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BIBLE VIEW OF SLAVERY.

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Pro-Slavery

A Discourse,

DELIVERED AT THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, "BNAI JESHURUM," NEW YORK, ON
THE DAY OF THE NATIONAL FAST, JAN. 4, 1861.

BY THE

REV. M. J. RAPHALL, M.A., PH. DR.

RABBI PREACHER, AT THE SYNAGOGUE, GREENE STREET, NEW YORK.



NEW YORK:

RUDD & CARLETON, 130 GRAND STREET,
BROOKS BUILDING, COR. OF BROADWAY.

M DCCC LXI.

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PREFATORY REMARKS.

WHEN the discourse which is now placed before the public in pamphlet form, was first delivered, I little anticipated that it would attract and occupy public attention in the manner and to the extent which it has done. The subject had not been chosen by myself; I was called upon to expose a pernicious fallacy. Under a strong sense of duty I did it; not by any reasoning of my own, but by a statement of facts, supported by the authority of Scripture. That such a sober statement, and the inferences to be deduced therefrom, should prove very unpalatable to men of extreme opinions, and that they should do their utmost to refute my discourse, was naturally to be expected. Accordingly they have tried their best, from newspaper paragraphs of a few lines up to elaborate articles of many columns. With what success, it is for public opinion to decide. It seems, however, that the public, like myself, thinks "that facts are facts." So long as the one great fact is not produced—THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE WHICH DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY DENOUNCES SLAVEHOLDING AS A SIN—so long as this has not been done, my statements remain incontrovertible. As that text has not been quoted, which it never can be, SINCE IT DOES NOT EXIST, all the fiery attacks and declamations against me are but "leather and prunella."

It is true that the attempt has been made to find such a text; and that Matt. vii. 12: "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do

you even so to them," has been quoted. I might answer that this great precept, the practical explanation of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," was not only known to the ancient Hebrews and even to heathen Greeks, full four hundred years before the sermon on the Mount, but likewise to all Christian nations upwards of 1800 years after that sermon; but that by ancients and moderns it never was brought to bear on slaveholding till within the last (comparatively) few years. But I prefer to take my answer from the New Testament. The writer of the "Epistle to Philemon" had, before his conversion, been the disciple of Gamaliel, a descendant of that Hebrew sage, who, in the Talmud (tr Sabbath fo. 31), declares that the rule "whatsoever is hateful to thee do not unto others" is the sum and substance of the Law. After his conversion he became one of the principal teachers of Christianity. But though he must have entered into the spirit of the sermon on the Mount far more fully and truly than the writers in the "Tribune" can do—and perhaps for that very reason, he sent back the fugitive slave, Onesimus, to his owner. Proof sufficient on the authority of Paul of Tarsus, that the text, Matt. vii. 12, has no special application to slaveholding.

The long tirade in the "Tribune" of this day must go for what it is worth. It is before the public; so is my discourse. Each of the two must stand or fall on its own merits. But I am convinced my discourse will not fall, for it embodies "the word of our God, which standeth good for ever."

M. J. R.

NEW YORK, *Jan.* 15th, 1861.

S E R M O N .

THE
BIBLE VIEW OF SLAVERY.

“The people of Nineveh believed in God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For the matter reached the King of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and seated himself in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh, by decree of the King and his magnates, saying: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink any water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry with all their strength unto God; and let them turn every individual from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knoweth but God may turn and relent; yea, turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way: and God relented of the evil which he had said that he would inflict upon them; and he did it not.”—Jonah iii. 5–10.

1. MY FRIENDS—We meet here this day under circumstances not unlike those described in my text. Not many weeks ago, on the invitation of the Governor of this State, we joined in thanksgiving for the manifold mercies the Lord had

vouchsafed to bestow upon us during the past year. But "coming events cast their shadows before," and our thanks were tinged by the foreboding of danger impending over our country. The evil we then dreaded has now come home to us. As the cry of the prophet, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown," alarmed that people, so the proclamation, "the Union is dissolved," has startled the inhabitants of the United States. The President—the chief officer placed at the helm to guide the vessel of the commonwealth on its course—stands aghast at the signs of the times. He sees the black clouds gathering overhead, he hears the fierce howl of the tornado, and the hoarse roar of the breakers all around him. An aged man, his great experience has taught him that "man's extremity is God's opportunity;" and conscious of his own inability to weather the storm without help from on high, he calls upon every individual "to feel a personal responsibility towards God," even as the King of Nineveh desired all persons "to cry unto God with all their strength"—and it is in compliance

