employ it; when they may know that to exert this power would bring untold joy to hundreds of millions, while it would cause sadness to none but tyrants and their minions; when they know all this, and much more, have they a right to be neutral? nay, is it possible to be neutral?

The great plea for neutrality has ever been, we must not turn aside from our appropriate work. But what is their appropriate work, except to destroy sin, to promote holiness, to bless mankind? When they depart from such labors have they not already abandoned their appropriate work and joined hands with the wicked? If it be said that there is something else to be done in the world besides warring with slavery, we grant it; but, if it is claimed that slavery does not lie within the natural province of these institutions, we deny it. What, let it be asked, are they doing so important and so peculiar, that none of them can lift a finger "to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free," without stepping aside from their proper work? One is promoting the cause of missions abroad; but have we not three millions of Christian-made heathen at home to be converted? And would it be departing from the missionary

work to give them a single look of sympathy, or intimate that they need the gospel? Another is engaged in the work of missions at home. Is this too, inconsistent with doing any thing for the slave? Is he outside the pale of foreign missions and of home missions, both? Another society is promoting the tract cause. And may this society without leaving its proper work, write tracts against every sin in the universe but that of slavery? Another society is promoting the Bible cause; and do the slaves need no Bibles? Another is engaged in the Sabbath-school enterprise; but does the poor slave need no instruction? The truth is, that slavery lies directly within the field, and almost within its very centre, which every one of these organizations professes to cultivate; and so far from going out of their way to notice it, they are going almost infinitely out of their way even to the very borders of infidelity to get around it. Three millions of crushed bondmen clank their chains before the doors of these several institutions, and beg for help; theirs is the eloquence of solemn, agonizing, heart-broken silence, for they dare not speak a word. It is a plea for themselves and their children; it is a plea for the light of the gospel, and they plead in the name of God and humanity; but what answer do they obtain. They are turned away with the cold reply, Your cause does not come within the circle of our labors. There is no sense, nor truth, nor honesty, in that reply. It is a mere excuse gotten up in the absence of any thing better, for the purpose of self-defense. It is a miserable defense. It is worse than nothing; for besides being cold as an ice-berg, it is false as error. It were far better, like the Priest and the Levite, leaving the poor slave half dead, to go on the other side without speaking a word.

But grant for a moment that these institutions are neutral on the subject of slavery, and what follows? We reply, their very neutrality is proof conclusive of their guilt. If they may be neutral in relation to this sin they may be in respect to all others. It is their condemnation that they do nothing where they ought to do much. In the day of judgment will it not be said, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these my brethren ye did it not unto me." The conclusion to which we arrive, is, that these institutions are bound to exert a direct, powerful, and uncompromising influence against slavery wherever they meet it. We do not demand more; yet if, like David when he slew Goliath, they

should occasionally step a little out of their natural path to destroy an enemy that is boldly defying the army of the living God, who would blame them? At least let them not attempt to be neutral; for this, besides the wickedness it involves, is cruel as the grave.

“’Tis the most unkindest cut of all.” So much for the position they ought to occupy.

Our next inquiry is, what position do they in fact occupy?

We answer at once, it is a position in which they constantly and powerfully uphold the system of slavery; they constitute its stong bulwark of defense. They are the house of refuge to which it flees for safety, the brazen altar on which it hangs for protection; and it has found in them a protection thus far which has been unailing. Now for the proof.

These institutions have not only refused to advance of themselves, and freely, in the work of opposing slavery, but how have they generally treated those, who in Christian faithfulness, have endeavored, in the form of memorial, remonstrance, petition and resolution, to bring the subject before them for consideration? As a general rule such persons have been regarded as intruders, and treated with coldness. Their counsel has not been received, much less sought, and they have generally been made to feel that their presence was not desired. Petitions on the subject have not only not been granted, but often they have not been admitted, and when they have found admittance it was only to be hurried upon the table as soon as possible. If discussions have at times come up, it has been to the great and manifest annoyance of the majority, and they have generally been choked down as soon as possible. Every species of wire-working which talent, skill, experience and ingenuity could invent, has been employed to keep this subject outside the door, and when they have been successful, the highest possible satisfaction has been manifested. In the appointment of officers every precaution has been taken to secure those who would not commit these institutions in favor of liberty and against slavery. That one is a slaveholder is generally no objection, but he must not upon any account be a decided and avowed abolitionist. The appeals of slavery are listened to when those of liberty are rejected. The threats of slavery produce fear and counter-movement, while those of liberty pass uncared for. More is done to cover up and conceal than to expose the wickedness of slavery. While every

effort is made to show up the errors and fanaticism of the anti-slavery man nothing is left unsaid by which the slaveholder could be screened. If these institutions have made any progress it has been forced out of them by an advancing public sentiment, the growth of which they have opposed at every step.

This is not idle talk, but sober truth; and what do all these facts put together show? They show that these institutions are allied to slavery, that they give it countenance and support, and must share in its guilt. They are inexplicable on any other hypothesis.

But lest the correctness of these statements should be doubted or denied, let us enter into detail, and learn there how the case stands.

