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A REVIEW
OF THE
REV. HORACE BUSHNELL'S
DISCOURSE
ON
THE SLAVERY QUESTION,

DELIVERED IN THE NORTH CHURCH,

HARTFORD, JANUARY 10, 1839.

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REVIEW.

SELF-CONCEIT and dogmatism cannot be tolerated in civilized society. They are two dark spots upon the character, which splendid talents and elevated station make darker. Criticism turns from them with disgust, and would fain leave the works they deform to perish and be forgotten. But though repelled from the unsightly page, true to herself, she returns with averted eye, to succor truth, and restore her, radiant and lovely, to the admiration of her disciples. Criticism has comparatively little to do with the author, and, like love, is often blind to his unamiable traits of character, while occupied with the high and appropriate duties of her vocation.

The ostensible design of this Discourse, is no less than the utter overthrow and annihilation of modern abolitionism. To this high-blown purpose are brought whatever of wit, eloquence, and logic, the author possesses. To accomplish his object with greater facility and certainty, he shields himself behind some of the features or incidents of slavery, in order to deal at abolitionism a less suspected and deadlier blow. With a benevolence a little peculiar, and in a manner altogether his own, he endeavors to show abolitionists themselves that they are a company of weak-minded, misguided, and

ill-mannered men, whose measures correspond in these respects with the character given them. At the same time, they are consoled, in their pitiable inferiority, with the kind assurance and prophetic declaration, that "the destruction of slavery will be accomplished, either with them, or without them; or if they make it necessary, in spite of them."

The Discourse is introduced with the following Text: "And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground." [Acts xxvii, 41.] Surely, these are startling and ominous words, with which to open "a Discourse on the Slavery Question." They excite dismal bodings of winds and tempests; of billowy seas and darksome skies. But the speaker, justly apprehensive that his hearers might be disquieted and alarmed for their safety, quickly informs them, in the concluding words of the same chapter, "that they all escaped safe to land." His manner of doing this will best be understood from the preface itself.

Navigation is dangerous, where two seas meet. The transition to my subject is obvious.

But let me remind you in passing, that Paul, who was pilot in this memorable scene, did much more magnify his office, than if he had only dared to speak in fair sailing and still water. Perhaps too, it may serve your comfort to add the last words of the chapter, And it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to land.—[p. 3.]

The compliment here bestowed upon the Apostle, appears to be one of a reflex nature which, though given to him, was designed quite as much for the benefit of one of his successors. Whether so or otherwise, the author straightway assumes the pilotage of the ship, and launches forth into deep and perilous waters. Some unpropitious wind must have driven him far from his *proper* course, and whether he and his fellow voyagers will ever "all escape safe to land," the Ruler of the storm and the tempest, only knows. We cherish none but the kindest and most humane feelings towards these unfortunate mariners; we see their distress, and do hereby proffer our best services to help them to their reckoning, to show them their latitude and longitude, to call their attention to their Chart, and point out to them through

the fogs, and mists, and spray, the *polar star*. And sincerely do we hope it may hereafter be said,

* * * Alba nautis
Stella refulsit,
Deffluxit saxis agitatus humor:
Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes.*

After reminding his audience of a former discourse on the subject, and taking occasion to say, "after watching the movement for so long a time, reading, conversing, hearing, with a mind fully open to conviction, it is a *great satisfaction* to me that I find occasion to alter no one of the principles laid down," the author proceeds thus to state his object and divide his discourse.

My object this evening will be to present a general view of the whole subject of slavery as related to the question of abolition. Of course I shall not be able to bring set arguments for every assertion made. My hope is rather to present a view, which taken in the whole, will appear to be so reasonably cast, as to furnish its own evidence.

As regards the matter of abolishing slavery in the Southern portions of our country, there are two great questions, which arise for discussion and settlement.

I. Whether such abolition is possible, or a duty obligatory on Southern Legislatures. And

II. What is our duty in reference to the subject; what measures, if any, ought we to adopt with a view to hasten the result.

Let us glance at these questions separately.

The attempt has been often made, to show that holding a person in legal bondage is of course a sin in all cases, and in every moment of its continuance,—no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the laws of the State. I believe it is now generally understood by the Anti-Slavery advocates, that they gain nothing by the argument, and in fact, that it has no foundation in truth. The ground is too narrow. A thousand cases could be stated, in time sufficient for the statement, where no man in his senses, while the present laws continue in force, would charge the mere temporary holding of slaves as a crime. And in this view, all that we have heard in the way of calling our countrymen *pirates*, *man-stealers*, and the like, is a mere indiscriminate raving, entitled to no respect, and having no apology but ignorance. Or if an attempt be made to reason out the justice of these epithets, it is only by that small logic, which distinguishes the class of petty Reformers.—[pp. 4, 5.]

The taking for granted what never has been conceded, is, surely, an unfortunate oversight in this instance, inasmuch as

* Horat. I, Od. 12, 27.

* * * A star
Upon the sailors shone serene;
Swift from the rocks down foams the broken surge,
Calm are the winds, the driving clouds disperse.

the whole Anti-Slavery movement turns on the great principle, that the making or holding of man as property, is wrong—an atrocious outrage upon humanity, and a heinous sin against God. This is the fundamental element, the vital and constituent principle of the enterprise. We are told that this ground is too narrow—what, it may be asked, could make it broader? Relinquish this principle, and it would, indeed, be as narrow as any opposer could desire. In this great truism are the efficiency and power of the organization. Man can never be rightfully held under dominion as the beasts, because God gave him dominion over them. He cannot be made property, because his worth is inappreciable, and none but the Infinite mind can duly comprehend it. Christianity points to the Cross, to the agonies and blood of a dying Savior, and bids us learn the worth of man from the amazing price there paid for him. All that is noble and godlike in our nature revolts, with instinctive horror, from the contemplation of man as property—as a tool, a chattel, a mere thing, to subserve the physical enjoyment of another. What! Man, made after the image of God and ransomed by a Savior's blood; man, intellectual and immortal, made but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor; man, with all his aspirations, hopes, affections, sympathies, conscience, intellect, immortality, to be marked and branded as goods, to be bought and sold in the shambles, to be made a beast of burden, to rank in the creation with cattle, and horses, and swine! Flagrant usurpation! high-handed outrage! damning sin! Yet we are told that “a thousand cases could be stated, in time sufficient for the statement, where no man, in his senses, while the *present laws* continue in force, would charge the mere temporary holding of slaves as a crime.” As if human laws could reverse the orderings of Providence, efface the sanctions of Revelation, and wash guilt in innocence. As if human government could abrogate the Decalogue and usurp the prerogatives of “Him whose right it is to rule.” Are we, then, to take the statute-book of a slave-holding state, and read the acquittal of slave-holders in the

very laws they have themselves enacted, and pronounce them crimeless, innocent? God forbid! Abolitionists can never yield their understandings to such a divinity—they believe that sin is the same in all worlds, and in all ages, as fixed and unchangeable as the pure Being whom it offends. They regard the inalienable rights of man, as the munificent gift of his Creator, and no law can make it right to wrest or withhold them from any human being, unless forfeited by crime. The institution of civil government is for the protection of these rights: and whenever it fails to do this; when instead of guarding, it plunders them, it thwarts the very end of its existence, and becomes a tremendous engine of evil and misery. The declaration recently made in the Senate of the United States, that “that *is* property which the laws declare *to be* property,”* is the very essence of despotism; it destroys the sacred tenure by which we hold our liberties, and casts us, weak and helpless, upon the mercy of man. Every freeman should reject it with disdain, and spurn it as the progeny of slavery.—We think the “small logic,” which the author affects so much to despise, and which is truly despicable, is on the side of the “petty [*anti-*]Reformers”—those who wish to make the ground narrower.

“If our countrymen are guilty in this matter of slavery it is in not holding what they know to be truth concerning it.” [p. 5.] We would suggest, whether the theology of this remark would not be a little improved, by a slight change in the reading, to this effect: If our countrymen are guilty in this matter of slavery, it is in refusing to admit the light of truth, and in disobeying its commands. Voluntary blindness, so far from mitigating, aggravates guilt. This principle is recognised by human tribunals, and the culprit can never plead ignorance of the law as any excuse for transgression. Our countrymen are guilty because they have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, hearts and understand not, the subject in question. They seem determined to be ignorant—“they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be

* Hon. Henry Clay.

reproved;" and hence they are doubly guilty—guilty in not receiving the truth; guilty in not obeying it.

Our hearts fully respond to the truth of the following sentiment: "If there was ever a people on earth involved in crime, who yet deserved sympathy and gentleness at the hands of the good, it is the slave-holding portion of our country."— [p. 6.] It is understood to be the high calling of the Christian ministry, not to cover transgressions, but to teach transgressors the way of life, and warn them of a coming judgment. It is the highest office of friendship, and its surest test, faithfully to admonish an erring friend of his faults, to acquaint him with their nature, and unfold to him their evil tendencies. This is just the position which abolitionists endeavor to assume towards the Southern slave-holder; and though the remark may seem strange and paradoxical to those unfortunate gentlemen, whom the author represents as having been thrown into a "false position," it is nevertheless true, that the hearts of abolitionists embrace within the expansive circlings of their benevolence both the master and the slave. At least, they hope they are not far behind their opposers in this respect. While they feel, and feel deeply for the slave, crushed and trodden down, they feel for the master who crushes and tramples him. They view the system of slavery as one of unmixed, unmitigated evil, fraught with ruin alike to the slave and to his master. They see in all its ramifications an exemplification of that principle of the Divine government, which exposes him who does wrong to suffer wrong. While it lays its iron hand upon the hearts of its victims, and makes them heave and bleed in its grasp, it hardens, pollutes, and desolates the hearts of masters. The fatal blow, which strikes down the oppressed and degrades him to the dust, recoils, with unerring precision, upon the oppressor, and lays him low. Viewing the subject in this light, how can we fail to be moved with compassion for the slave-holder—how cold and insensible must our hearts be to every generous emotion, should they not feel for him! And would it be the part of friendship, of religion,

or of humanity, to be silent as the grave; or if not, only to break that silence by the cry of peace, peace, when there is no peace? None but enemies in the disguise of friendship, none but false-hearted and parasitical friends will do it. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." As in the West-India Islands, so in this country, the time may come, when slave-holders, though now they frown and gnash upon abolitionists, in consequence of the misrepresentations and abuse poured upon the latter, by Northern presses, and Northern pulpits, and Northern mobs, will understand the principles and aims of those who are struggling for the rights and happiness of man, through a storm of persecution and obloquy unexampled in our history, and magnanimously acknowledge those as friends, who, they had been taught to believe, were enemies, with fanatical hearts and crazy intellects.