with this call of the Chief Magistrate of these United States that we, like the many millions of our fellow-citizens, devote this day to public prayer and humiliation. The President, more polished, though less plain-spoken than the King of Nineveh, does not in direct terms require every one to turn from his "evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." But to me these two expressions seem in a most signal manner to describe our difficulty, and to apply to the actual condition of things both North and South. The "violence in their hands" is the great reproach we must address to the sturdy fire-eater who in the hearing of an indignant world proclaims "Cotton is King." King indeed, and a most righteous and merciful one, no doubt, in his own conceit; since he only tars and feathers the wretches who fall in his power, and whom he suspects of not being sufficiently loyal and obedient to his sovereignty. And the "evil of his ways" is the reproach we must address to the sleek rhetorician who in the hearing of a God-fearing world declares "Thought is King." King

indeed, and a most mighty and magnanimous one—no doubt—in his own conceit; all-powerful to foment and augment the strife, though powerless to allay it. Of all the fallacies coined in the north, the arrogant assertion that “Thought is King” is the very last with which, at this present crisis, the patience of a reflecting people should have been abused. For in fact, the material greatness of the United States seems to have completely outgrown the grasp of our most gifted minds; so that urgent as is our need, pressing as is the occasion, no man or set of men have yet come forward capable of rising above the narrow horizon of sectional influences and prejudices, and with views enlightened, just, and beneficent, to embrace the entirety of the Union and to secure its prosperity and preservation. No, my friends, “Cotton” is not King, and “Human thought” is not King. *Adonai Melech.* The Lord alone is King! *Umalkootho bakol mashala*, and His royalty reigneth over all. This very day of humiliation and of prayer—what is it but the recognition of His supremacy, the confes-

sion of His power and of our own weakness, the supplications which our distress addresses to His mercy? But in order that these supplications may be graciously received, that His supreme protection may be vouchsafed unto our Country, it is necessary that we should begin as the people of Nineveh did; we must "believe in God."— And when I say "WE," I do not mean merely us handful of peaceable Union-loving Hebrews, but I mean the whole of the people throughout the United States: the President and his Cabinet, the President elect and his advisers, the leaders of public opinion, North and South. If they truly and honestly desire to save our country, let them believe in God and in His Holy Word; and then when the authority of the Constitution is to be set aside for a higher Law, they will be able to appeal to the highest Law of all, the revealed Law and Word of God, which affords its supreme sanction to the Constitution. There can be no doubt, my friends, that however much of personal ambition, selfishness, pride, and obstinacy, there may enter into the present unhappy quarrel

between the two great sections of the Commonwealth—I say it is certain that the origin of the quarrel itself is the difference of opinion respecting slave-holding, which the one section denounces as sinful—aye, as the most heinous of sins—while the other section upholds it as perfectly lawful. It is the province of statesmen to examine the circumstances under which the Constitution of the United States recognises the legality of slave-holding; and under what circumstances, if any, it becomes a crime against the law of the land. But the question whether slave-holding is a sin before God, is one that belongs to the theologian. I have been requested by prominent citizens of other denominations, that I should on this day examine the Bible view of slavery, as the religious mind of the country requires to be enlightened on the subject.

In compliance with that request, and after humbly praying that the Father of Truth and of Mercy may enlighten my mind, and direct my words for good, I am about to solicit your earnest attention, my friends, to this serious subject. My

discourse will, I fear, take up more of your time than I am in the habit of exacting from you; but this is a day of penitence, and the having to listen to a long and sober discourse must be accounted as a penitential infliction.

The subject of my investigation falls into three parts:—

First, How far back can we trace the existence of slavery?

Secondly, Is slaveholding condemned as a sin in sacred Scripture?

Thirdly, What was the condition of the slave in Biblical times, and among the Hebrews; and saying with our Father Jacob, “for Thy help, I hope, O Lord!” I proceed to examine the question, how far back can we trace the existence of slavery?