We speak first of churches and ecclesiastical organizations generally. What is their relationship to slavery? They open their arms wide and receive it to their very bosoms; they baptize it under the name of religion; they call it brother. They fellowship it at the communion table, and receive instruction from its traitor lips at the altar. They treat slaveholding as a mere trifle—as no evidence against Christian character. While they hunt down as heretics, and cast out of the church, those who in a few non-essential points of doctrine, and points of almost no practical importance can not believe in exact accordance with the prescribed creed, they take slavery with its hoofs and horns into the church, and hide it from its heaven-sent pursuers under the very altar of the sanctuary, and defend it to the last. Yes, they do this amid the full-orbed light of the present day.

Go to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. See Southern slavery represented by slave-holding ministers on that floor; see nearly all the Presbyterian churches of our land, slaveholding and non-slaveholding, represented there, and standing side by side in brotherly affection and Christian fellowship; hear them consulting together about converting the world to God; see them sit down at the communion table and take the emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood from hands stained with the blood of slaves; see them arise from that table to denounce what they call northern fanaticism, and defend the "peculiar institution;" listen to the committees' would-be non-committal report on the subject of slavery; mark the excitement when a single northern man dare move a report which shall



mean something; see that amendment voted down almost unanimously, and the original one unanimously sustained; then hear the shout, "we have capped the Vesuvius for the next three years;"—mark all this, and it is repeated annually, then answer the question, Have we overdrawn the picture?

What is here said of the Presbyterian Church, is essentially true of the Episcopal, the Methodist, and the Baptist Churches, although the ecclesiastical polity of some of these make the connection less perfect. But in justice it must be admitted, and we rejoice to admit it, that there are many individual societies or churches of all the above-named denominations who have severed the bands that bound them to slavery, and others we hope will soon do it. It is due also to state that many individuals in pro-slavery churches are not at home there, and are only waiting to see if something can not be done to break up this unholy combination. If there can not be they will soon change their relationship. Our statement is, that these organizations and churches as a whole, countenance and sustain slavery, and if it has any guilt they share in it.

Let us now turn to some of the daughters of the church—those institutions that have been brought into existence to promote given departments of Christian effort. It would be natural to anticipate that they would possess the general character of their paternity. So we shall find it.

These institutions are truly in a sad predicament; they are between two fires—one in the front and another in the rear. Slavery is before them, God and humanity are behind them, and they are not willing fully to surrender themselves to either. The consequence is, they are in turns fired upon by both. If they cut and trim as they usually do, to suit the demands of slavery, humanity showers down its artillery upon them and if they retreat before the storm so far as to encroach upon slavery and come within the reach of its batteries, they suffer a raking fire from that direction. They are, and they evidently feel that they are in a most uncomfortable position, in miserably close quarters. They really know not what to do, and we know not what they will do. Of one thing we may be certain; if humanity should take down her battery they would at once make peace with slavery, and we fear they will at best, if indeed it has not been done already. Our conclusion is that this galling fire in the rear, even though it may seem

cruel, must be kept up; the only hope of their future usefulness depends upon it.

Let our position be re-stated. These institutions, in different ways, are exerting a direct, powerful, and studied influence to harmonize their respective enterprizes with the system and demands of slavery, thus countenancing the sin, and partaking of its guilt.

Look, first, at the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

It is admitted on all hands, at least by all who have any true anti-slavery feeling, that for many years this almost worshipped institution has been bowing and cringing at the mandates of Southern slavery. Thousands, while they have loved the missionary cause, have felt the deepest interest in the Board, have nevertheless felt bound for truth's sake to withdraw active co-operation, while thousands more have been induced to continue their support, only on the hope they have had, that she would soon change her position. A year or two since, events transpired which greatly encouraged that hope. Statements were made by the officers of the Board that caused every anti-slavery heart to rejoice. Now leaving her past history where is she to-day? She has changed her position, but it has been towards slavery. Look at the records of her recent annual meeting in Pittsfield—a meeting with which all her officers, all our pro-slavery periodicals, and all the South are in perfect ecstasies. Why this rejoicing? We answer, because those who were there were afraid to speak, and those who would have spoken had they been there, staid away. They did this because they knew their presence was not wanted; or they believed that speaking would be useless to the Board, while it would bring down indignation upon themselves. But for these things the anti-slavery note would have been sounded by a thousand voices, and by many of the strongest and best men in America. As things were the meeting was harmonious, and as Dr. Anderson tells us, was the most glorious meeting ever held. But what did it do? *It took back the only seeming anti-slavery act it ever performed.* It virtually asked pardon for ever having done it; and declared that it never intended to do what all anti-slavery men supposed was done deliberately and in good faith. We refer of course to the matter of Mr. Treat's letter in connection with Cherokee and Choctaw missions. That letter, and other things connected with it, when presented at Chicago raised the ex-

pectation that unless those missions abandoned slavery and rejected slave-holders from the church, they would themselves be rejected by the Board. By the recent meeting in Pittsfield that expectation is annihilated. Secretary Treat's letter is explained away by saying that it was mere advice to those missions, but was not authoritative, and it is more than intimated that the *advice* was such as would not again be given. Certainly it was not given, for there is not a word in the doings of the late meeting which recognizes slavery as existing in those churches, or as any way connected with the missions except in the mere matter of hiring slaves to do their work. The Board has now deliberately taken her position. She says she never intended to declare slave-holding to be inconsistent with church-membership, or to require mission churches to banish it from their midst. Her present position and future purposes are thus defined by the New York Observer in its account of the Pittsfield meeting. "Next, the specific case of the Choctaw mission came up, and a letter recently received from those *noble missionaries* was read. It was a masterly letter; putting the facts and the argument in such a light that nothing short of dullness could fail of being convinced. Not a voice was raised against it, not an exception was taken to it. \*