We take pleasure in quoting the following passages. They present a graphic and impressive delineation of the prominent features of American slavery. The sentiments are worthy of the man and the Christian.

But while I say this, there are some three or four features in American slavery, which no Christian, no man who has the common feelings of humanity, can think of without pity, disgust, and shame. I am reluctant even to make any exception here, in favor of those educated in slavery; for I have never found a truly virtuous minded man, from the slave-holding country, who did not yield what I say. The features, of which I speak, are such, if we look them in the face, as forbid all apology, all argument. Our nature positively refuses to reason farther. Not that we are here to give ourselves up to mere impulse, and forswear the exercise of our judgment, but that we are *ready* to judge, and to say at the first flash of vision—away with it—nothing can be worse—any thing beside must be better.

The obnoxious features in American slavery of which I speak are these.

First and chief of all is the non-permission of the family state, by the denial of marriage rites; by the tearing asunder those parents whom God, more merciful than the laws, has doubtless accepted in the rites of nature; by stripping their children from their arms; by disallowing, if I should not rather say, extinguishing every affection which makes life human. I know of no term but one, which designates this feature of slavery. It is, without a figure, the cattle-state imported into humanity.

Another feature of American slavery is the absence of any real protection to the body of the slave, in respect to limb, life, or chastity. I am not ignorant of the various laws, in the statute-books, against extreme punishments and cruel usage in various respects. Still, it is philosophically true, that there are no such statutes, and they are not to be named in making out the legal view of slavery. For, owing to the exclusion of testimony against their masters, on the part of slaves, (necessary, perhaps, as a part of the institution,) owing also to the power the master has to overawe their complaints, or to take revenge afterwards, in case any attempt is made to find protection against his cruelty, it may be said that they *CAN* do nothing, but bow their body to fury and lust, and vent their griefs in tears, which none but God will notice or regard. I blush to say, that, in a certain high point of

civilized honor and humanity, not even the form of a law exists, to maintain the show of protection.

A third feature of American slavery, as a legal institution, is that it nowhere recognizes, in the slave, a moral or intellectual nature. He exists for another;—in himself he is no man. He is a muscular being only, or, rather I should say, he is a muscular tool, a thing composed of arms and legs and various integuments convenient to do work with. A frightful system of legalized selfishness has robbed him of himself. [Who is the robber, or man-stealer ?] Light is denied him, the windows of his soul are shut up by express statute. As a creature of conscience, a creature of immoral wants, a creature in God's image, he has no legal existence.

Now observe—when I fix upon these three features of slavery and take my stand for abolition before them, I do by no means regard the view they present, as a picture of slavery in the life. I only say—this is what the law PERMITS IT TO BE. The great truth is here—the law draws back from the slave's well-being and protection, and leaves him, virtually, in the absolute power of his master as to family, as to body, as to mind, that is, as to every thing of any value in his being. The condition of the slave, thus deserted, is seldom as desperate as the law suffers it to be. In this matter, he depends entirely upon the mercy, or the caprice of his master. Sometimes, of course, he finds a parent in his master. Oftener, he only exists, under him, in the rank of a tolerably well-kept drudge. No reasonable man, however, needs any other proof, than that masters are men, to assure him that, in the exercise of a power over their slaves so nearly absolute, there must be scenes of crime and woe, too horrid and foul for the inspection of day. For myself, I cannot think of slavery, in this view, knowing as I do, the selfishness, the ferocity, the demoralized passions of men, without such a sense of its woes and cruelties as I cannot restrain. It compels me to say—I will not reason the matter farther. No facts, no arguments, no apprehensions of mischief in a change, shall put me at peace with these things. They ought to be, will be, must be put away. And this to me is the abolition of slavery.—[pp. 6, 7.]

We are not a little surprised by the suggestion which concludes the following passage on the next page: "I say to the South, this institution is your own, not ours. Take your own way of proceeding. Modify your system as you please. Invent any new fashion of society you please, or introduce any old fashion. Create you a serfdom, or a villein socage, or sweep the whole fabric away."—It is hard to think the author insincere in this suggestion, and harder to think him sincere. It cannot be that any true friend of man, who rightly understands what is meant by "a serfdom, or a villein socage," would be willing to have either introduced into this country, and extended over a sixth portion of its population. They are stigmas on the darkest and most despotic governments of Europe, and are fast disappearing under the beams of the rising sun of Liberty. Neither of these systems recognises man as the owner of himself, nor shields his inalienable rights as a creature of God. We admit either of them is not so bad as American slavery, and for the sole reason, in the language of Wesley, that "American slavery is the vilest beneath the sun." But they are only

other names for slavery, and a bare suggestion of a willingness to see them substituted for slavery in its present form, if made intelligently and deliberately, must throw distrust and suspicion on him who makes it. But charity requires us to impute it, in this case, to a fondness for speculative inquiries, rather than to any lurking unfriendliness to the cause of liberty. The writer proceeds :

You observe here, that I rest myself, not on any vagrant rumors or stories of hideous oppression. I fix on three simple points in the ground work of slavery, where I can study it, separate from all passion. I see it, in each of these three points, to be clearly distinguished from that institution endured or licensed, under the name of bondage, in the law of Moses. As a mere being of reason too, and natural feeling, I see enough, at first glance, in it, to put me into instant opposition. And that not in disregard of consequences; for I say at once, that a just God never did or will make it necessary that such an institution should continue. There can be no consequences worse than the thing itself, provided there be a disposition on all sides to concur in its abolition, and no obstructions be thrown in the way, by ill-advised and pernicious measures.

I do not, of course, forbid, when I shut up the subject to this confined but conclusive view, that the discussion shall take a wider range.

Let facts be set forth. Not such as merely show the ferocity of *some men*, but such as show the ferocity of *slavery*. If it were my object to sweep away the marriage state, what horrid examples of cruelty in husbands could I produce. But such examples would be only specimens of monstrosity in men, not proofs of the merits of the domestic state. Draw out then the portrait of the domestic slave trade. Describe the disgusting scene of a slave-purchase in the market. Portray the miserable slave-gang marching off to the far south-west, silent, weary, and sick at heart, for the wives and children left behind and never to be heard of again on earth. Weep over the stain, which slavery brings upon the honor of our common country. Exhibit, in its true color, the miserable falsification which slavery gives to all our boasted pretences of liberty, our avowed principles of equality. Deprecate the judgments of a just God. Show the moral darkness of the great region of slavery, and claim it as the right of Jesus Christ, that his gospel should be preached and read by the slaves, and their immortal manhood acknowledged: giving due credit always to those masters, who have so far honored their Lord, as to become the instructors and guardians of their slaves; and to those ministers of Christ, who have been the faithful dispensers of salvation, among so many discouragements.

Take up the prudential view, and show the masters, as you may by unquestionable facts, that if they should prefer to give their slaves entire freedom, they may do it with perfect safety. Show them, also, that they will lose nothing by emancipation. The slaves will still exist on their soil, and constitute an article of the general wealth, as truly as now. The labor-power will not be destroyed, and it will be commanded at as cheap a rate as now. Their plantations will produce as much, and the income of their whole territory be as great as now. So true is this, that I would never consent to give them any compensation for the loss of their slaves, by emancipation. Let them be reminded, withal, that by the simple act of abolition, they will give themselves ten or twenty representatives in Congress, above their present number.

It ought to be a matter of great weight with us here at the North, though difficult to be used in any appeal to the South, that slavery has no agreement with the spirit of our institutions. Their electors are not simple freemen, in the Northern sense. They are rather so many little doges or sheiks who come together to vote in their own name and that of their slaves. The equality, they speak of, is not the equality of citizens, but of so many masterships or slavedoms. The notions bred in them by their education, are too often correspondent. They grow up in command, not in concession. In childhood they make law, not learn subordination to it. They invigorate their will, but not their notions of equal justice. Their organ is power,

not reason. And, accordingly, when they come into the Congress of the nation, they too often come with a jealous and imperious spirit, which well nigh disqualifies them for a place in that reasoning and deliberative body. You have too long seen and felt what I speak of to be ignorant of my meaning. Here is the point, where our institutions have ever been most incommoded and their security most endangered.—[pp. 8, 9, 10.]

These considerations are just, and commend themselves to the understandings of all men. On what side soever the author contemplates slavery, nothing but blackness and horror meet his view. Yet we are called upon to admit “a thousand cases” in which slave-holding is no crime—as stainless and spotless as innocency itself.

We now come to what are styled, “some of the more discursive thoughts” of the Discourse. The following questions introduce an inquiry which, though answered somewhat ingeniously, is not settled on a satisfactory basis: “We cannot avoid asking, too, as we discuss this subject, what will be the result to the slaves if emancipated? Will it do them any real service?” [p. 11.] The ground is then taken that an uncultivated and barbarous people can never rise amid a cultivated and civilized nation; and several historical examples are cited in proof of the position. But strange and sad to tell, the conclusion is reached, by this newly discovered law of population, that a state of slavery is inseparable from the perpetuity of the African population in this country. Withdraw the kind care and fostering protection of masters, and they, as a people, would waste away and dwindle to extinction! But this inevitable doom, by which millions of the human family are to be blotted out of existence, awakens no plaint of sadness, no dirge-note in the author’s heart. On the contrary, this new law of population is urged as a reason for emancipation, and in anticipation of the downfall of slavery from its prospective operation, he bursts forth into the following strain of enraptured eloquence:

And glorious will be the day when it falls. Though it opens no very bright prospect on the African race it will at least, bring them the acknowledgment of their manhood. To many individuals of them it will be the dawn of an auspicious morning, the beginning of a more elevated and happy life. And as to the poor herd who may yet be doomed to spin their brutish existence down to extinction, it will be a relief to know, that a first day of conscious liberty made them one bright spot, in the compass of a sad and defrauded immortality. But our country,

on that day, recruiting as she will her sickened hopes, and breathing unoppressed, in the freshness of that exhilarated morning, will most of all rejoice. To her it will be a day of honor and ineffable brightness. The bad education of slavery is no more to exist. As the African race gradually disappears from the fields dishonored by their tears, her sons will multiply their hands of industry, a spirit of subordination and justice will be in their breasts, and she will possess one people. Then may she dare to promise herself a clear and blessed perpetuity. Her jealousies are extinct; her dangers are passed by. Her floods thereat shall clap their hands as they roll, and one jubilant brotherly hymn bursting upward and abroad, shall make her mountains tremble in their distant seats, responsive to the common touch of harmony.—[pp. 14, 15.]

