

THE COMMITTING OF OUR CAUSE TO GOD:

A

S E R M O N

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PREACHED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHARLESTON, S. C.

ON

FRIDAY, THE 6TH OF DECEMBER;

A DAY OF

FASTING, HUMILIATION, AND PRAYER,

APPOINTED BY THE

LEGISLATURE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

IN VIEW OF THE STATE OF OUR

FEDERAL RELATIONS.

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By REV. FERDINAND JACOBS.

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No. 40 BROAD STREET.  
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CHARLESTON, 9th Dec. 1850.

*Rev. and dear Sir:*

At a meeting of the Congregation of the Second Presbyterian Church, of this City, on the 7th inst. the undersigned were appointed a Committee to wait on you, and request you to furnish them, for publication, with a copy of the very able and appropriate discourse delivered in the Church on Friday last.

We feel highly gratified in being made the medium, through which the *unanimous* desire of the Congregation is expressed, and hope you will grant their request; satisfied as we are, that the sound and scriptural views brought to bear on the subject discussed, would do great good by being universally disseminated.

We are, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your's very sincerely,  
W. C. DUKES,  
S. S. CLARK,  
FLEETWOOD LANNEAU. } *Committee.*

Rev. FERDINAND JACOBS.

CHARLESTON, Dec. 10th, 1850.

*Gentlemen:*

I thank you for the kind terms in which you have expressed the wish of the Congregation, in regard to the Sermon of last Friday. It is entirely at your disposal. I regret only, that circumstances admitted not of a more careful preparation. I shall be happy, if its publication shall be the means in any measure of establishing the mind of our congregation, in a religious state correspondent to the times.

With very high regards,

I am, Gentlemen, yours,

FERDINAND JACOBS.

Messrs. W. C. DUKES,  
S. S. CLARK,  
FLEETWOOD LANNEAU, } *Committee.*



## S E R M O N .

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PROVERBS, III: 5, 6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We have fallen, my brethren, upon momentous times. The fair fabric of our National Structure is shaken to its foundations; and without direct Divine Interposition,—it would seem,—must inevitably fall into pieces.

Ours is not a Union held together by the energy of a central power. It is not a consolidated Government, but a confederation of separate independent sovereignties, bound together, only by the bonds of affection and interest, on principles expressed in a written Constitution. So long as these principles are held paramount in authority, so long as the interests of the various elements of the Union are common, or may be made to harmonize in one general plan, so long as affection between the parties continues vigorous,—so long will this great nation continue *one*, but no longer.

The real, essential interests of the different parts, separated widely though they be in their extremes, may readily enough, be made to harmonize; constitutional provisions, knowing no “higher law,” by an upright, honest and religious people, should be held inviolate; but affection between the parties is less under the control of the judgment, more wayward in its nature, more uncertain in its continuance. And when affection is gone, interests are soon, recklessly made to clash; fundamental agreements are made to yield to the will of the dom-

inant party;—and all the bonds, by which as a people, we are held together, are sundered. Now, who with an undisturbed mind can contemplate the evils that would result from the dissolution of our confederacy? How next to impossible, would it be to avoid most desolating civil war! How withering would it be to the hopes of civil liberty,—the prevalence of liberal governments throughout the world! How desecrating to the Churches of the Living God! How paralyzing in its influence upon christian enterprize! How would it tend to delay the coming of the latter day glory upon the earth!

It is not to be disguised, that great and just anxiety pervades the public mind in regard to the permanency of our National Union. Alienation of fraternal regards, has already, in a great measure taken place; and angry and increasingly hostile feelings are awakened. Portions of the country entertain views adverse to the institutions characteristic of another; and these views based,—however falsely,—in radical principles, both in civil government and religion, have called into activity the most violent passions of human nature. There is no passion more violent than political rancour; none more determined, more unrelenting than religious fanaticism. Though yet in their youth, these passions have wrought most fearful havoc. Under their influence,—denouncing slave-holding as a most heinous crime,—portions of the Church exclude slave-holding ministers of the gospel of their own communion, from their pulpits, and slave-holding members of their Church from the Supper of the Lord; and indeed by this schismatic spirit, the most popular branches of the Church have been rent asunder. Under their influence, in politics, such a disregard of the rights and interests of slave-holding citizens has been exhibited, so injurious in its operation thus far, and for

the future so threatening, so manifestly pregnant with evil, as to justify the darkest forebodings.