I. It is generally admitted, that slavery had its origin in war, public or private. The victor having it in his power to take the life of his vanquished enemy, prefers to let him live, and reduces him to bondage. The life he has spared, the body he might have mutilated or destroyed,

become his absolute property. He may dispose of it in any way he pleases. Such was, and through a great part of the world still is, the brutal law of force. When this state of things first began, it is next to impossible to decide. If we consult Sacred Scripture, the oldest and most truthful collection of records now or at any time in existence, we find the word *Ngebed* "slave," which the English version renders "servant," first used by Noah, who, in Genesis ix. 25, curses the descendants of his son Ham, by saying they should be *Ngebed Ngabadim*, the "meanest of slaves," or as the English version has it "servant of servants." The question naturally arises how came Noah to use the expression? How came he to know anything of slavery? There existed not at that time any human being on earth except Noah and his family of three sons, apparently by one mother, born free and equal, with their wives and children. Noah had no slaves. From the time that he quitted the ark he could have none. It therefore becomes evident that Noah's acquaintance with the word slave and the nature

of slavery must date from before the Flood, and existed in his memory only until the crime of Ham called it forth. You and I may regret that in his anger Noah should from beneath the waters of wrath again have fished up the idea and practice of slavery ; but that he did so is a fact which rests on the authority of Scripture. I am therefore justified when tracing slavery as far back as it can be traced, I arrive at the conclusion, that next to the domestic relations of husband and wife, parents and children, the oldest relation of society with which we are acquainted is that of master and slave.

Let us for an instant stop at this curse by Noah with which slavery after the Flood is recalled into existence. Among the many prophecies contained in the Bible and having reference to particular times, persons, and events, there are three singular predictions referring to three distinct races or peoples, which seem to be intended for all times, and accordingly remain in full force to this day. The first of these is the doom of Ham's descendants, the African race,

pronounced upwards of 4,000 years ago. The second is the character of the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs, pronounced nearly 4,000 years ago; and the third and last is the promise of continued and indestructible nationality promised to us, Israelites, full 2500 years ago. It has been said that the knowledge that a particular prophecy exists, helps to work out its fulfilment, and I am quite willing to allow that with us, Israelites, such is the fact. The knowledge we have of God's gracious promises renders us imperishable, even though the greatest and most powerful nations of the olden time have utterly perished. It may be doubted whether the fanatic Arab of the desert ever heard of the prophecy that he is to be a "wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him." (Gen. xvi. 12.) But you and I, and all men of ordinary education, know that this prediction at all times has been, and is now, literally fulfilled, and that it has never been interrupted. Not even when the followers of Mahomet rushed forth to spread his doctrines, the Koran in one

hand and the sword in the other, and when Arab conquest rendered the fairest portion of the Old World subject to the empire of their Caliph, did the descendants of Ishmael renounce their characteristics. Even the boasted civilization of the present century, and frequent intercourse with Western travellers, still leave the Arab a wild man, "his hand against everybody, and every man's hand against him," a most convincing and durable proof that the Word of God is true, and that the prophecies of the Bible were dictated by the Spirit of the Most High. But though, in the case of the Arab, it is barely possible that he may be acquainted with the prediction made to Hagar, yet we may be sure that the fetish-serving benighted African has no knowledge of Noah's prediction; which, however, is nowhere more fully or more atrociously carried out than in the native home of the African. Witness the horrid fact, that the King of Dahomy is, at this very time, filling a large and deep trench with human blood, sufficient to float a good-sized boat; that the victims are innocent men, murdered

to satisfy some freak of what he calls his religion ; and that this monstrous and most fiendish act has met with no opposition, either from the pious indignation of Great Britain, or from the zealous humanity of our country.

Now I am well aware that the Biblical critics called Rationalists, who deny the possibility of prophecy, have taken upon themselves to assert, that the prediction of which I have spoken was never uttered by Noah, but was made up many centuries after him by the Hebrew writer of the Bible, in order to smoothe over the extermination of the Canaanites, whose land was conquered by the Israelites. With superhuman knowledge like that of the Rationalists, who claim to sit in judgment on the Word of God, I do not think it worth while to argue. But I would ask you how is it that a prediction, manufactured for a purpose—a fraud in short, and that a most base and unholy one, should nevertheless continue in force, and be carried out during four, or three, or even two thousand years; for a thousand years more or less can here make no difference. Noah,

on the occasion in question, bestows on his son Shem a spiritual blessing: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem," and to this day it remains a fact which cannot be denied, that whatever knowledge of God and of religious truth is possessed by the human race, has been promulgated by the descendants of Shem. Noah bestows on his son Japheth a blessing, chiefly temporal, but partaking also of spiritual good. "May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem," and to this day it remains a fact which cannot be denied, that the descendants of Japheth (Europeans and their offspring) have been enlarged so that they possess dominion in every part of the earth; while, at the same time, they share in that knowledge of religious truth which the descendants of Shem were the first to promulgate. Noah did not bestow any blessing on his son Ham, but uttered a bitter curse against his descendants, and to this day it remains a fact which cannot be gainsaid that in his own native home, and generally throughout the world, the unfortunate negro is indeed the meanest of slaves.