Analogy is, at best, a precarious foundation for an argument, especially for one which develops and establishes a new law of population. It often chanced, that analogies are found where none exist; and after the reasoner has constructed a profound and conclusive argument on such a basis, it has no better support than "castles built on air." Never was this remark truer than in the present instance. On examining the several historical examples which are cited as analogous cases, there is found to be no more analogy between them and that of the slave population of this country, than prevails between the complexions of a white man and a black man. The obvious difference in the two cases is this. The ancient Britons never constituted any part of the nation that subdued them, but were a distinct people, a nation within a nation. So of the American aborigines, the natives of British India, New Holland, and South Africa, which are mentioned; they occupied no place, or had no locality in the civil organizations of their conquerors. In this sense they were foreigners, and regarded with jealousy as rivals, rather than with benignity, as equals. Had they formed members of the organic body, and, as such, had certain offices to perform, they would have grown with its growth and strengthened with its strength. They could no more have been dispensed with than an arm or a leg in the human frame. Now in the case of the slave population of this country, it constitutes a part, though a very abject part, of the nation—it is incorporated into the society of the South, and its absence would be as much missed as that of any other class. The slaves constitute, what is, in all civilized countries, a most useful and necessary part of the population, the laboring class—the pro-

ducers, without which capital is useless and plantations barren. Their services would be no less needed in a state of freedom than they now are in a state of slavery, and hence it cannot be supposed their employers would adopt towards them a cruel and exterminating policy. This, they would see, would be a suicidal policy, no less detrimental to themselves than unjust to others.

There is some analogy between the several cases mentioned and that of the colored population of the free States, but one which goes to subvert the author's argument. The colored people are treated by most of the States not as constituent parts of their population, but as foreigners—they are disfranchised by their constitutions, and oppressed by their partial laws—they are the victims of disgraceful and unmanly prejudices, which slavery has engendered against them—they are crushed and degraded by the unmerciful policy of those who complain of their degradation. The laboring class is filled with white men, who do not wish those for competitors, whom they regard with jealousy, as obtruders. These are some of the causes of their depression—causes no less fatal to their prosperity and increase, than were the spears of the Saxon conquerors to their subjugated foes. The relative position of the emancipated bondmen of the South, as has been shown, would be altogether different, inasmuch as they would form a large and constituent part of the body politic—such, at least, as its arms and hands.

Another fundamental error in the argument, consists in not making due allowance for the saving influences of Christianity. They are alluded to, but too little dependence is placed upon them. From this high source spring our hopes for this and every other people. The truth is, Christianity has hitherto exerted an influence so feeble—her solemn truths and momentous disclosures have been so little heeded and felt, that man has seldom been regarded in his higher nature. He has been viewed as a mere physical being, irrespective of his rational, spiritual, and immortal nature. This is the origin of slavery, and all the other abuses,

which have been heaped upon struggling humanity. Tyrants and enslavers do not appreciate man as an immortal child of God, but as an animal solely, as a thing, to subserve their own sordid purposes. The sublime injunction of Christianity, requiring all men to love their neighbors as themselves, is by them unknown or unfelt. On the contrary, the appeal is to the sword; power is the arbiter of destiny. But every philosophical observer of the signs of the times, beholds a brighter era dawning on the afflicted family of man. It is the harbinger of a Revolution more glorious and beneficent, than any the world ever saw. Christianity is destined to renovate society, and to write her sublime precepts on the hearts of rulers and people. Then will man be appreciated, not by his bones and muscles, not by the "clayey tabernacle" in which he dwells, but by his deathless nature and his immortal spirit. Then will be felt the force of the following sentiment :

" Woe for those who trample o'er a mind,
A deathless thing! They know not what they do,
Or what they deal with. Man perchance may bind
The flower his steps have bruised; or light anew
The torch he quenches; or to music wind
Again the lyre-string, from his touch that flew :
But for the soul! Oh! tremble and beware
To lay rude hands upon God's mysteries there."

We now come to the second division of the Discourse, which treats of duty and measures.

II. What is our duty, at the North, in reference to this subject; what measures, if any, ought we to adopt.

Many, who are offended by the Anti-Slavery movements, do not stay to settle their own minds, as they ought, but declare at once, that we have nothing to do with the subject, and have even no right to touch it. But that is a doctrine which cannot be yielded to for a moment.

The territories of the United States are in the hands of our Congress, and subject to our legislation. The same is true of the District of Columbia. And when we consider the high moral position of our Congress, and the tremendous blow that would fall on the whole system of slavery, if Congress should come into action here, we find a prodigious responsibility laid upon us. Not that we are, of course, bound to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia as soon as we can possibly force the vote. But we are to urge the subject, till our friends become familiar with it, till abolition loses some of its horrors, till the kindness of our disposition is proved, perhaps, till Virginia and Maryland, whose good neighborhood we are under some obligations of courtesy not to incommode, are ready to vote with us: in short, till we can do it without destroying the Union, and so as to have the highest effect possible against the institution of slavery generally.

Again we are linked with slavery, by duties of mutual aid and defence. Thus if an insurrection arises, we may be called, according to the constitution, to march

down our troops and aid in restoring the laws. And will it be said, in such a case, that we are to march home again and be hush as midnight on the subject of slavery, because we have nothing to do with it?

We have also a common character with the South, we are one nation, and have as dear a property in their good name as they have in their own. If we hold our breath where the honor of our nation is thus deeply concerned, we are not Americans. A man's right hand cannot be a thief's and his left an honest man's. No more can a nation have its honor or its dishonor in single limbs and fragments.

Then again our holy religion is a spirit of universal humanity and benevolence: By it we are constituted brothers of mankind. Not prison walls, not oceans, not the boundaries of kingdoms, much less any compacts or constitutional pledges put us, as some say, beyond the rights and duties of a mutual benevolence. The religion of our Master transcends all barriers, and carries us abroad to feel the pulse of joy and woe in every human creature. It brings China and Japan to our doors, and us to theirs; it cannot surely make us aliens to our countrymen, or permit us to be. I conclude then, that we have something to do with this subject. And now the question is, what have we to do?

This will be agreed to on all hands, that our measures are to be fitted to our end, and that our end is to secure the abolition of slavery by inducing the masters to act through their Legislatures. And in this you have the law of all our measures. If they are such as have no tendency to convince, move, or persuade the masters, they are bad measures. If they have a tendency to do this, they are good measures. If they have such a tendency, in the strongest degree, the best measures.—[pp. 15, 16.]

The rule of procedure here given is an axiom from which none will dissent; and we will anon make it the test of the author's plan for the abolition of slavery. But let us first attend to his "method in which the Anti-Slavery movement should have begun."

Let one or two Christian gentlemen have gone South and conferred with the more candid and humane citizens, approaching them as gentlemen standing in a position of natural jealousy. Let them have taken the post of suggestion, inquiring whether it was possible to do nothing for the family state, nothing for the more adequate security of the slave's person, nothing for the education of his mind and the salvation of his immortal being. There have always been many aching hearts at the South, in reference to these more horrid features of slavery, and it would have been easy to draw them forward into greater courage and efficiency. In this way, beyond all question, a strong movement could have been begun, in which the South would have taken the lead themselves. Much was beginning to be done, in respect to teaching the slaves to read and providing them with the privileges of the gospel. Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky too, were actually close approaching the act of emancipation, and nothing was wanting but a little time and forbearance in us to have secured the result.—[p. 17.]

Let us then suppose that "one or two Christian gentlemen" had started on this errand—what assurance would the author have had of its performance? He can doubtless recollect some instances, in which "Christian gentlemen," who have gone South and resided there a somewhat less time, than it would take "one or two" to traverse the whole slave region and "confer with the more candid and humane citizens," returned with new views of slavery; and represented it as

being not quite so bad, after all, as some people, who never saw it, imagine. Or he may be acquainted with some other cases, in which these "Christian gentlemen" never returned at all; but took the "post of suggestion," and conferred with some of the "more candid and humane," and it may be added, wealthy "citizens," about the gentle hands and rich dowries of their daughters. Instead of converting the South to liberty, they became converts to slavery. Like the messengers of old sent to spy out an adjacent country, they found it a land flowing with milk and honey; or if not literally with these, with certain other attractions quite as enticing and captivating to their hearts.*

Had the author favored us with one fact in proof of the assertion, that "much was beginning to be done" for the intellectual and moral improvement of the slaves; had he informed us by what processes Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky, were "actually close approaching the act of emancipation," we had been greatly obliged. These assertions we believe to be utterly groundless, and if we accredit them, it must be on the supposition, that they are made by one, who ought to know the truth of what he affirms. Was Virginia near the act of emancipation, when, a few years since, her Legislature passed a law, making it highly penal, to instruct a slave to read or write? Every man correctly informed on the subject, knows, nothing had been done in either of those States to unfetter the slave; on the contrary, the chains were never faster or heavier upon him, than at the moment when the Anti-Slavery movement began. But we have already dwelt too long on this passage. The Discourse proceeds:

But instead of beginning in this way, the first movement here at the North was a rank onset and explosion. I may speak plainly on this subject, because none of you were engaged in the movement, and I think you will generally agree with me. The first sin of this organization was a sin of ill manners. They did not go to work like Christian gentlemen. They went to work much as if they were going to drive the masters—as they do their negroes. The great convention, which met

* Anna soror, quæ me suspensam in somnia terrent?
 Quis novus hic nostris successet sedibus hospes?
 Quem sese ore ferens! quam forti pectore et armis!
 Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum.