\* \* \* There is no flinching from former positions—no concessions to the demands of unreasonable men. It reaffirms former views, and so far as it respects the matter of *hiring* slaves it turns the argument of Mr. Treat's letter back upon all those who use slave productions with a force that can not be resisted.

It was evident that no farther action was needed. The Board had taken its own ground and expressed it year after year. *There was nothing in the practice of the missionaries inconsistent with that position.* It now only remained for the Board to go on with its appropriate business—the cause of missions to the *heathen*. It did so to the great joy of thousands."

This is out-spoken and needs no comment. The American Board has bound herself to the car of slavery; she is in full fellowship with the system; she is there deliberately and from choice. Let this be remembered, and let those who give their money through this Board remember it. Let anti-slavery men who still support this Board, instead of others who are promoting the cause of free missions, begin to search for that invaluable but lost "jewel," consistency.

Let us turn next to the American Home Missionary Society.

A single sentence will state her position. Not only does she in common with all the other societies, have slaveholders among her life and honorary members, if not in her corporate body: not only does she have slave-holding auxiliaries at the South; not only does she send agents to solicit funds from slaveholders, and this too with the distinct understanding that they are not to utter a word against slavery, but she does what is infinitely worse. She contributes the funds of anti-slavery men to build up and sustain slavery churches. Of course then she is striving to harmonize slavery and Christianity, that is, if she regards the building up of those churches as promoting Christianity.

Perhaps it may be said that the Home Missionary Society has recently taken an advance step in granting assistance to a small anti-slavery church in Kentucky, notwithstanding slaveholding presbyteries petitioned against it. We know this has been done, and we rejoice in it. We hope it was done freely, and not from dread of that fire in the rear to which we have just referred. But what are the inferences? Plainly these. That this society is willing to support an *anti-slavery* church, but not because it is anti-slavery, for to say the least, it would just as soon give that church support were it decidedly pro-slavery. And further, if any claim in view of the fact that this society has aided *one* anti-slavery church at the South, that therefore it is opposed to slavery, we have much greater reason to claim in view of the fact that it gives aid to *many* slavery churches that it is therefore in favor of slavery. And further still, if this act is claimed to be proof of marked progress in that society we beg to inquire what must have been her character before this progress was made? Then she was for slavery entirely, now she is for both. We would not be severe, but such a position strongly reminds us of the case of that poor sailor who in the midst of a terrible storm, not knowing into whose hands he might fall, and desiring to make peace with both, cried out, good Lord and good devil alternately. Shall such a Society be supported when we may give our money to the support of home missions just as well, and much better, in another way.

We come next to the American Tract Society.

We do not complain of her that she sends her tracts and other publications to the South, for we wish they had more

of them ; but we do complain that she selects and employs slaveholders and their apologists to carry and distribute them. But there is another high ground of complaint. It is that while this society, as it should do, publishes tracts on the subjects of profanity, gambling, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, lying, stealing, licentiousness, and almost every other form of evil, it has never published one single word against slavery. This neglect is not because they have not been urged to do it, for they have been repeatedly, and thousands of dollars would be furnished them immediately if they would employ it in printing and circulating anti-slavery truth. A donation on such terms they do not want, and we presume would not receive. Nor is this neglect because slavery is not within the field of their operations, for this Society more than any other carries on its work in the very midst of slavery. Why then this neglect to publish any thing against this system of iniquity ? It is solely because to do so would give offence to slaveholders at the South and their apologists at the North, and they are not willing to break hands with them ; they would sooner followship and cover up iniquity than do it. No other construction can be put upon their conduct unless it is claimed that they do not regard slavery as a sin, and therefore do not oppose it. Either view makes the society culpable.

We come now to speak of the American Bible Society.

This in its relations to slavery has generally been regarded as an exception to the others. It has been so regarded by the writer. But what are the facts ? There are in this land three millions of human beings destitute of the Bible, and forbidden by law to read it. What has this society ever done to remove this hindrance to their work of giving the Bible to every one on earth ? Absolutely nothing. From anything they have ever said or published as a society, the world would never know that such a fact as the above existed. A few years ago the Society announced to the world that it had supplied every destitute family in the United States, who were willing to receive it, with a copy of the Holy Scriptures, when they well knew that two hundred and fifty thousand families, that nearly one half the destitute families in the land, that one sixth part of all our population had never had the Bible offered them. Thus did this Society show that like the laws of the south they do not regard slaves as human beings. Now why is it, we ask, that so much is said and done to supply one half of our

destitute population with the Bible, while not a finger is lifted or a word spoken to secure the same blessing to the other half? It is not because they are less needy, but because they are slaves, and this society is the slave of slavery. The Bible Society is loud and constant in denouncing the Pope for withholding the Bible from the people, but it has never alluded to the customs and laws of the whole south on this subject. We have in our country about two millions of Catholics, many of whom have no Bible, and what lamentation, and curses does it call forth. We have three millions of slaves and they have no Bible, and not a whisper is heard. What does this mean? Till some explanation is given we can not take back that remark, that this society is the slave of slavery.