In this exigency, the absorbing question with the slaveholding section of the country is, What course shall we pursue, so as most effectually to secure our rights? Do the times demand a withdrawal from the National Confederacy? If so, in what mode? Or, shall we bear and still forbear, enduring for the sake of the Union; for the sake of National Influence; for the sake of advantages which notwithstanding the evils of which we complain, the Union secures;—shall we still maintain the Union inviolate? On their action, in the premises, each State must determine for itself. This momentous subject is before the Legislature of our State, now in session. But before determining on their course, they have wisely, very wisely,—under the conviction, that “it becomes a christian people, at all times, to look to the King of kings for guidance and direction, but more especially in seasons of trial and difficulty,”—they have wisely resolved to ask counsel of the Lord; and have invoked, in their behalf, the prayers of the people of God throughout the Commonwealth, this day assembled in their respective places of worship, that “Almighty God may aid and direct this General Assembly, in devising such measures as will conduce to the best interests and welfare of our beloved State.” It is wise, very wise, my brethren, in our Legislature thus to appropriate this day. It is wise, thus to “*trust in the Lord with all our heart, thus to lean not to our own understanding; thus in all our ways to acknowledge him;—for thus we may entertain the hope, that he will direct our paths.*”

In considering the subject thus brought before us, I will take into view only one or two features of this *trust in God*, as applicable in our present case, leaving much

to be said from this same text, at some future time, that is descriptive of christian character and experience.

In the exercise of trust in God,—the propriety of which, we are happy, that our State authorities have so distinctly recognized,—it is requisite that we be fully and intelligently satisfied that the matter, in aid of which we ask counsel of God, is in itself, just and right. “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,” says the Apostle; for while “he that doubteth” as to the righteousness of his principles of action “is damned,” “happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” It would be manifestly impious in the extreme, for a marauding piratical expedition, or for any engaged in the support of an unjust and unholy cause, to ask counsel of God, in the prosecution of their aims. It is necessary therefore, that in the present emergency, we be convinced from reliable sources, that the Institution, the simple agitation of which, “invades the peace and security of our homes,” which is now so violently assailed, and which we seek to defend, is not, in itself an unjust, immoral and oppressive institution, but one that meets with the sanction of God, and is sustained by his authority. That this is the truth in regard to the Institution of Slavery, I shall endeavor to prove.\*

Slavery, is assailed on two separate and distinct

\* The domestic slavery of the South—requires of the servant to labour for the benefit of his master, without any previous special contract to that effect, on an obligation growing out of providential arrangements. This right of the master to the labour of the slave does not sink the personality, the moral responsibility of the slave any more than the obligation to perform the same labour, arising out of a special contract, would have that effect. The slave is not a tool, a mere instrument, but is capable of a high sense of responsibility to God and man, and may as conscientiously discharge his obligations in his relations, as any other man. *Involuntary servitude*, is not a definition of slavery, though forced upon us, that we accept. Its being involuntary, does not characterise the institution, nor, if it did, would it affect the obligation. The labourer by contract, as well as the slave, may very unwillingly fulfil his obligation, but the obligation, is none the less binding. With the slave, it is based, as we have said, in the allotment of Providence.

But the right of the master to the labor of the slave, implies corresponding obligations on his part; obligations which cannot be neglected without crime. These embrace a proper regard to his life, as the life of a man; to his comfort, and indeed to all his wants as a man, in his sphere of life; his physical, social, and religious wants.

grounds, one, civil, the other, religious. It is the religious aspect I intend chiefly to discuss. In regard to the civil question, I shall say only a word, and that, only because it bears upon the religious question; for whatever is *essentially* wrong in civil institutions, and not wrong merely on grounds of expediency, is wrong also in morality and religion.