Virg. Æn. IV. 9.

at Philadelphia, drew up a declaration of their sentiments, in which they visibly affected the style and tone of the declaration of independence. In one point of view, it is a noble paper. It is eloquent. The sentiments are generally what they should be. And yet it is coupled with a sort of effect, I hardly know whether to call it sad or ludicrous, when you figure to yourselves a body of men gathered in solemn convocation at Philadelphia, and declaring independence, as it were, for slavery!—An act exactly fitted to alienate every friend they had or could have had at the South, and shut his lips forever.—An act, by which they wilfully and boorishly cast off the whole South from them, and kindled against themselves a flame of madness so hot as to exclude all approach, and create an embargo against all their arguments.—[pp. 17, 18.]

As to the “sin of ill manners,” (which by the way is a novel kind of sin,) if we have not already, we shall hereafter learn, whether our author is a Chesterfield in this respect, and whether his own breeding is such as qualifies him to pronounce upon the manners of others. The mixture of the sad and ludicrous, in the Declaration of sentiments, is what we never suspected, and we think a man must be peculiarly susceptible in whom it excites either of these emotions. But as the reader may have a curiosity to see the document over which our author “hardly knows” whether to cry or to laugh, though somewhat long, we will insert it entire, with the request, that he will carefully observe his own emotions as he reads, and compare them with those of the writer of the Discourse.

DECLARATION.

The Convention assembled in the city of Philadelphia, to organize a National Anti-Slavery Society, promptly seize the opportunity to promulgate the following DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, as cherished by them in relation to the enslavement of one sixth portion of the American people.

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed since a band of patriots convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The corner stone upon which they founded the TEMPLE OF FREEDOM was broadly this—“that all men are created equal; and they are endowed by their Creator, with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness.” At the sound of their trumpet-call, three millions of people rose up as from the sleep of death, and rushed to the strife of blood; deeming it more glorious to die instantly as freemen, than desirable to live one hour as slaves. They were few in number—poor in resources; but the honest conviction that TRUTH, JUSTICE, and RIGHT, were on their side, made them invincible.

We have met together for the achievement of an enterprise, without which that of our fathers is incomplete; and which, for its magnitude, solemnity, and probable results upon the destiny of the world, as far transcends theirs as moral truth does physical force.

In purity of motive, in earnestness of zeal, in decision of purpose, in intrepidity of action, in steadfastness of faith, in sincerity of spirit, we would not be inferior to them.

Their principles led them to wage war against their oppressors, and to spill human blood like water, in order to be free. Ours forbid the doing of evil that good may

come, and lead us to reject, and to entreat the oppressed to reject, the use of all carnal weapons for deliverance from bondage; relying solely upon those which are spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

Their measures were physical resistance—the marshalling in arms—the hostile array—the mortal encounter. *Ours* shall be such as only the opposition of moral purity to moral corruption—the destruction of error by the potency of truth—the overthrow of prejudice by the power of love—and the abolition of slavery by the spirit of repentance.

Their grievances, great as they were, were trifling in comparison with the wrongs and sufferings of those for whom we plead. Our fathers were never slaves—never bought and sold like cattle—shut out from the light of knowledge and religion—never subjected to the lash of brutal task-masters.

But those for whose emancipation we are striving—constituting at the present time at least one-sixth part of our countrymen,—are recognized by the law, and treated by their fellow beings, as marketable commodities, as goods and chattels, as brute beasts; are plundered daily of the fruits of their toil without redress; really enjoying no constitutional or legal protection from licentious and murderous outrages upon their persons; are ruthlessly torn asunder—the tender babe from the arms of its frantic mother—the broken hearted wife from her weeping husband—at the caprice or pleasure of irresponsible tyrants. For the crime of having a dark complexion, they suffer the pangs of hunger, the infliction of stripes, and the ignominy of a brutal servitude. They are kept in heathenish darkness by laws expressly enacted to make their instruction a criminal offense.

These are the prominent circumstances in the condition of more than two millions of people, the proof of which may be found in thousands of indisputable facts, and the laws of the slave-holding States.

Hence we maintain,—that in view of the civil and religious privileges of this nation, the guilt of its oppression is unequalled by any other on the face of the earth; and, therefore,

That it is bound to repent instantly, to undo the heavy burden; to break every yoke, and to let the oppressed go free.

We further maintain,—that no man has a right to enslave or imbrute his brother—to hold or acknowledge him for one moment as a piece of merchandise—to keep back his hire by fraud—or to brutalize his mind by denying him the means of intellectual, social, and moral improvement.

The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it, is to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body—to the products of his own labor—to the protection of law, and to the common advantages of society. It is piracy to buy or steal a native African and subject him to servitude. Surely the sin is as great to enslave an AMERICAN as an AFRICAN.

Therefore we believe and affirm—That there is no difference, *in principle*, between the African slave-trade and American slavery.

That every American citizen who retains a human being in involuntary bondage as his property, is [according to Scripture*] a MAN-STEALER.

That the slaves ought instantly to be set free, and brought under the protection of law:

That if they had lived from the time of Pharaoh to the present period, and had been entailed through successive generations, their right to be free could never have been alienated, but their claims would have constantly risen in solemnity:

That all those laws which are now in force, admitting the right of slavery, are therefore before God utterly null and void; being an audacious usurpation of the Divine prerogative, a daring infringement on the law of nature, a base overthrow of the very foundations of the social compact, a complete extinction of all the relations, endearments, and obligations of mankind, and a presumptuous transgression of all the holy commandments—and that therefore they ought instantly to be abrogated.

We further believe and affirm—That all persons of color who possess the qualifications demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, as others; and that the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them, as to persons of a white complexion.

We maintain that no compensation should be given to the planters for emancipating their slaves,

Because it would be a surrender of the great fundamental principle, that man cannot hold property in man;

Because SLAVERY IS A CRIME, AND THEREFORE [MAN] IS NOT AN ARTICLE TO BE SOLD;

Because the holders of slaves are not the just proprietors of what they claim; freeing the slaves is not depriving them of property, but restoring it to its rightful owners; it is not wronging the master, but righting the slave—restoring him to himself;

Because immediate and general emancipation would only destroy nominal, not real property; it would not amputate a limb or break a bone of the slaves, but by infusing motives into their breasts, would make them doubly valuable to their masters as free laborers; and

Because, if compensation is to be given at all, it should be given to the outraged and guiltless slaves, and not to those who have plundered and abused them.

We regard as delusive, cruel, and dangerous, any scheme of expatriation which pretends to aid, either directly or indirectly, in the emancipation of the slaves, or to be a substitute for the immediate and total abolition of slavery.

We fully and unanimously recognize the sovereignty of each State, to legislate exclusively on the subject of the slavery which is tolerated within its limits; we concede that Congress *under the present national compact*, has no right to interfere with any of the slave States, in relation to this momentous subject:

But we maintain that Congress has a right, and is solemnly bound, to suppress the domestic slave-trade between the several States, and to abolish slavery in those portions of our territory which the Constitution has placed under its exclusive jurisdiction.

We also maintain that there are, at the present time, the highest obligations resting upon the people of the free States, to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed by the Constitution of the United States. They are now living under a pledge of their tremendous physical force, to fasten the galling fetters of tyranny upon the limbs of millions in the Southern States; they are liable to be called at any moment to suppress a general insurrection of the slaves; they authorize the slave-owner to vote on three-fifths of his slaves as property, and thus enable him to perpetuate his oppression; they support a standing army at the South for its protection; and they seize the tortured slave who has escaped into their territories, and send him back to be tortured by an enraged master or a brutal driver. This relation to slavery is criminal and full of danger: IT MUST BE BROKEN UP.

These are our views and principles—these our designs and measures. With entire confidence in the overruling justice of God, we plant ourselves upon the Declaration of our Independence and the truths of Divine Revelation as upon the Everlasting Rock.

We shall organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town, and village, in our land.

We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty, and rebuke.

We shall circulate, unsparingly and extensively, Anti-Slavery tracts and periodicals.

We shall enlist the pulpit and the press in the cause of the suffering and the dumb.

We shall aim at a purification of the churches from all participation of the guilt of slavery,

We shall encourage the labor of freemen rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions; and

We shall spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to a speedy repentance.

Our trust for victory is solely in God. We may be personally defeated, but our principles never. TRUTH, JUSTICE, REASON, HUMANITY, must and will gloriously triumph. Already a host is coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and the prospect is full of encouragement.

Submitting this DECLARATION to the candid examination of the people of this country, and of the friends of liberty throughout the world, we hereby affix our signatures to it; pledging ourselves that, under the guidance and help of

Almighty God we will do all that in us lies, consistently with this declaration of our principles, to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth—to deliver our land from its deadliest curse—to wipe out the foulest stain which rests upon our national escutcheon—and to secure to the colored population of the United States all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men, and as Americans—come what may to our persons, our interests, or our reputation—whether we live to witness the triumph of LIBERTY, JUSTICE, and HUMANITY, or perish untimely as martyrs in this great, benevolent, and holy cause.

Done at Philadelphia, the sixth day of December, A. D. 1833.

In farther commenting upon this document, the writer is filled with sadness, because it is “so dishonorable to religion.” Really, it is time for abolitionists to take heed to their ways, if in addition to the “sin of ill manners,” they dishonor religion by the Declaration of their sentiments, and fill her ministers with sadness. They may yet have another new sin charged upon them for the latter offense. The censure of his audience is thus deprecated.

Do not remind me that finding fault with measures, even the best of measures, long after their adoption, is too easy to be a work of honor or of ambition. I showed you the fault of this movement, much as I have now done, in the first heat and rumor of the explosion, and long before any of you came into it. Do not remind me that those who will propose nothing and do nothing but oppose others, have little to boast of, in their freedom from mistakes and errors. I proposed to you, at that time, and to the citizens of Hartford generally, to embark in a course of active measures much like that which I would now approve, only a little more rank and strong handed than I should now feel justified in advising. The proposition was received in silence. Some of you did nothing, others of you did what you ought not to have done.—[p. 18.]