We must not pass over particulars. Several years ago five thousand dollars was guaranteed to this society on condition that it should be used in supplying the slaves with the word of God. Did they receive it thankfully? No; they *rejected the donation*. They would not promise to give the Bible to the slave even if the means were put into their hands. They, refused, not because they hated the slave, but because they feared his master. In 1841 a Bible Agent was arrested in New Orleans for offering the Bible to a slave. Before the court he plead ignorance of the law, and on that ground was released. But the judge declared to the Agent that he had just escaped the penitentiary, and warned him never to repeat the act. He, or the N. O. Society promised for him accordingly. The parent Society never remonstrated, nor even adverted to this interference with their work. In 1843 at the annual meeting of the American Bible Society held in Cincinnati, the following resolution was presented, and after a long and heated discussion was rejected by a vote, twenty-nine to seventeen, most of the members skulking or refusing to vote.

“Resolved, That all our auxiliaries located in slave-holding states, be urgently requested, as far as practicable to supply every person in their vicinity, able to read, whether bond or free, with a copy of the Holy Scriptures.”

What does the rejection of such a resolution mean? Its explanation has already been given.

We are told that the society has its auxiliaries at the south and the matter of distributing the Bible is left to them. But the officers of these societies are slave-holders, at least many of them are, and the rest are in favor of sla-

very, and what are the inferences? One is that the Society has slave-holders among its officers, and is thereby allied to the system. Another is that such men will not give the Bible to the slave. Hear the testimony of four of the officers of the New Orleans Society, given under oath when the Agent above referred to was on trial for offering the Bible to a slave. They said that when they appointed their agents, "it never for a moment entered the mind of the society to present *a single Bible to a slave.*" From such societies what can be expected? Yet this is one of the American Bible Society's most efficient auxiliaries. Put all these facts together, and the necessary inference is that the Bible Society is striving to harmonize its operations with slavery, that it does this voluntarily, and deliberately, and perseveringly, and therefore partakes in its guilt.

We shall speak of but one society more, the American Sabbath School Union.

Like the Tract Society it has never, to our knowledge, but in one instance, published a single word that was understood to bear directly against slavery. That was in a small book by the Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, late principal of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Conn.; a man no way famous for his anti-slavery sentiments, but extensively known as the author of various Sunday School books and other juvenile publications. This book was first published by the American S. S. Union, about sixteen years ago, and was entitled, "Jacob and his sons," and is among the best works of that author. The following is the passage referred to.

"What is a slave, mother? (asked Mary.) Is it a servant? Yes, (replied the mother,) slaves are servants, for they work for their masters and wait on them; but they are not hired servants, but are bought and sold like beasts, and have nothing but what their masters choose to give them. They are obliged to work very hard and sometimes, their masters use them cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them—for they have nobody to help them. Sometimes they are chained together and driven about like beasts."

When, not long since, this paragraph was discovered by slave-holders, and found to have been published by the American S. S. Union, they were thrown into a great rage. They denounced the Union through the press, and called upon the whole south to withhold all contributions from that society, and in no way to co-operate with it till this

book was stricken from their catalogue. They passed resolutions at home, and sent up their complaints to the Board at Philadelphia, and the officers of the Board, *at the demand of slave-holders dropped the book from their list.* Then, and not before, the south became reconciled; and the Sunday S. Union of South Carolina, which was auxiliary to the American S. S. Union, among other expressions of satisfaction used the following language:

“Resolved, that the confidence of this Board in the American S. S. Union is undiminished, and that the recent action of their Committee of Publication is a sufficient pledge that nothing will at any time hereafter be issued from the press under their control, calculated to awaken sectarian feeling or *sectional jealousy.*”

They further resolved, “To vindicate the society from any disposition to *agitate or meddle with a topic altogether foreign to the designs of the American S. S. Union.*”

This shows how the South understood the matter; and the Board has never intimated that it did not understand it in the same light. But this is not all. When the facts became public the Board was earnestly petitioned and entreated from many parts of the north to restore the rejected book. They were assured that its rejection under the circumstances could only be regarded as a fearful and deliberate compromise with slavery—as an endorsement of the system. The Board disregarded their petitions and refused to restore the book. The south forbid their telling the world what a slave was, and they dared not disregard the prohibition. They stand virtually pledged not to speak for the slave.

Now if all this had been done openly and in the face of day, it would be less inexcusable. But it was done secretly, and every effort has been made since then to keep it secret. They have refused public discussion, and to a considerable extent private correspondence. They have expressed deep regret that northern men should have spoken or published anything in relation to it. When the light of investigation has approached them they have shrunk back into the darkness which their own deeds have generated and exclaimed, “Let us alone, what have we to do with thee;” thus adopting the watchword of Satan’s camp. Is such a society worthy of confidence? Has it not more sympathy for the cruel tyrant than for his crushed victim?