Slavery, it is affirmed, is in violation of an *essential* elementary principle in human existence; a principle embodied in our declaration of National Independence, in justification of our separation from the Mother Country. It is, that "all men are created **FREE** and **EQUAL**; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, **LIBERTY**, and the pursuit of happiness." If this be true, it is affirmed,—and we must as readily yield; then our domestic slavery is wrong, is essentially, is morally wrong. But as for myself, from my earliest boyhood, I have never ceased to wonder that a statement so manifestly erroneous should have met with such wide-spread favour. It served our turn at the time, and perhaps therefore, has been rendered sacred. But the just surprise is none the less. Nor was the introduction of this principle, at best doubtful, at all necessary in that instrument, since there were other and sufficient reasons, not only to justify the action of our fathers, but to render that action imperative.

*All men are not born free and equal.* The subject under the government of the Sublime Porte, of the Celestial Empire, of the Autocracy of the Russias, is *not* free. The Zoolah, the Hottentot, the Esquimaux, is not equal to the Anglo-saxon. *Liberty is not an inalienable right*; for in every state of society, and under every form of government on earth, whether founded in implied contract, in might, in necessity, or in the Providence of God;—by various causes, without crime in the infe-



rior, and equally without crime in the superior;—it is in various modes, and in various degrees constantly alienated. And government and society could not otherwise exist. We readily enough agree, that this state of fact, may be very different from what we may conceive to have been the original scheme of human existence;—a scheme embracing holiness as an essential element. But with our departure from so radical a principle as holiness, corresponding radical changes must have been induced in our physical and social condition and relations; and these changes are manifest in every form and aspect of life. **INEQUALITY** is now the law of our being. In innumerable forms, it determines the conditions and relations of life. The relation of master and slave is but one of these relations so determined, and there is no juster reason for objecting to this, than to any other unequal relation.\*

\* "The worst form of government, is better than anarchy; and individual liberty or freedom, must be subordinate to whatever power may be necessary to protect society against anarchy within or destruction without; for the safety and well-being of society are as paramount to individual liberty as the safety and well-being of the race is to that of individuals; and in the same proportion the power necessary for the safety of society is paramount to individual liberty. On the contrary, government has no right to control individual liberty beyond what is necessary to the safety and well-being of society.

"It follows from this, that the quantum of power on the part of the government, and of liberty on that of individuals instead of being equal in all cases, must necessarily be very unequal among different people, according to their different conditions. For just in proportion as a people are ignorant, stupid, debased, corrupt, exposed to violence within, and danger from without, the power necessary for government to possess in order to preserve society against anarchy and destruction, becomes greater and greater, and individual liberty less and less, until the lowest condition is reached, when absolute and despotic power becomes necessary on the part of the government, and individual liberty extinct. So, on the contrary, just as a people rise in the scale of intelligence, virtue and patriotism, and the more perfectly they become acquainted with the nature of government, the ends for which it was ordered, and how it ought to be administered, and the less the tendency to violence and disorder within, and danger from abroad; the power necessary for government becomes less and less, and individual liberty greater and greater. Instead, then, of all men having the same right to liberty and equality, as is claimed by those who hold that they are all born free and equal, liberty is the noble and highest reward bestowed on mental and moral development, combined with favorable circumstances. Instead then of liberty and equality being born with man; instead of all men and all classes and descriptions being equally entitled to them, they are high prizes to be won, and are in their most perfect state, not only the highest reward that can be bestowed on our race, but the most difficult to be won, and when won, the most difficult to be preserved."—*Speech of Hon. J. C. Calhoun.*

He therefore, who on this principle wages war upon the Institutions of the South, should with the Knight of La Mancha, become the universal redresser of grievances, and set about righting all the affairs of earth. And in fact, the extremists on this principle, affirm, that Government, whether in the State, in the Church or in the family, is alike wrong; that it is wrong for one man to be poor, and another rich; that there should be an equal partition of property and of advantages, and all men be left to act on their individual sense of right. Such monstrous conclusions do men reach, when in their speculations, they assume premises discordant with facts.