We shall in the sequel learn some of the peculiarities of the “course of active measures,” which so commended themselves to the good sense and understandings of men, that “the proposition was received in silence,” and led some to do ‘nothing,’ others “what they ought not to have done.” In the same passage, the Anti-Slavery society is called upon to disband and yield the ground as a “just claim,” because it has excited against itself “unnecessary prejudice.” Now if this forms a good and valid reason in this case, it may be extended to others, and the minister should quit his pulpit, because a great portion of the community are prejudiced against religion. We had supposed prejudice to be sinful, and hence thought it never should be yielded to. But we are not surprised at finding in a production, so entirely original, some new divinity withal. Here is more of it in the next

paragraph: "If I were a Southern legislator, strongly as I feel on this subject, I should think it my first duty to save the sovereignty of my State, and I would never so far humble it as to vote the abolition of slavery at the beck of a Northern association."—[p. 19.] The position of the author is this—Southern legislators are in duty bound to persist in upholding a system of iniquity of which he elsewhere says, "nothing can be worse," because, forsooth, that system is rebuked by associations of men. The South must cling to slavery, because the North is uniting in opposing it. Now this is just the spirit of the proud and haughty legislator, but ought not, we are confident, to be that of a Christian minister. We never before heard this doctrine stated and defended from a New-England pulpit. If sin can be justified, because reproof does not come in the way least offensive, and most agreeable to the sinner, then indeed, an ungodly world will be acquitted, and the blackest felons share the felicities of heaven with the purest saints. This new doctrine of theology and State-rights may have been acted upon by venal legislators, but never was it done under the sanction of a Protestant pulpit. Aside from its immorality, it indicates not a noble and manly nature in the legislator, but the base and dogged spirit of a bully and coward. It may have the spite and venom, but it has not the wisdom of the serpent, nor the harmlessness of the dove, to recommend it. It is altogether odious in theory and disgraceful in practice. Were it to be passed upon by a body of New-England clergymen, the mildest epithet they could apply to it would be that of *super*—or rather subterlatitudinarianism. As much as the writer deprecates the conduct of associations, and censures them for rash and inconsiderate action, we are confident, no moral association would hazard its character by this sentiment. "No one would like to shoulder the responsibility of advancing such a declaration."*

* The late Dr. Leland, of Charleston, related to a friend of ours, the following anecdote, which, while it exhibits the spirit which slavery fosters, illustrates the sentiment advanced by the author.

A member of his congregation took offense at the manner of his preaching, on the ground of his sometimes presenting the terrors of the law. The Southron's blood was up—he thought it his "first duty to save his sovereignty," and declared, that, sooner than go to Heaven under such preaching, he would go to Hell.

A pagan philosopher* makes real independence of character consist, in "being resolutely minded in a just cause;" but, according to the ethics of a Christian teacher of the nineteenth century, it may consist in being resolutely minded in an unjust or bad cause. Must we then shut the Bible, and go back to paganism, for light to illumine our pathway; or conclude, the Bible is right, but its teacher wrong? We often contemplate, with the highest admiration, true independence of character—not in him who madly persists in doing wrong, because desired to do right; but in him who firmly perseveres in doing right, while urged to do wrong—who, like a Wilberforce, plants his feet upon the high ground of truth and justice, and with his eye fixed on some sublime and glorious object in the distance, stands

"Firm, as the rock of the ocean which stems
A thousand wild waves to the shore."

Furthermore, had the author deigned to look into the Constitution of the Society, he would have found no occasion for hazarding his reputation, as a Christian minister, by a sentiment so unchristian. It does not address itself in any sense to Southern legislators; but, on the contrary, explicitly says, in the second article, "that each State in which slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to *legislate* in regard to its abolition in said State," and while it admits this, it distinctly avows its aim to be "to convince all our fellow-citizens by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that slave-holding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its *immediate abandonment*." Here then it is obvious, the writer, in order "to swing a battering-ram," with his own puissant arm, makes entirely a false issue, and so far from hitting "something," hits nothing, but himself.

He tells us he "would sooner trust himself almost any where, than in a society of this nature," lest he "should propose things and vote things out of his heat as often as out of

* Plutarch.

his reason.”—[p. 20.] It may be, after all, that such a society would be just the place for one of his avowed temperament. He might, possibly, there find a few cool and rational men, who would serve as refrigerants upon his “heat,” and keep him within the bounds of sense and reason.

We now come to one of the evidences, on which rest the author’s pretensions to the title of Doctor of Manners. [D. M.] “I have looked in vain for the evidence, that it [the Anti-Slavery Society] has a man in its ranks, who is able really to follow out and settle on a just basis, the ethical questions involved in the subject.”—[p. 20.] Certainly it is very kind in the *gentleman*, to instruct us as to our “ill-manners,” by which, as he genteelly asserts, we “wilfully and boorishly cast off the whole South,” but to be taunted, for what we cannot help nor amend, is heart-rending. How could he have got such an insight into our metaphysics! We have already seen some rare specimens of his theological attainments—this modest declaration authorises the inference of his having made astonishing proficiency in the mysteries of phrenological science; for none but phrenologists and witches, after the most careful examination, undertake to tell men what they are incapable of doing; and they, even, sometimes manifest a *becoming* backwardness about acquainting us with their less agreeable discoveries. If this Doctor has never been able to find the evidence of ethical competency in any of our regions of bumps and embossments, we acknowledge it was very humane in him to inform us, inasmuch as it may save us much toil and weariness, in fruitless attempts, to sound depths which we can never fathom.

Now, it is presumable, that the man, who perfectly understands what other men are unable to do, is capable of doing the very thing himself, or, at least, *thinks* himself so. We are really in an emergency, and, since we cannot indulge the fond hope that this *gentleman* will come to our relief; for he assures us, he “never felt any obligation, except the obligation not to unite” with us, and “never could have done it without a violation of his conscience;” we would take the

liberty to suggest to the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society that it call a special meeting of said society, for the purpose of appointing a committee, consisting of some such men as James G. Birney, William Jay, Theodore Weld, Joel Hawes, Gerrit Smith, Beriah Green, Alvan Stuart, and as many more as shall be deemed sufficient, to wait upon the ethical *gentleman* of Hartford, and, for the special benefit of said society and all weak abolitionists, crave of him the favor that he will “follow out and settle, on a just basis, the ethical questions involved in the subject.” Among the intricate and thorny questions of this nature, on which the Committee, doubtless, and all of us, would be pleased to be enlightened, are the following :

Has a man a right, to “tear asunder those parents, whom God, more merciful than the laws, has doubtless accepted in the rites of nature,” and “strip their children from their arms?”

Has a man a right, to withdraw all “real protection” from his body, “in respect to life, limb, or chastity?”

Has a man a right, not to recognise “his moral or intellectual nature?”

Has any man, or body of men, a right to establish what is, “without a figure, the cattle-state imported into humanity?”

Among the manifold delinquencies, which the author, with so much decency, charges upon the abolitionists, is short-coming in patriotic allegiance. “The Union is undervalued, and its preservation is often spoken of with lightness.”—[p. 20.] Were we in the way of indulging any but the tenderest feelings in the examination of this *inimitable* production, we might be a little indignant at this foul aspersion. Does the author really mean to insinuate, that the abolitionists are guilty of treasonable designs, when they are hazarding every thing dear to them, as citizens, on the very “question in which,” he admits, “is involved the existence of our Union?” They declare in one of their official documents: “We have never ‘calculated the value of the Union,’ because we believe it to be inestimable; and that the abolition of slavery will remove

the chief danger of its dissolution; and that one of the many reasons, why we cherish, and will endeavor to preserve the Constitution, is, that it restrains Congress from making any law 'abrogating the freedom of speech or of the press.' " They see the foundations of the Union crumbling, its cement cracking, and the whole structure heaving and rocking: they remember, too, how often questions, growing out of slavery, have disturbed our political harmony and brought the nation to the brink of dissolution. Slavery, rearing his colossal and terrific stature in the halls of Congress, and brandishing his bloody scepter, has pealed the menacing war-cry, "*dissolution, dissolution!*" and by threats and intimidation, constrained the North to assist in piling hecatombs of living men upon his gory altar. So complete is his triumph, that he demands even freemen to sate his cannibal ferocity, and, on a recent occasion, the North was foremost in volunteering to lay the charter of our national liberties beneath his iron feet. Abolitionists believe the question must soon be decided, whether Liberty or Slavery shall prevail in this country, the struggle between these antagonists is fraught with our national destiny, and by all that is thrilling in the past, cheering in the present, and hopeful in the future, they cannot be indifferent spectators. So far from a disposition to undervalue the Union, they offer, in proof of their fidelity to it, their self-sacrificing labors, for a series of years, to rouse the nation to the chief danger of its dissolution, and induce it to co-operate in a system of measures, which shall lead to its re-establishment on a firm and enduring basis. In short, they aim to convert the country to the Declaration of Independence in the way the Constitution prescribes—by the exercise of their chartered and inalienable rights, as men and American citizens. As was said on another occasion, "if this be treason, make the most of it."*

We now come to another specimen of the author's mannerliness. It is peculiarly modest and unassuming. "It is

* Patrick Henry's Speech before the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765, against the Stamp Act.

doubtless true, that some of the clergy have been thrown, temporarily, into a false position. But the stand they have taken, on the whole, is one which does them great honor. * * * They are men accustomed and trained to ethical reasonings. They are more competent than laymen often are to such investigations, and it is a part of their office to guide the moral opinions of their people.”—[p. 21.]

If we have hitherto indulged in anything like levity, we must now dismiss it on so grave a subject. Though we would, by no means, attempt anything in the way of “ethical reasonings,” being nothing but a humble layman, we may perhaps, be permitted to say, that we have heard of an age when the clergy assumed “to guide the moral opinions of their people,” and all their other opinions too, because they claimed all the knowledge and competency. We had, however, supposed that “after so many ages of deferred hope and ineffectual striving, the day of the people has come!”—[p. 10.] But admitting what is claimed in this case, as a dutiful layman must do, we should like to be informed how it has come to pass, that “some of the clergy have been thrown temporarily, into a false position.” We should suppose, in our simplicity, that men so “accustomed and trained to ethical reasonings,” so entirely “competent,” would have sufficient stability to secure them from so disastrous an occurrence. Perhaps, it is not prudent for us to dwell on this subject; but it may be due to ourselves just to say, in conclusion, that we always have, and hope we always shall entertain none but sentiments of the highest respect and esteem, for those clergymen, who, in trying and critical times, are “competent” to keep their proper balance and hold themselves erect as the holy messengers of God,

“Unskilful they to fawn, or seek for pow’r
By doctrine fashioned to the varying hour.”