We have now gone through the list but before leaving this part of our subject, fairness and candor require, that with respect to all these organizations, one general admission should be made. It is that the great majority of those who act in connection with them are free to admit, in general terms, the sinfulness of slavery. They almost uniformly admit this as private individuals, and frequently in their associated capacity, they incorporate the same sentiment in their reports and resolutions. It is on this ground alone that these institutions can claim the slightest defense. It is on this ground alone that our preceding statements can be condemned as exparty or untruthful. Let the inquiry be made, does this fact constitute the slightest ground of defense for them, or of condemnation to us?

These admissions do not excuse them because they are always made in such circumstances, and with so many neutralizing and qualifying statements, as entirely to destroy their force. Take for illustration Dr. Beman's report on the subject of slavery, made at the last meeting of the N. S. General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. There were sentences and parts of sentences in it, which were good, but taken as a whole it was worse than good for nothing. While it gave no offence to slave-holders at the south, because it was no rebuke to them, it delighted pro-slavery men at the north for the same reason. It was a compromise of principle which was infinitely worse than nothing. So it uniformly is when these societies speak on the subject of slavery. Commence as they may they are sure to end in such a way as to gain the applause of slavery; and make humanity weep. This double dealing is merely for effect's sake. It is *appearing* to be one thing and *being* another. Or as Aristotle would represent the matter, it is attempting to clothe the wolf in a sheep's garment; and a greater than Aristotle has referred to the same thing.

If it seems hard that we should represent these admissions as unmeaning, if not insincere, then we will take the other view, which we believe is the true one, and grant that these organizations do really believe slavery to be unqualifiedly enormous wickedness, and consequently slave-holders enormous sinners; what follows now. Plainly this; that they are in full fellowship with this wickedness. But such a conclusion is the very one we had before arrived at. The truth is, these societies, if they really believe slavery to be a great sin, are by far less excusable than they might be,

if they could be so dull and blind as to think it no sin at all. This declared ground of justification then, if it be a reality, is, in point of fact, a ground of greater condemnation, and if it be not a reality, it leaves the question unchanged, except that it casts upon those organizations the charge of double dealing not to say hypocrisy. But in our comments we have chosen to speak not so much of what these societies have said, as of what they have done; and if their conduct has been rightly represented our argument is sound.

With all that has been said before the mind we are now prepared to submit the question. Were the statements with which we started too strongly drawn? It was affirmed that these institutions were exerting in different ways a direct, powerful and studied influence to harmonize their respective enterprises with the sin of slavery; that they were giving countenance to the system, and were partakers of its guilt. If all this has not been made out, then it would seem that nothing can be proven by evidence. There is no more proof that Popery favors spiritual despotism, and general ignorance, than that these Institutions favor slavery. There is no more proof that the great political parties of our land have been bowing and bending to accommodate slavery than that these institutions have; and if the former are culpable so are the latter. And if we ought to withdraw from the former on account of their connection with slavery we are bound to withdraw from the latter for the same reason; unless indeed, purity in politics is more essential than purity in the church. But this brings us to the last and following proposition.

That those who assent to the truth of the two preceding propositions are bound in consistency, as men of principle, as Christians, and for the good of all concerned, to withhold co-operation with these institutions until this unholy compromise is broken up.

This conclusion, as it appears to us, follows inevitably. If slavery, as we have seen, in the light of this day is unmingled wickedness, "the sum of all villainies," "a crime without a name;" if this wickedness flows not from the abuse of the system, such as over-working, under-feeding, whipping, &c., but from its essential nature—from a practical disregard of the inherent right of self-ownership; and if these institutions, as we think has been shown, are giving countenance and support to this system of enormous wickedness, and are doing it deliberately and perseveringly, then

how can we escape the conclusion, that as men of principle, and as Christians, it is our duty to withdraw active co-operation with them till this unholy compromise is broken up. If we reject the conclusion either in theory or practice without rejecting the premises also, (and to reject these is to blind our eyes to evidence,) then it follows of necessity, that we have a morality and a religion which permits us voluntarily to co-operate with those who sustain directly, and of choice, the greatest and vilest of crimes; and so to co-operate as to encourage and uphold them in their position. We appeal, is such conduct consistent with Christian ethics, not to say Christian character?

Let us suppose a case, for this point must not be dodged or lost sight of. We will suppose there are in a given community an extensive band of horse-thieves; that many of them are persons of natural amiability, of wealth, and of learning. They are brave generous and hospitable; they are frank in avowing their sentiments, and in acknowledging themselves horse-thieves. Their fathers were horse-thieves before them, from whom they inherited much of their present stock, and also such compromises with the people round about as to enable them with safety to continue the business. They have gained such power and influence that although thousands of horses are stolen every week, it is dangerous, nay, impossible at present to break them up. Indeed they have followed so long, and so successfully this business, that they claim and maintain the right to continue it. They denounce those who deny this right as fanatics, and intruders, and threaten to hang them if they come within their reach. Now in the midst and in the near proximity of these horse-thieves there are certain churches, ecclesiastical institutions, and benevolent societies. Those churches receive these horse-thieves to their communion and call them brethren; for they say we must make great allowances, they were educated to steal horses, and have been doing it from childhood. Indeed in some of these churches the minister is a horse-thief, and so are the deacons, and all the officers, and most of the members. And these same churches belong to the Presbytery, and Synod, and General Assembly; and when the sons of God come together at their great meetings, those horse-stealing ministers and elders come also with them. And what seems remarkable, they are appointed to the "uppermost seats," and are especially consulted on questions relating to the pu-