The grand principle that stands at the base of the *religious* fanaticism on this subject, is this: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." On this principle it is demanded, that the master who would like to be free were he a slave, should liberate the slave who is in bondage to him. But a similar and coordinate application of this principle in all the relations of life, would inevitably lead to the same agrarianism and communism, to which I have just adverted. The man of wealth, for instance, should share his wealth with the poor, because, were he poor, he would have the wealthy to share with him. But this is manifested to be a wrong application of this principle, not merely by the results to which it leads. Its proper sphere of application, is described in the very annunciation of the principle by our Saviour. He tells us that this is the *sum of the law and the Prophets*. It must therefore, never be so applied as to subvert any of the orders and relations established or sanctioned by the Law and the Prophets: The Law must be permitted to interpret itself. Men, however, are less respectful to the Bible than this; but, and it is manifested specially on this subject, from their

own baseless and pre-conceived notions, they determine what the Bible ought to teach, and then strain, distort every passage of scripture that lies in their way, so as to render it consistent with their view. But, notwithstanding this, let us enquire what the Bible does teach, expressly in regard to slavery; and we shall be much mistaken, if we do not find it fully to sustain the Institution.

The argument from the Bible is exceedingly copious. I shall not attempt to give it fully; our time admits only of an outline. The sum of the argument is this. Slavery has existed in the Church from the earliest ages; has been recognized under every dispensation, as one of the permanent relations of life; has been treated as properly a subject of rule; the holders of slaves are recognized as the servants of God, are spoken of in the highest terms of approbation, and are admitted to intimate communion with God.

Abraham, who was "the friend of God," who was an intercessor with God, who took it upon him to remonstrate with God, and who was accepted in that remonstrance;—Abraham, "the father of the faithful," was a possessor of slaves. In the schedule of his property, several times repeated in his history, it is said, "He had sheep and oxen, and asses, and camels, and *men-servants* and *maid-servants*. The words here rendered *men-servants* and *maid-servants*, are words expressive of absolute slavery. Some of these servants were "born in his house," and some were "bought with his money." Of the former, he had a number so great, that he armed of them in his war with the five Kings, three hundred and eighteen.

God made with Abraham, a solemn covenant, the sign and seal of which, was the rite of circumcision. In prescribing the application of this seal, God said to Abra-

ham, "every man-child in your generations, *he that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money*, of any stranger which is not of thy seed, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant." This covenant involved the establishment of the Church; the coming of the Saviour in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed; it involved all our hopes of attaining to moral purity, to communion with God, to the enjoyment of his presence in the world of purity and bliss. In this covenant, sacred indeed, this institution of slavery is distinctly recognized;—not to be denounced, not to be prohibited in the Church, but to require that it be the means of spiritual good to the slave; *that the servant with the master, enjoy like glorious spiritual blessings.*

If the argument in the support of slavery rested here, and nothing were said in the subsequent scriptures, either approving of or forbidding it,—it would be entirely satisfactory. *A principle established in the charter of the Church cannot be annulled, except by express prohibition.* And can it be believed, that God would so distinctly recognize the institution of slavery, without any intimation of censure but with every implication of approval: Can it be believed, that he would thus recognize it, in a covenant so sacred in the regards of all believers, if it were an institution essentially wrong!

In the subsequent history of Abraham, we have an account of the increase of his possessions of slaves, for "Abimelech took of sheep and oxen and men-servants and maid-servants, and gave them to Abraham." And of the increase of his possession by these and other means, Eleazar his steward speaks, as being the *special gifts of God*. Said he to Laban, "the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and He hath

*given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants."*

All this property which God gave to Abraham, Abraham devised to Isaac; for said Eleazar, "Sarah my master's wife, bore him a son, and he hath given him all that he hath;"—and so, in process of time, it came to pass, that Isaac "had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and *great store of servants.*" Yet Isaac enjoyed communion with God, and was of the favored line, through which the covenant was fulfilled.

After Isaac, Jacob was an extensive slave-holder, for "he increased greatly, and had much cattle, and *men-servants and maid-servants.*" Yet Jacob "had power with God, and prevailed." So intimate was Jacob's communion with God, that he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." With Jacob, the Abrahamic covenant was renewed, and he himself prophesied of the Messiah.