But we confess we feel neither of these emotions towards those who, at such times, are “thrown into a false position,”

and never can, till they return to a true one. Nor do we greatly admire

“ The pastor, either vain
 By nature or by flatt'ry made so, taught
 To gaze at his own splendor, and t' exalt
 Absurdity—not his office, but himself ;
 Or unenlightened, and too proud to learn,
 * * * * *
 Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace,
 The noblest function, and discredits much
 The brightest truths that man has ever seen.”

If you wish to put a man of real weight quite out of the way, to hide him, or make his name a cipher, as regards this question, you need only put him into an Anti-Slavery association. He will lie there sweltering under the heated mass of numbers, like the giant under *Ætna*, and by men as little felt or regarded.—[p. 22.]

Unluckily for the comparison, it was this very giant, according to our classical recollection, whose writhings were supposed to cause the volcanic phenomena, and, at the same time, to shake the whole surrounding world. “ A man of real weight” in an Anti-Slavery society, might not, after all, be less “ felt or regarded.” But we now proceed to glance at the author's three prominent objections or arguments against Anti-Slavery associations.

“ In the first place, an association at the North, on this subject, must almost necessarily be odious to those on whom it is intended to act.”—[p. 19.] And why? Because, as we are told in the next line, “ it is an unknown thing.” This being the fact, it would seem to be quite harmless in its operation at the South. Surely the Society has practised no concealment ; on the contrary, its policy has been altogether open and undisguised. It has cheerfully embraced every opportunity to acquaint the whole country with its principles and aims. It has spread out its banner to the world ; its objects have been published to all our free countrymen, and if any portion of them, speaking collectively, are ignorant in this matter, they are voluntarily so. Hence, if the association is “ odious” to the South, it is not “ necessarily” so, on the ground of its being an “ unknown thing.”

Furthermore, this appears to be one of those two-edged arguments, which cuts, not one way only, but all ways. It

is a mighty leveler. It would not only disorganize the society at which it is aimed, but would overthrow the great benevolent associations of the age, and even shake the Christian church to its center. How unknown are the "machineries" of our Missionary, Tract, and Bible Societies, to those dark and distant tribes on which they are designed to act. Hence, according to the argument, they are "fitted to awaken only jealousy," and should be instantly dissolved. They too "are sovereign states" or tribes, "and are properly jealous of their position," and these associations must consequently, be very mortifying "to their pride of character." The Christian church, on the same principle, "must necessarily be odious to those on whom it is intended to act," fitted to awaken their jealousy, and wound their pride. We acknowledge our inability to distinguish the difference, and see not the applicability of the argument in the one case more than in the others. Hence by proving too much it proves nothing; and we presume the author will be willing to be considered less of a *disorganiser* than it would make him. He cannot be ambitious of the distinction, if for no other reason, because it is one of those choice epithets, bestowed by public charity, upon the abolitionists.

"Again," says the author, "associations of men, while they are fitted to push some objects with vigor, are yet too irresponsible, and drive their work too heedlessly, for the safe management of a matter so vast and critical as this. When a resolution is passed by any society, and especially a society of reform, you will very often observe that there is something in it, which is not true, and which no individual would have ventured on saying without some qualification. The object is to swing a battering-ram against something; the resolution is framed so as to hit, and the society pass it by acclamation. * * * Accordingly, truth is no where so loosely held or badly stated as you will find it in the resolutions of societies."—[pp. 19, 20.]

Politicians have sometimes said of moneyed incorporations, that they are soulless; but we never suspected this of *moral*

associations, and the attempt to prove them so is one of very modern origin. Many of these societies have been in operation for a half a century, and not till within the last two or three years, has it been discovered that they are actually thwarting their own specific ends, and baffling the progress of truth and reform. But it is said, the longer men live in the world the more they have to learn. Let us, however, examine this matter. These societies are chiefly composed of laymen, with a slight sprinkling of clergymen, *some* of whom, it is admitted, are competent to "ethical reasonings," though every society may not be favored with any of the latter class. One of these societies holds a meeting. A member has a sentiment, which he wishes to present to its consideration. It is generally submitted, in the first place, to a committee, appointed by the society to prepare and bring forward the business of the meeting. This committee, which is generally numerous, discuss it among themselves, and if a majority disapprove it, the resolution is withheld, but should a majority approve it, they report it to the meeting, either as submitted to them, or variously altered and amended. There again it undergoes discussion, and, perhaps, is modified to suit the views of a majority, who pass it, and submit it to the public. Meanwhile, the society is fully conscious of acting under the scrutiny of a community full of eyes to detect its errors, and ready to turn every indiscretion, pointed and barbed, towards its very heart. Now we submit to the candid reader, whether truth, under such circumstances, is more likely to be "loosely held or badly stated," than by an individual, though he be "a man of real weight." It has been thought, that truth is a gainer by the collision of mind with mind, and opinion with opinion; but it now appears the world has been mistaken in this idea also, and the marvel is, that truth has not long since perished from the earth, slain by the parricidal hands of her own unenlightened defenders. For ourselves, we have sometimes been in some of these societies, and so far from there feeling "irresponsible," we never more felt our responsibility, at any time, or under any circum-

stances; and we venture to say, if the author of this Discourse could be persuaded to "trust" himself for a short time "in a society of this nature," and would be a little guarded against his "heat," he would feel much as we have done, and be penetrated with as keen a sense of responsibility, as when standing in the pulpit, to misrepresent and defame the character of an *unpopular* association.

The third and last argument, which the author urges against associated action on the subject of slavery, is much like the first. It is thus stated. "I say then again, that this is one of those matters of reform, in which associations destroy, rather than augment, the moral power of those who engage in them. The movements of our societies have not touched the consciences of the Southern people, as many would be glad to believe, when they see the heat that is excited. * * * They have scarcely learned, as yet, at the South, that our societies are attempting to show, by sober facts, the possibility of emancipation."—[p. 21.]

It is a peculiarity of this whole production, that while it is fruitful in assertions, it is barren of facts. One fact, however small, is sometimes worth more in proof of a position, than whole pages of philosophising. But not to do the writer any injustice, in this respect, it should be here stated, that there are, in the latter part of the Discourse, [p. 29,] two facts stated, showing "how one may act in the still, unpretending sphere of a mere private citizen." He then relates two interviews, he had, with as many Southern gentlemen, on the subject of slavery, and modestly fears, *if he sent* them home with *tender* consciences, that he has done more than some Anti-Slavery societies; and then concludes by saying, "pardon this vain confident boasting." But to proceed: as in the other positions against associations, so in this, the author, while familiar with speculation, appears to be shy of facts—not one is given in proof of anything. Now, we have some proofs of this kind which conflict very much with his opinions, and show conclusively that the Southern conscience has been reached. Truly *conscientious* men at the

South are with us—they see and deplore the tremendous iniquity in which they are involved—some few have escaped from it, while the greater number are waiting, and longing for the day of emancipation. They hail the abolitionists of the North, not only as the friends of the slave, but as their friends, and bid them Godspeed in their work of universal philanthropy. But as we do not admire “vain confident boasting” in others, we will avoid it ourselves, and proceed to relate a statement which, if abolitionists have not done as much at the South as their opposers desire, discloses to us the true and lamentable cause.

At the commencement of the Anti-Slavery movement, a gentleman at that time residing in Tennessee, and then a slave-holder of extensive acquaintance in that quarter, while on a recent journey through New-England, made, at a public meeting in this vicinity, substantially the following statement. The first intelligence of the movement arrested the attention of the people in that region. The principles of the society burst upon them and seized their thoughts, as great truths, unfamiliar to the mind, are wont to do. They read, conversed, inquired, and watched the operations of the society, with intense interest and wakeful solicitude. Then followed the accounts of outrages committed upon abolitionists—of the intolerance shown them by churches, in bolting their doors against them; the proscription of presses, in denouncing them as fanatics and incendiaries; the brutality of mobs, in assaulting their persons and destroying their property. On receiving these tidings, they paused, doubted, and dismissed the subject, concluding that men who could not be tolerated in the exercise of their constitutional rights, nor protected from the fury of their own neighbors in States nominally free, must be infatuated, and evil-designing, utterly unworthy of any consideration.—While we know something has been done for the cause of emancipation in waking the Southern conscience, we regret that more has not been accomplished, even as much as our opposers desire. And they are answerable for having thrown unnecessary

obstacles in our path,—by misrepresenting our objects, vilifying our motives, outraging our persons, and thus abusing the Southern mind relative to our principles and aims—there rests the responsibility with a weight, which, if felt, would be insupportable—a responsibility that would make some of our adversaries weep, and all of them tremble.

Having thus, as the author flatters himself, put an effectual extinguisher on the society in question, he concludes the Discourse by an appeal to three classes of the community. In the first place, he addresses himself to his “friends of the Anti-Slavery Society,” who, though they constitute a very inconsiderable portion of the public, are favored with double the attention that is paid to both the other classes. In the midst of what he is pleased to style his “salutary and friendly counsels” to them, he cannot be unmindful of their grievous incivilities. After putting them in remembrance of “some early indiscretions,” which he is careful not to specify, he proceeds to say: “It was with real grief and mortification too, as a lover of liberty, that I was compelled, a few months since, when the interchange of an official correspondence with the South, gave your National association so fine an opportunity to disabuse their prejudices and give a good impression of your cause, to admit that the courtesy and, I must say, the dignity of the correspondence were too exclusively on the wrong side.”—[p. 23.]