rity of the church and the salvation of the world, for these men greatly desire the salvation of souls, and are exceeding zealous for the law, especially for the law of their church, and of horse-stealing. But if there happens to be present a fire-brand of a fanatic, as is sometimes the case, who intimates that in the light of this day horse-stealing is not quite right, and suggests that a committee be appointed to examine the subject and report at the next meeting, a terrible sensation follows. Every horse-stealing minister flies into a rage, and threatens to withdraw from the body if that matter is pressed farther. He declares that the church has nothing to do with the business of horse-stealing, and that this subject shall not be looked into, and the rest of the brethren say, Amen. And then to heal the wound more fully, and prevent any such unpleasant occurrence again this offending brother is severely reprimanded for introducing a subject which would disturb the peace and harmony of the church, and turn it aside from its appropriate work. When all this is done, they adjourn and go home. But these same churches with many others further removed from these horse-thieves, have certain benevolent associations under their control, some designed for one thing and some for another. Now the horse-thieves claim the right of dominion, or censorship at least, over these associations also. They demand that nothing shall be done by these societies which can in the least interfere with their business. They must not be called sinners, those from whom they steal must not be apprized of danger, and when property is thus obtained no effort must be made to restore it to its rightful owner. On these conditions they promise to give their prayers, and the tithing of a tithe of their ill-gotten gains. The agreement is made, and the societies send their agents to collect the money, ask the thieves to pray for them, and promise to keep dark about the stealing. When the good people ask them not to do such things, they call it interference, and say that others are sinners as well as these. Indeed they persevere in their course year after year deliberately, and justify it, and all too in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Now we ask, would any of us co-operate with such churches and societies? All answer no. But unless man-stealing in the *light of this day* is a less crime than horse-stealing, those who belong to, or act in connection with the above specified institutions are doing this very thing.

But to press this point still further, are there not hundreds and thousands of Christian people scattered throughout the North, and acting in connection with these institutions, who are convinced of the inconsistency of their position? We are confident there are; and were it not for the self-denial and sacrifice it would cost them, they would break from it without delay. Their friends are there, their associations are there, they have loved these institutions, and it is painful, even where duty calls, to part with them. The consequence is they linger along, half condemned, and with constant misgivings from year to year. They cherish a hope, a disappointed hope, that there will soon be a change for the better. But for this hope their position would be unendurable. And what is more, these persons are among the most spiritual, active and godly part of the church.

Now from all this what are the inferences? First, that those institutions in their present relations ought not to be encouraged. If good men in direct opposition to all their preferences and preconceived opinions are compelled to feel thus we may depend there is some good reason for it. But there is yet another inference. It is that these same good men lack that firmness, boldness, and decision of character, that deathless attachment to high moral and religious principle, which they ought to possess. The great sin of the church in our day is that she is governed by a groveling selfishness. She is not willing to make the sacrifices for God and humanity which the cause of Christ and of truth require. When duty calls she frames some excuse for disregarding it. It is this that has brought these organizations into their present relations to slavery, and still holds them there. And is it not the same thing which induces the brethren referred to, to continue their connection with them. If so, why should they remain where they are, and play into the hands of slavery, while at the same time they countenance, and encourage, and practice the same selfishness which is eating up the piety, and destroying the usefulness of the church?

Would they but withdraw co-operation, these institutions might be purified and saved. The last hope of their reform and extended usefulness depends, not upon our sustaining them, but upon our withdrawing from them. If all who are convinced of the fact of their unholy compromise with slavery would do this, and do it promptly and manfully, and assign boldly their reasons, it might, and doubtless would

bring them to their senses, and lead them to repentance. Probably nothing less will do this. The longer we let them alone, and the longer we go with them, the worse and more wicked they become. This is the natural tendency with all overgrown and corrupt bodies. To encourage is to corrupt them. If we would save these institutions we must abandon them. We must leave the sinking ship or go down with her amid the billows. If we escape and sound the alarm, she may yet be saved. Slavery, which in mid-ocean is scuttling her very bottom, may yet be attacked and cast overboard.

But aside from all this, the Christian must be a *Christian*. There are great and eternal principles of action, principles infinitely above the low grounds of human policy and expediency, by which he is to be governed. Having looked at all the facts in the case, he must decide what is duty, and then come what may, he must do it. While we have no sympathy with the system of metaphysics, which teaches us to decide our duty without any reference to the bearings or results of our conduct, we have still less with that other system, if system it can be called, which is blind to principle, and makes policy and expediency its great rule of action—which studies consequences to self in full detail, before it decides what to do. On all subjects we are to weigh the whole matter before making up our minds, then wherever judgment preponderates and conscience points, there we must go. No matter whether the world smile or frown, whether we stand among the millions, or remain solitary and alone. We must be willing to sacrifice, if need be, feelings, property, reputation, and even life itself. This would be Christ-like, and if it did not bring to us the praises of men and the wealth of earth, it would confer what is infinitely better—peace of conscience and the smile of Heaven. If such a course were generally pursued, what would become of our leading religious institutions? They would either cut loose from slavery and other kindred sins, or be left to “be filled with their own devices.”