Even in those early ages, slavery was common; and common among the best of men. Job, who repeatedly, on the authority of God, was declared to be "a servant of God; a perfect and an upright man; one that feared God and eschewed evil," and who eschewed evil with at least as settled antipathy as any modern abolitionist, and certainly with a juster discrimination;—Job, like whom for his integrity, "there was none to be found in the earth," possessed besides sheep and oxen, and camels, and asses, "a very great household." The word here translated *household*, is the same that in the enumeration of Isaac's property is rendered, *a great store of servants*; a word which in its primary signification is *servitude*, *bondage*; and in its secondary meaning, as in both these texts, is *bond-servant*, or slave.

During those early ages, however, there were no specific regulations of this relation, of which we have

knowledge. The master was left to act according to his own sense of right. Under the monitions of his enlightened conscience, Job so conducted himself, that he could appeal to God, that he had treated his servants with due consideration. "I did not despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me." Perhaps, however, this was not always the case with owners, for Sarah, under special provocation, seems to have treated Hager with such severity, that she fled from the face of her mistress into the wilderness. There the angel of the Lord met her, and said unto her, "Return unto thy mistress and submit thyself into her hands." What this means I know not, unless it be that the obligations to servitude resting on Hager were so absolute, that not even great unkindness and severity could annul them. The principle exemplified in the case of Hager is the same as that enjoined by Peter, when he says, "Servants be subject to your own masters with fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."

In passing, I must remark, that what is here said is not intended as a justification of any unkindness toward servants. Even punishments, when necessary, upon servants as upon children, should be inflicted with kindness. They will then seldom be unduly severe, but be more certainly effective. God vindicates the cause of the oppressed, in whatever relation of life they are found. He vindicates the cause of the oppressed poor, and no less that of the oppressed servant. The divine injunction is,—which we will here anticipate,—“Masters render unto your servants that which is just and equal.”

Under the Mosaic economy, this relation became the subject of written law;—regulating the purchase and sale; and treatment of servants, and the continuance of the term of servitude. We cannot, of course look spe-

cifically into these numerous laws. They contemplated, at least, two classes of servants; the one, *of their brethren* who were servants for a limited time, and must be freed at the jubilee; the other from *foreign nations*, who were servants for life, absolutely the property of the master;—so much so, that even the life of the slave was more in the power of the master than the laws of this Commonwealth permit. (Ex. 21 : 21.) These two classes of servants are described in Lev. 25 : 39–46. “If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant, but as an hired servant, and as a sojourner shall he be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee, and then shall he depart from thee. He shall not be sold as a bond-man. Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy,—and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men forever.”

Among the numerous civil laws of the Hebrews, regulating servitude, there is not one—emanating as they did from God,—that casts censure, expressed or implied upon the institution. There is indeed a law in favour of *fugitive* slaves. It is this. “Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him.” Dent. 23 : 15, 16. But this law, as is universally admitted, did not contemplate the servants of the Hebrews fleeing from one portion of the country or from one

tribe to another. Were this the case, the same law that prescribed and defended the rights of masters would invade them. It contemplated the slaves of the heathen, who might flee to them. These should not be restored to their masters. The great reason of this law, which at most was a *local* law, we apprehend, was this. The Heathen round about the Hebrews, were a doomed race. By their crimes, they had forfeited all claims upon Him, who was the Lord of the Hebrews; by his decree they were devoted to destruction, and, of course, were divested of all rights. His people were commanded utterly to extirpate them; of course should form no alliances with them, should come under no obligations to them. Nor should they answer any demand, for to answer any demand—even for a fugitive slave—would imply that some compact or obligation existed.

The Hebrews, however, did not hesitate to pursue and to recover when they could, their slaves that had fled from them among the heathen. We have an example of this in the case of Shimei, (1. Kings, 2: 29–40,) who pursued and brought back two of his servants, that had fled to Gath. This transaction is related, as though such occurrences were common.