We suppose the allusion here is to what is familiarly called the Elmore Correspondence; since we know of no other of an official nature. A want of courtesy and dignity is here indirectly charged upon Mr. Birney in his reply to the fourteen interrogatories propounded to him by Mr. Elmore, of South Carolina, relative to the objects, aims, and operations, of the American Anti-Slavery Society. This is so contrary to the impression it made on ourselves, that we have carefully reviewed the correspondence for the proofs of the delinquencies by which the author was so aggrieved and mortified; but in vain. According to our poor ideas of courtesy and dignity, there is no deficiency in these respects chargeable to

either of the correspondents. Whoever is acquainted with the distinguished secretary of the society, knows his character to be a sufficient guaranty against any such shortcomings as are here darkly charged upon him, and the reply is altogether characteristic of the man. If the reader will refer to that highly interesting correspondence, whatever his feelings may be relative to the question of slavery, he will be impressed with the dignity, courtesy, and frankness which distinguish it. We must, then, ascribe the exceptions which the author takes to that document, not to any inherent blemishes, but to what we have already learned to be his *peculiar* views of *etiquette* and manners.

Our fathers and all our statesmen of the old type were abolitionists. Could you ask a stronger evidence than that they abolished slavery themselves? Our clergy used to set forth on fast days, and other like occasions, as I recollect with the greatest satisfaction, the national crime of slavery. And when they prayed on the subject, they prayed for emancipation, did it, too, *pleno corde*, and without adding ingenious qualifications, as we are driven to do, to show that we are not members of your society.—[p. 24.]

Our fathers did abolish slavery, and in this view, were abolitionists. But from what considerations did they do it? Did they regard slavery as a great social evil merely, or as a gross transgression of the moral law? Did they, in their conversations and debates, speak of it rather as an evil entailed upon them for the existence of which they were unanswerable, than as a wrong, for which they were accountable? Did they, in short, abolish slavery, because it was unprofitable, or because it was sinful? They might have done it from one or both of these considerations; if from the latter, they were truly abolitionists in principle as well as in practice; if from the former solely, they were such only in the act, and not in the motive. A very humane deed may be performed by one who cannot be entitled a philanthropist. Now if our fathers, preparatory to the day of emancipation, sold their slaves to be driven off to an adjacent slave-market, they were no more abolitionists, than while they held them in their own names. How much this was done, the survivors of that day best know. The author says in a note: "On extensive inquiry, I can find no instance,

where a Connecticut slave was transported in evasion of the statute." Such instances, notwithstanding, we are pained to learn, did occur. An aged gentleman, an officer in the Revolution, related in our hearing, not long since, that coffles of slaves, under the whips of drivers, not unfrequently passed his door, on their way to a slave-mart in an adjacent State. We hope such instances were rare, but so many as did occur, must go to disprove the Anti-Slavery character of our predecessors.—Moreover, it is presumable there were great and radical errors on the subject prevailing in the sentiment of that day, else there would be fewer at this. Had slavery been viewed and treated, as a sin, in this quarter, half a century ago, its discussion, at least, would now be tolerated.

Now, as touching the "ingenious qualifications," which a certain class of clergymen are "driven" to make, to exempt themselves from any suspected connection with the Anti-Slavery society, it may be said, that a minister, who feels it necessary to do this, must have as little of the spirit of supplication as of real independence; and be inspired with much that sort of devotion, the child felt when overheard to pray, "Oh, Devil, don't catch me!" The Father of mercies desires none but sincere and spiritual worshippers—how, then, must a suppliant appear, before his pure and searching eyes, who forgets the Creator to think of the creature, and pray himself out of any odium or unpopularity as a suspected abolitionist. This savors of the doctrine of Purgation. But since it is highly important that such "ingenious qualifications" should be made for the special reasons assigned, and no little perplexity must be felt by the younger clergymen of the same school, we would suggest to the author, whether he could not render essential service to such clergymen in general, by preparing for their own proper use and behoof, before writing another Discourse on the Slavery Question, a stereotyped edition of "ingenious qualifications."

In this appeal, the speaker takes occasion to tell those whom he is addressing: "It has not been my object to

diminish your merits, or to *find fault* with that which is done and cannot be altered," and calls upon them to relinquish their associations, because, as he asserts, "you keep us back, and we do nothing as heartily as we should, if it were otherwise." Truly, abolitionists are sorry to throw men into a "false position," and prevent their doing right—thus defeating their two grand objects; and if they had good reason to suppose, that by simply abandoning their associations, these men would find their true position, and heartily engage in doing right, they would cheerfully comply with the request made of them; but till this is shown a little more satisfactorily; till they have seen some earnest of such a change in the conduct of their opposers, they should not be thought blameworthy for adhering to their own chosen system of operation.—Again it is said,

The same pulse which beats in your hearts, beats in New England. There is, in New England, a deep and settled opposition to slavery, and *nothing is wanted but to let it forth.*—[p. 25.]

It is a radical defect in this Discourse, and sufficient, apart from all others, to disparage it in the minds of well-informed men, that it proceeds throughout on the supposition, that the North is sound on this subject—penetrated with a deep and uncompromising abhorrence of slavery. This, we are compelled to say, is entirely a misconception. If there ever was a time, when the assertion, here made, was strictly true of New-England, where are the evidences of its present applicability? Are they derived from the fact, that, with here and there an exception, the churches of all denominations are closed against the discussion of the subject; ay, and the school-houses too; from the fact that the press, political, religious, and infidel, is silent, or rather loud in vilifying abolitionists and publishing every vague rumor, that discredits emancipation, while it studiously suppresses every thing of an opposite tendency; from the fact that mobs, those monstrous productions, which spring out of a corrupt public sentiment, as spontaneously as mushrooms grow out of the dunghill, rage on all sides, and trample law and government; from the

fact that a large part of the New-England delegation in Congress, on a recent occasion, were first to sacrifice the Right of Petition and stifle debate, even against the remonstrances of Southern men, and Southern slave-holders; from the fact that the Executive of the Nation is universally understood to be "a Northern man with Southern principles?" Truly, the man who believes, "there is, in New-England, a deep and settled opposition to slavery," must not only stand in a "false position," but, as a necessary consequence, must see things through a false medium. Twenty years ago, the North, in one sense, was opposed to slavery; but when she yielded to the threats and seducements of the South, and, in 1820, sacrificed her principles and her conscience, on the Missouri question, she was recreant to herself and to liberty. From that day to the present, her steps have been downward, and, though she may have resolved and re-resolved to reform, no effort has been made to recover her fair fame. The deadly infection of slavery taints her breezes, and Freedom's fire burns dim on her thousand hills.* We are not unaware that professions of opposition to slavery are almost universal;

* Among the numerous authorities in favor of the position here taken, we quote the annexed passage from Dr. Channing's Letter to the Abolitionists.

Are there no signs, is there nothing to make us fear, that the freedom of speech and of the press, regarded as a *right* and a *principle*, is dying out of the hearts of this people? It is not a sufficient answer to say, that the vast majority speak and publish their thoughts without danger. The question is, whether this freedom is distinctly and practically recognized as *every man's right*. Unless it stands on this ground, it is little more than a name; it has no permanent life. To refuse it to a minority, however small, is to loosen every man's hold of it, to violate its sacredness, to break up its foundation. A despotism, too strong for fear, may, through its very strength, allow the mass great liberty of utterance; but in conceding it as a privilege, and not as a *right*, and by withholding it at pleasure from offensive individuals, the despot betrays himself as truly, as if he had put a seal on every man's lips. That State must not call itself free, in which any party, however small, cannot safely speak their minds; in which any party are exposed to violence for the exercise of a universal right; in which the laws, made to protect all, cannot be sustained against brute force. The freedom of speech and the press seems now to be sharing the lot of all great principles. History shows us, that all great principles, however ardently espoused for a time, have a tendency to fade into traditions, to degenerate into a hollow cant, to become words of little import, and to remain for declamation, when their vital power is gone. At such a period, every good citizen is called to do what in him lies, to restore their life and power. To some, it may be a disheartening thought, that the battle of liberty is never to end, that its first principles must be established anew, on the very spots where they seemed immoveably fixed. But it is the law of our being, that no true good can be made sure without struggle; and it should cheer us to think, that to struggle for the right is the noblest use of our powers, and the only means of happiness and perfection.

but who has not learned, that profession is not principle, and deplored that the world is not as good and correct in practice as in theory. The most frenzied mobocrat declares himself to be utterly opposed to slavery, and it is not improbable that Satan himself claims to be a foe to sin. Professions are but blossoms; we know nothing of them further till they ripen into fruits, and then, though fair, how few prove sound at the core, or tasteful to the sense! Liberty has oftener fallen through the treacherousness of her professed friends, than by the swords of her avowed enemies.

From the events which are transpiring around us, it would seem, that slavery is strongly seated in the public sentiment of the North, and can never be abolished, in the natural course of things, until dislodged from this her securest fastness. Routed here, she would soon yield elsewhere. Her only safety is in a vitiated public sentiment throughout the country, when this shall be purified, slavery will fall, and be buried in a grave of abhorrence and infamy too deep for any resurrection.

We think the sparkling passage [p. 28] in which the author deprecates "bustle and noise" misplaced. Its appropriate position would be in the sequel, where the other classes comprehending the opposers of abolition, are addressed. We submit it to all candid persons to say, whether the "bustle and noise" do not come from that quarter rather than from any other—whether those, whose sensitive nerves are so much disturbed, are not the very persons who make the disturbance; and whether, if the Anti-Slavery societies were permitted *peacefully* to enjoy their rights, as men and citizens, there would be any turmoil or uproar at all. When we have occasionally attended the meetings of these societies, we have been vastly more incommoded by "bustle and noise" without, than within, and have heard of some other similar cases. It is indeed true, that "the greatest moral power of man is that which he exerts, when he is seen to be reposing, somewhat, on his own strength and the

strength of his cause. Effect is never so remote as when every thing is done for effect.”—[p. 28.]

After all the objections which the author makes to Anti-Slavery associations, we are pleased to find, that he can approve of some of their measures: “You may raise candidates, question candidates, as you do now, vote, debate, converse, write.”—[p. 29.]