When Christians are urged to withdraw active support from these institutions, a number of objections are frequently urged; but among them all there is only one which appears to have any force, or to demand an answer. It is stated thus: “If we begin to withdraw from our religious institutions on account of their connection with slavery, or for any other corruption, there is no stopping place; we must in

consistency withdraw from every institution on earth, for no one is pure."

This seems to be a formidable difficulty, but let us consider it. It is nothing for or against the real merits of the case to say, that this is precisely the objection that papists have always urged against protestants for withdrawing from the church of Rome; and it is the grand argument by which Puseyites are endeavoring to persuade us back again to the arms of the mother church. We have merely alluded to the origin of this objection for the sake of saying that if it is really good for any thing in the hands of those who object to our withdrawing from the organizations in question, it is equally good, so far as logic goes, in the hands of Popes and Puseyites against our leaving Rome. If the corruption of a church is not a sufficient reason for withdrawing from it, then let all protestants repent of their sins and become papists. And if we deny the right of Christians on this ground to withdraw, let us proclaim the infallibility of our church, surrender our consciences to the keeping of a Pope, and submit to an ecclesiastical despotism.

But who is to judge as to what kind and degree of corruption shall justify such withdrawal? We answer, every man is to judge for himself. "To his own master he shall stand or fall," and "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." This right of withdrawal, and of individual judgment as to when such withdrawal becomes necessary, is inherent; it belongs to the right of conscience. None but a Pope, or one who stands on the fundamental platform of popery will deny it. When we hear men denying this right, and denouncing others for its exercise, we bless God that they are not Popes, holding in their hands the power which the Vatican wielded six hundred years ago. The truth is, the spirit of popery is not yet cast out of protestant churches; the rights of conscience in matters of religious faith and practice are not yet half recognized. It is a serious question whether a pure Christianity has not more to dread from the misrule and corruption of overgrown protestant organizations than from the Roman pontiff, or rather from the tottering throne from which he has fled. We would not intimate that popery is less corrupt, but we know what she is, and the world is awake to her influence. Not so with the others. They are constantly and imperceptibly letting down the high standard of Christian character and conduct, and the people generally suspect it not.

It has been said that every Christian is to decide for himself on the great question of withdrawal. By what principles or tests ought this decision to be made? He is simply to ask whether the position which he occupies compels him to give countenance and support to sin. If so he is bound to escape from it. Whether it does do this or not, he is himself to determine, and is responsible to God for the judgment he forms and the action he pursues. This answer may be thought indefinite, and we grant it is, but yet no other can in consistency be given.

With this principle before us *our* duty is plain. We must withhold active support from these institutions. We do this, not from enmity, but as their friends. We rejoice in all the good they have done, and in some points of view, are still doing. We regret only the evil. We have waited long in the hope that this evil and sin would be removed; but really it seems to be getting worse and worse. Having reasoned the case, having spoken plainly and faithfully, as we were bound to do, our duty in this respect is performed. If others differ from us and do it honestly, we hope not to esteem them the less. If any of our statements have been unfair we desire to be corrected; but if they are truthful we hope they will be carefully considered, for our subject is one of serious and solemn import.

The principle of withdrawal which has been announced may be abused, and in two ways. Some may think it duty to withdraw from all churches and religious institutions, from the government under which they live, and may adopt views which should compel them to withdraw from all co-operation with their fellow men, and even with themselves also. We certainly regret that they should do this, although we are bound to admit that no human authority has a right to interpose. We feel it duty to say that nothing in this article is intended to encourage what we deem such extravagance, not to say fanaticism. But while we fear that some may imbibe a harsh, censorious and reckless spirit, and go further than the facts in the case warrant, we have yet stronger fears that thousands will stop short of what the cause of truth and holiness demands. We speak now, not of the mass of professed Christians, but of anti-slavery Christians. Why, when they denounce the spirit of compromise in others, should they practice it themselves? Will not those who are convinced of duty be decided? Let them consider the example of Christ—his sacrifices for the



truth's sake. If they still falter let them hear their Savior saying, "Except a man forsake all that he hath and take up his cross daily and follow me, he can not be my disciple." By these words we shall be judged at the last day. If any think it their duty to remain in these institutions a little longer, we beg of them not to be silent, not to go with the multitude to do evil, but to lift up their voice like a trumpet and cry aloud against this unholy compromise. And when the poor slave, having gone to all these societies for aid, and had the doors of them all shut in his face, and when he sits down alone in his grief to weep, oh, then let those anti-slavery men who still co-operate with these institutions, have compassion on the innocent victims of their cruelty! Let not sympathy for the oppressor harden the heart against the cries of the oppressed. Treat him kindly and pray for him. And may those who have taken their stand and withdrawn their support realize how great is the responsibility they have assumed. Let them be consistent, liberal and immovable, yet kind and Christ-like. Let them watch their spirit. Let them not return evil for evil, but contrary-wise, blessing. Let them be followers of Him who was meek and lowly of heart and who went about doing good. Let them be faithful unto death and they shall have a crown of life.