But there is one other GREAT LAW, in which this relation in life is distinctly recognized, not only without a note of censure, but as a *permanent* relation of life. By *permanent* relation, I mean such a relation as is ever admissible, and such as may ever be *expected* to exist. "The poor ye always have with you," and so may you have the slave. I mean not that slavery is a condition in life that is necessarily good, and which therefore *should* always exist. Slavery like poverty may be an evil, and therefore may, where it is possible, be removed. But as it is utterly impossible to make all rich, there may be states of society in which it is equally impossible to make all free.



This GREAT LAW, is the law of the ten commandments. The fourth of these commandments is this. "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God ; in it, thou shalt not do any work ; thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy *man-servant*, nor thy *maid-servant*." In the recapitulation of the Commandments in the book of Deuteronomy, it would seem that the law of the Sabbath specially contemplated the welfare of the servant, for it has there appended to it this clause,—“that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant, may rest as well as thou.”

The tenth commandment is this, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant." In this commandment the right of property in the slave, is not only recognized, but is specially *defended*, on the immediate authority of God ; defended in that law which was made for all places and all times ; in that law, which according to the exposition of our Saviour, is essentially love to God supremely, and love to our neighbour as to ourselves ; it is that law of which our Saviour said, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil."

The evidence thus far adduced, certainly assures us, that this relation is not only not essentially evil, but that it is approved of God, as the other relations of life are approved of him. On looking into the New-Testament Scriptures, we find nothing to weaken, but much to confirm this conviction. At this we will rapidly glance.

There was a certain Centurion of whom our Lord said, "I have not found so great faith," as in him, "no, not in Israel." This man owned a slave ; and the fact of this ownership, and of the implicit obedience of this slave to the commands of his master, were distinctly stated in that conversation and profession of faith, which drew from our Lord, this approving testimony. I say he

owned a *slave*; for the word here employed and rendered *servant*, is the Greek word of the classics for slave. In all its compounds and derivatives, which are, at least as many as thirty, slavery is the essential idea.

Slavery, however, as we have constantly admitted, may be a natural evil, as poverty is an evil. Christian servants are therefore taught to prefer freedom, if they may attain it: "If thou may'st be made free, use *it* rather." But if not, to acquiesce in their lot. "Art thou called being a servant,—care not for it." They are taught obedience in their relation, and due respect for their masters. "Ye servants be obedient to your own masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God; with *good will* doing service as to the Lord and not to men." "Let as many servants as are under the yoke"—that is, christian servants,—under the yoke of Christ, which is an easy yoke—"Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and of his doctrine be not blasphemed." "Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things."

There is not one word in the New Testament—nor in the Old,—tending to sunder this relation, as a moral evil, but many words tending to regulate, to cement, to perpetuate it. It is worthy of special notice, that the consideration by which the duties of the servant are enjoined, is the same as that by which the duties in the tenderest and most endearing relations are enjoined. "Wives submit yourselves, unto your own husbands, as *unto the Lord*." "Children obey your parents *in the Lord*." "Servants be obedient to your own masters,—*in the Lord*,—

as unto *Christ*." The obedience of the servant, required in the Divine Word, is not the obedience of constraint,—it is cheerful obedience, the obedience of "good will." Unwilling or *involuntary servitude, is indeed a sin*;—but not a sin in the master who exacts his right, but a sin in the servant who renders it grudgingly. He should respect the ordinances of God. His, should be the obedience of a high religious principle, acquiescing in the dispensations of Providence; obedience from regard to the authority of God,—an authority requiring of all men faithfully to discharge all the duties in all the relations in life, in which by his Providence they are placed. This is the obedience of the christian servant.

But on masters also, their relative duties are enjoined, and by a reference to the same high authority. "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, *knowing that ye also have a Master which is in Heaven*." While the condition of slaves amongst the Greeks and Romans, was not only wretched in the extreme, but without redress by any civil enactment in their favour; the Apostle enjoins upon christian proprietors, to act toward them both according to *justice and equity*,—giving to them that which is right and due in their condition, and required by their necessities as men. This treatment, kind and considerate, should they render to their servants, *in the absence of all civil enactments, from a regard to the authority of their own Master in Heaven*. Again, he said to them, "Ye masters, do the same things to them, forbearing threatening, *knowing that your Master is in Heaven*."