To our certain knowledge, many men, who are perfectly well pleased with the Discourse in all other respects, demur at this one ill-advised and harmful line. They do not understand how it is, that a Discourse otherwise so profound and orthodox, happens to be blemished and almost spoiled by a blot so dark and dismaying! This is the very measure by which they are most aggrieved, and if the societies would dispense with this, they would look upon them with something like approbation; for then their consciences would be greatly relieved, and their hearts kindle with compassion for the slave. What! abolitionists carry their principles to the ballot-box, and cast their suffrages for those candidates only, who are pledged, in their official action, to regard human rights, and sustain the Declaration and Constitution of the country! They presume to be honest and conscientious at the polls, and not sustain the party at this most *critical* and *perilous crisis*! They, by whom “the Union is undervalued, and its preservation often spoken of with lightness,” carry their treasonable designs to the elections, and not be patriotic one day of the year out of the three hundred and sixty-five! They presume to question candidates, and repudiate the old and well-tried maxim, that “every thing is right in politics!” Out upon such fanaticism!—In passing, we would take the liberty to suggest to the author, whether in the next edition of the Discourse, it would not be advisable to erase this line, in order that nothing may remain, which shall be, in the least degree, unadapted to the times.

After having, in his judgment, exploded the Anti-Slavery society, and demolished its every foundation, it had been kind and obliging in the writer, had he favored us with some other

system of operation, as a substitute, which would give full scope to the Anti-Slavery sentiments and fervor of the community. We have carefully examined the Discourse, in order, if possible, to gather from it some favorite scheme of his, that we might test its merits by the rule which has been noticed. As we have seen, he speaks of a "course of active measures" which he recommended to the citizens of Hartford some years since, and which, as we are informed, led some to do "nothing," and others to do what they "ought not to have done;" but he does not think it prudent to enlighten us, as to the *original* peculiarities of the system. Elsewhere he says, "if the ministry take their ground, you will not need to lecture us"—but we are left in darkness relative to the specific plan of operation that he would recommend. It has no handle, nothing by which we can take hold of it.—The Anti-Slavery portion of the community, with all their blindness, are not so tenacious of their own system, that they would not cheerfully relinquish it for any other, that should be fairly entitled to a pre-eminence. By no means. Their grand aim is the abolition of slavery—on this they are bent with full purpose and steadfast devotedness. Any measures, that shall appear to them adapted to accomplish this object, with the greatest precision and beneficence, will receive their cordial sanction and concurrence. As much as they desire the co-operation of their fellow-citizens, the author is right in saying, "they will not unite with them in doing nothing." As much as he has mistaken their character in other respects, he has not misjudged them in this.—It is possible, indeed, that the "ministry would take their ground," and the laity would find theirs too—and all come to the rescue, as with the heart of one man. But the author durst not give any assurance what would be done by those who get thrown into a "false position," and, in this one instance, he has shown, that "prudence is the better part of valor." Men, who cannot do right, because the Anti-Slavery society is in the field, would be liable to do wrong, were that society out of it. They are not to be trusted, and the author, who

knows their character, very cautiously avoids hazarding any thing but conjecture, as to their future conduct.

Can he then have been sincere, in calling upon the Anti-Slavery societies to abandon their organization, on a mere supposition of this nature, unsupported by the slightest probability, and with nothing but his own individual suggestion, to recommend it? Indeed, the proposition must have been predicated on the supposed mental incapacity of those to whom it was made; or, possibly, it originated in the overweening confidence of him who made it. In either case, he has so little faith in it himself, that he justly fears it will not be complied with.

Thus we have endeavored to expose some of the sophisms of this extraordinary Discourse. Had it not come to us, clothed with the authority and sanction of the pulpit, it would have been left to pass its ephemeral existence unnoticed, and mingle with the perishing mass of kindred speeches and pamphlets, with which the press has teemed ever since Wilberforce lifted his voice against the slave-trade, in the British Parliament. But, coming from a profession, that deservedly enjoys the confidence of a large part of the community, we thought it, from this circumstance, calculated to mislead many sincere inquirers after truth, and afford a soothing balm to the stricken consciences of others, who were beginning to feel its power. Had the author foreseen the exultation with which the Discourse is hailed, especially by the "third class" whom he addresses, as "accustomed to think no more of liberty and humanity than simply to oppose others who do—and who speak lightly of the slave's wrongs, and wish him no relief—and who are opposed even to discussion, mad against it in any shape and in every place," sure we are, he could not have been so recreant to liberty and to himself, as to have sent forth his name and influence on the wings of this widely disseminated pamphlet.—Liberty, in this country, has hitherto found the pulpit to be her firmest ally—there have stood her staunchest defenders;—with what keen and insupport-

able anguish, then, must she feel the slightest wound from that quarter, in this dark and portentous day of her destiny. If betrayed here, she must fall; if the chains of slavery, already thrown around the press, shall be hung upon the pulpit also, here, amid the graves of the Pilgrims, whither shall Liberty betake herself for refuge?

Of the style of the Discourse, it would be "faint praise" to speak of it, as only worthy of the sentiments it conveys. It is more. It sometimes rises to eloquence and seldom sinks with the writer. Though, for the most part, clear, we may have been occasionally betrayed into mistakes of the author's real meaning, by a looseness in the language; if any misapprehensions of this kind have occurred, this must be our apology. Vituperative language should be sparingly used and carefully guarded.

While occupied in following the author through this Discourse, we have been unable to discover the precise ground he wishes to occupy at this momentous juncture. The question has often arisen, Where is his locality? He informs us he cannot quite harmonize with the abolitionists, though friendly to their general object: he does not agree with their opposers who persist in doing nothing: he does not coincide with those colonizationists, who think transportation to be a remedy for slavery: he extols the wisdom of Dr. Channing, who, though somewhat of an abolitionist, he informs us has never united with the society, but is careful to say, in a note, he "would not be understood to express entire assent to his argument.—"We have somewhere read of a character, we believe it was Voltaire's Venetian Senator, Procurante, who was too great a genius to be pleased with any thing, or to agree with any body.

When the opposers of the Anti-Slavery movement, in order to execute their hostile designs, find it necessary to assail the very principle of associated moral action, which has done so much, within the last half century, to disseminate the light of truth, and ameliorate the condition of

man,* so far from dismaying, it should inspire every heart with firmer confidence and higher hope. It betrays a consciousness, on the part of its enemies, of the soundness of its principles; that here it is impregnable to any irruption. In order to assail it with any hope of success, the blow is leveled at its corner-stone, and the discovery is suddenly made that the world has been wrong in the maxim, that *union is strength*, and we are required to believe, for the first time since the creation, that *division is power*. The bundle of rods in the Greek fable, and the builders of Babel, are alike forgotten, and we are told, if we would be efficient and truly powerful in operating on the public sentiment of the country, and overthrowing slavery, we must abandon a system of concentrated efforts, and act single-handed and alone.

No sincere and rational friend of liberty, who duly comprehends the momentous interests involved in the question, which gave origin to the Anti-Slavery society, could witness

* The power of voluntary association though scarcely tried as yet, is of largest promise for the future; and when extended upon a great scale, is the influence most removed from the shock of accidents and the decay of earthly things, renewing its youth with renewed generations, and becoming immortal through the perpetuity of its kind — *Douglas on the Advancement of Society*.

We quote the following eloquent paragraph from an article on "Voluntary Associations" in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.

It is indeed a delightful fact that the Spirit of Him who went about doing good, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and therefore explored the wants and the wretchedness of man, that he might relieve them, has beamed forth more brightly in his followers within a few years past, than at any preceding period of the world. It has seen that men were to a deplorable extent ignorant of the Gospel and it has set on foot missions to carry them the tidings of great joy. It has seen them destitute of the word of God, and it has originated Bible societies to supply them. It has found that Missionaries and Bibles could not be multiplied fast enough to meet the exigencies of the case, and it has established Tract societies to act as pioneers in the great work of preaching the Gospel to every creature. It looked on neglected childhood, and opened the Sabbath school for Christian instruction; on inquisitive but unfurnished youth, and instituted Bible classes to assist in the investigation of the oracles of God. It has learned that knowledge is power and talents a trust to be occupied and increased for purposes of Christian usefulness, and it has therefore provided means for giving the rising ministry a superior education. It has looked on the fatal ravages of intemperance, and arrayed a powerful public sentiment for its suppression. It has organized Peace societies, to prevent, if possible, the toils and barbarities of war. It has looked on the corruptions of the abandoned prisoner, and by means of prison discipline societies, spread them with all their dreadful circumstances of aggravation, and the only effectual means of cure, before the eyes of a startled world. It has remembered the forgotten seaman, and opened Bethels and Christian boarding-houses, and savings banks, for his benefit; it has thought, at last, of the unhappy slave, and taken measures for his emancipation, and elevation in the scale of social, intellectual, and moral being. All this has been done by means of voluntary associations.

its dissolution without secret regret and sorrow. He would feel, as the bewildered traveler, when the wild beasts of the wood howl along his path, darkness curtains the heavens, and the last star fades from his aching vision. The question is not simply whether three millions of our "countrymen in chains," and their posterity, shall continue to bleed at every pore, under a system of legalized despotism, among the fiercest, the basest, and the most relentless, that ever smote humanity—a despotism which strikes, with deadly aim, at the souls and hearts of its victims, that it may clutch their bodies more securely, and degrade them to its own sordid and infamous purposes. The question stops not with the bond, it reaches the free, and admonishes us of yokes and fetters forging for our own necks and limbs. It is, in short, whether the slaves of this country are to become freemen, or the freemen, slaves—whether Liberty or Slavery shall prevail throughout the United States; for God has decreed, that the nation which persists in enslaving, shall itself be enslaved. He warns us of our impending doom, by the storms of popular fury, which burst over the land, as forerunners of dark and desolating judgments. The Freedom of Speech, the Liberty of the Press, the Right of Petition,—all our rights as freemen, are imperiled. Is this then the time to yield our position, and retire from the field of united resistance? No—as men, as patriots, as Christians, we cannot, we dare not. Our hearts are fixed; our purpose is steadfast. With the Constitution of our country for our shield; with the truth of Him, whose attributes are justice and mercy, for our sword, we are resolved never to give over the contest, till death shall paralyze our efforts, or the land be cleansed from the pollutions of slavery as clean as after the Deluge left it.

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