## EXTRACT FROM A SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT,

IN FAVOR OF WITHDRAWING FELLOWSHIP FROM CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL BODIES TOLERATING SLAVEHOLDING AMONG THEM.

BY REV. SILAS M'KEEN,  
of Bradford, Vt.

IF, after all the protestations which the Ecclesiastical Bodies of New England have uttered against slaveholding, they continue to have communion with slaveholders, and to extend to those bodies which patronize the accursed institution the right hand of fellowship by sending delegates to them and receiving delegates from them, as though no such evil existed among them, we must, by an impartial world, be considered guilty of the grossest inconsistency. If slavery is not what we have declared it to be, common honesty requires that we should, without delay, retract our declarations, and make due acknowledgment of the wrong which we have done in censuring, so severely, those who practice it. But, if we believe the ground which we have taken to be true and just; then let us maintain it, without shrinking, and wholly withdraw from those who persist in doing what, in our opinion, both the law and the gospel of God so expressly condemn. What is to be gained by deferring this decisive step any longer? The slaveholding churches are taking no measure to deliver themselves from this iniquity; the gospel as preached among them is, in reference to this matter, without point or power, and can *never* effect a removal of this deadly evil; they will not allow our delegates to declare plainly, in their assemblies, the sentiments of their constituents; and it is coming to be thought almost discourteous for us in our own Associations and Conferences to declare what we believe, in the presence of their

delegates. What then is to be gained by maintaining our present correspondence and fellowship?

Will it be said that we have more influence with them now than we should have if we withdraw—that to withdraw at present would at least be highly inexpedient? It is to be seriously feared that, as things now are, our testimony against slavery is at least completely neutralized, by treating slaveholders and those who tolerate them in the church, with such cordiality as we do—that our influence has been in fact more in favor of slavery than against it. In this way we disgrace ourselves and injure the Southern churches, instead of doing them any real good. Doubtless we shall find in the end that no course but the straight forward course of obedience to the gospel was expedient, either for them or for us. If all professed Christians, all ministers and churches, and larger Ecclesiastical Bodies, who believe slaveholding to be wrong, to be a great sin against both God and man, would refuse to have fellowship with all such professed Christians as practice or tolerate it, their influence against it would, beyond all doubt, be far greater and more powerful than it now is. Slaveholding churches, left alone in their iniquity, cut off from all fellowship with other churches, and the Christian world, would be led to serious reflection: they would feel their position to be most undesirable; and such among them as fear God, and regard the honor of his cause, would be induced to unite their energies to deliver themselves from the disgrace and guilt which must ever be involved in the practice of this great iniquity.

But while we withhold fellowship from churches and other Ecclesiastical Bodies which tolerate slavery, and from ministers and church members who are known to practice it, we should remember with sympathy and favor such other individuals, ministers, churches and Ecclesiastical Bodies, as, in the same connexions, neither practice, nor willingly tolerate the evil, but are with us seeking to deliver the church and nation from it. Due discrimination in such a case ought, surely, to be made.

In the Presbyterian connexion, as we are assured by good authority, the Synods of Michigan, Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, Illinois, and Peoria, including twenty-seven or more Presbyteries, have taken the ground that slaveholding—not its abuses merely—but *slaveholding*, should, by due process of discipline, be excluded from the church. A large portion

of these Presbyteries have also taken action of their own, to the same effect. In addition, connected with other Synods, the same ground has been taken by the Presbyteries of Champlain, Otsego, Onondaga, Genesee, Niagara, Angelica, Montrose, Meadville, Grand River, Huron, and some others. See Rev. A. A. Phelps' Reply to Dr. Bacon. If these bodies judge that they can operate more efficiently against slaveholding by retaining their connections, still longer, with slaveholding churches, we leave them to act in accordance with their own convictions of duty. To their own Master they stand or fall. May God enable them to stand, and prosper. We are ready, to the extent of our power, to encourage and help them. Should their endeavors to deliver the slaveholding bodies with which they are connected, from this great wickedness and scandal, prove successful, we will unite with them in praise to Him who holds the hearts of men in his hand, and without whose special blessing all efforts for the removal of this deep-rooted and deadly evil must surely prove unavailing.

But should they fail in their endeavors, and become convinced that their present position promises no better prospects of success, then it will be plainly their duty to come out, and be separate from all further connection with slaveholding churches; and we unite on higher and better ground;—on ground sacred to truth and righteousness, to both civil and religious liberty; where slavery would no more dare to appear than it would in Heaven. May God not only make plain their path of duty and ours, but incline and help us all to do that which is right and just before him; and give us the infinite satisfaction of seeing the entire church of Christ, in this and in all lands, shining forth in the beauties of holiness; and uniting with every friend of God in praises to his name, that slaveholding can no longer be found, either in the church, or anywhere on earth.