With what remarkable care is this relation guarded in the scriptures; and that not merely by precept, but by example. Onesimus was the servant of Philemon. He ran away from his master and fled to Rome. There he was brought under the ministry of Paul; was converted,

and made profession of faith in Christ. Having now become a christian disciple, the Apostle enjoins upon him, his christian duties to his master from whom he had fled. He enjoins on him, to return to his home and his place. On his return, the Apostle sends by him a letter to his master, in which he entreats him to forgive the returning fugitive, and to cancel by his own debt of love to the Apostle, all damages that might have resulted from his servant's delinquency. He states to Philemon, that he would have been glad to retain Onesimus, that he himself might have enjoyed his services in his necessities, but that he did not think proper to retain him without his master's consent. This epistle is addressed to this slaveholder, as, "Philemon our *dearly beloved*." Paul then not only apprehended and sent back a fugitive slave,—on high moral principle,—but maintained the most endearing fellowship with that slave-holder.

The residence of Philemon was at Colosse, in Phrygia. Paul sent Onesimus in company with Tychicus, who bore to the Colossians, his epistle addressed to the Church, in that city. Hence we see a special occasion for his enjoining in that epistle, upon the servants at Colosse, as he does, that earnest and hearty service to their masters, as to the Lord.

But finally; Paul in his first letter to Timothy, states the duties of servants to their masters; and enjoins upon Timothy, "These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise,—he continues,—and consent not to these wholesome words, which are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to this doctrine, or teaching, which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy and other evils; *from such*, says the Apostle, *withdraw thyself*." Agree not with them in their opinions; give no countenance to their disorganizing

sentiments; fraternize not with these dogmas of abolition.

The glance that we have given at this subject has been very rapid; but if, with even this hasty sketch, the view which the scriptures afford of this relation be not a perfect justification of it, I know not what can be. If the scriptures do not justify slavery, I know not what they do justify. If we err in maintaining this relation, I know not when we are right,—truth then has parted her usual moorings and floated off into the ocean of uncertainty.

This subject, then, about which our country is so much agitated and distracted,—in which *our* interests specially, are so deeply involved,—we can with confidence commit to God, asking him to maintain the right. By no means do we condemn ourselves in that thing which we allow, but are fully persuaded as to the righteousness of our cause. Thus far, are we, in regard to it, prepared to exercise **TRUST IN GOD.**

But in committing our cause to God according to the requisition of the text, we are to ask Him to take it under his own guidance, and to conduct it in his wisdom to a favorable issue. This involves an entire mistrusting of the goodness and wisdom of man, and an implicit confidence in the wisdom of God, and in his willingness to direct.

We are to come to God, mistrusting *our own goodness.* And, oh! what profound humility on account of our sins should mark this, our approach to God. Perhaps the evil which we apprehend will result from this agitation, and which we so earnestly deprecate, is menaced upon us, as a just retribution for our wickedness. We know that “the curse causeless does not come.” We know also that in many respects we are a sinful nation, laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters;” and it is not impossible that by our ini-

quities we have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. Our controversy with our brethren, may on our side, be a just cause;—but our controversy with God, *may be the controversy of sin!* It becomes us then, with profound humility to enquire, why the Lord hath brought upon us this threatening evil.

The particular direction which this inquiry should take, is in regard to that very subject from which the agitation arises. How have we as masters, as members of the community, discharged our duties to our servants? The Lord as we are assured, will avenge the cause of the oppressed;—and our servants are oppressed, if we render not to them “that which is just and equal.” I pass over all duties to them that tend merely to ameliorate their physical condition; the lowest principle of our common humanity, prompts, in this respect to treat them kindly. But considering them as immortal beings, as tending with us to the same spirit-world, “where the servant is free from his master,” as standing with ourselves upon the same moral platform, before Him to whom we are alike responsible, and “who is *no respecter of persons;*” as included with us in the same gracious covenant; as called with us to the enjoyment of like glorious spiritual blessedness,—what care do we take,—dependent upon us as they are,—*what care do we take for their eternal welfare?* I know that there is much provision made for their spiritual instruction throughout our State. In this I rejoice. But even admitting this provision to be sufficient;—the simple providing of the *means* of salvation, is not the full discharge of our duty. They stand to us in what has been called, “the relation of children in the *second* degree;” and the *christian* master should feel an *interest* for them of like nature, with that he feels for his children. They are of our own household; and there is a deep abiding sympathy for them we should

cherish,—a sympathy manifesting itself in prayerfulness on their behalf, and in personal influence exerted upon them for their good. This is not chimerical. This is the theory of this relation in the scriptures. And since it is from the sacred word, that we derive our guarantee for the relation in which we hold them, most carefully should we obey that word, in discharging the duties of this relation. Now, in this view, how have we discharged our duties? Is there no sin; no guilt of the blood of souls attached to us? Of any past indifference to this matter; of any neglect in regard to the highest interests of this relation, we should most earnestly repent, and from it reform, *if we expect God to accept us in the trust we would commit to him.*

But as we would lament our past deficiencies in our relations with our servants, we should carefully guard against the commission of sin, in the prosecution of our controversy, in regard to them, with our brethren. A rash and hasty spirit is not consistent with right trust in God.

We are aggrieved, greatly aggrieved. Our rights have been invaded; ourselves, our institutions, our manner of life most flagrantly defamed; we are contemned, despised, scorned;—and even in our most sacred relations,—our relations in the Church that Christ has purchased with his blood, we have, in some of its branches, been told to stand aside, for, say they to us, "*We are holier than thou.*" But notwithstanding this, there is a high moral, nay religious principle,—to say nothing of simple manly dignity;—that not only forbids us to vilify them in turn, but, and specially, requires that we avoid all passionate action. Let us plant ourselves upon the justice of our cause. And, *if we cannot agree: if we must separate;*—then, LET THE SEPARATION COME! But let it be a separation on principle; let it not be precipitated by our sin. Let us so conduct ourselves, that in the strife that

must ensue, we may be able, still "*with a conscience void of offence,*" TO COMMIT OUR CAUSE TO GOD!

Finally, in trusting God, how profoundly should we mistrust our own wisdom. We are not to come to God with a plan of action, definitively formed in our own minds, and ask God to further that;—we are not, while seemingly asking God to determine for us, really to be seeking success to measures on which we have already determined, and in regard to which we have not sought his counsel. Not only might such measures be essentially wrong, but this would be extreme impiety. It would indeed be, to ask God to leave us to the *folly of our own wisdom*. And "cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh. But blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but its leaf shall be green." **We are to trust in the Lord *with all our heart*, and *lean not to our own understanding*.** The spirit of this text, should by us, this day, be most religiously observed. Under a profound sense of our own ignorance, of our inability to see the end from the beginning,—under a jealous mistrust of the bias to still greater evil, which our already erring judgment might suffer from passion, from prejudice, from an undue valuation of our own interests, from an over estimate of our injuries;—under a belief that God will hear the prayer of them, who with sincere repentance call upon Him, that his arm is stretched out still, that he can control the hearts of the people, and turn them as the rivers of water are turned, that he can change darkness into light, and bring to nought the devices of wicked men, as well as correct the follies of his



misguided, though sincere and honest people; thus trusting with simplicity of heart, with earnestness of soul, with confidence in his goodness and wisdom, we should come entreating Him to take into his especial charge, the affairs of our State and Nation;—that in the present emergency, the determinations of our Legislative Assembly, may be so guided and controlled by him, as to avoid the threatening evils, to advance the best interests of our Commonwealth, the cause of truth and righteousness, and the welfare of our beloved Country. A Country rendered sacred to us by the toils and blood of our fathers; a Country where their graves are; where God has given to us our heritage, and around the destinies of which, from long cherished associations, and deep abiding sympathies, all our hopes for time have so constantly clustered. May God, long preserve this people; this Country!—In its institutions unimpaired; in its destinies unimpeded; in its glory, ever in the ascendant! But may it be thus advanced and established, **ONLY ON PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS;—ON principles of justice and benevolence without—on principles of justice and fraternal regards within;—**principles of which, God will approve, and under the prevalence of which, man shall be blessed!

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