Much has been said respecting the inferiority of his intellectual powers, and that no man of his race has ever inscribed his name on the Pantheon of human excellence, either mental or moral. But this is a subject I will not discuss. I do not attempt to build up a theory, nor yet to defend the moral government of Providence. I state facts; and having done so, I remind you that our own fathers were slaves in Egypt, and afflicted four hundred years; and then I bid you reflect on the words of inspired Isaiah (lv. 8.), "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

II. Having thus, on the authority of the sacred Scripture, traced slavery back to the remotest period, I next request your attention to the question, "Is slaveholding condemned as a sin in sacred Scripture?" How this question can at all arise in the mind of any man that has received a religious education, and is acquainted with the history of the Bible, is a phenomenon I cannot explain to myself, and which fifty years ago no man dreamed of. But we live in times when we

must not be surprised at anything. Last Sunday an eminent preacher is reported to have declared from the pulpit, "That the Old Testament requirements served their purpose during the physical and social development of mankind, and were rendered no longer necessary now when we were to be guided by the superior doctrines of the New in the moral instruction of the race." I had always thought that in the "moral instruction of the race," the requirements of Jewish Scriptures and Christian Scriptures were identically the same; that to abstain from murder, theft, adultery, that "to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God," were "requirements" equally imperative in the one course of instruction as in the other. But it appears I was mistaken. "We have altered all that now," says this eminent divine, in happy imitation of Molière's physician, whose new theory removed the heart from the left side of the human body to the right. But when I remember that the "now" refers to a period of which you all, though no very aged men, witnessed the rise; when, moreover, I remember that the "WE" the

reverend preacher speaks of, is limited to a few impulsive declaimers, gifted with great zeal, but little knowledge; more eloquent than learned; better able to excite our passions than to satisfy our reason; and when, lastly, I remember the scorn with which sacred Scripture (Deut. xxxii. 18) speaks of "newfangled notions, lately sprung up, which your fathers esteemed not;" when I consider all this, I think you and I had rather continue to take our "requirements for moral instruction" from Moses and the Prophets than from the eloquent preacher of Brooklyn. But as that reverend gentleman takes a lead among those who most loudly and most vehemently denounce slaveholding as a sin, I wished to convince myself whether he had any Scripture warranty for so doing; and whether such denunciation was one of those "requirements for moral instruction" advanced by the New Testament. I have accordingly examined the various books of Christian Scripture, and find that they afford the reverend gentleman and his compeers no authority whatever for his and their declamations. The New Testament

nowhere, directly or indirectly, condemns slaveholding, which, indeed, is proved by the universal practice of all Christian nations during many centuries. Receiving slavery as one of the conditions of society, the New Testament nowhere interferes with or contradicts the slave code of Moses; it even preserves a letter written by one of the most eminent Christian teachers to a slaveowner on sending back to him his runaway slave. And when we next refer to the history and "requirements" of our own sacred Scriptures, we find that on the most solemn occasion therein recorded, when God gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai—

There where His finger scorched, the tablet shone;
There where His shadow on his people shone
His glory, shrouded in its garb of fire,
Himself no eye might see and not expire.

Even on that most solemn and most holy occasion, slaveholding is not only recognised and sanctioned as an integral part of the social structure, when it is commanded that the Sabbath of

the Lord is to bring rest to *Ngabdecna ve Amathecha*, "Thy male slave and thy female slave" (Exod. xx. 10; Deut. v. 14). But the property in slaves is placed under the same protection as any other species of lawful property, when it is said, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, or his field, or his male slave, or his female slave, or his ox, or his ass, or aught that belongeth to thy neighbor" (Ibid. xx. 17; v. 21). That the male slave and female slave here spoken of do not designate the Hebrew bondman, but the heathen slave, I shall presently show you. That the Ten Commandments are the word of God, and as such, of the very highest authority, is acknowledged by Christians as well as by Jews. I would therefore ask the reverend gentleman of Brooklyn and his compeers—How dare you, in the face of the sanction and protection afforded to slave property in the Ten Commandments—how dare you denounce slaveholding as a sin? When you remember that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job—the men with whom the Almighty conversed, with whose names he emphatically connects his

own most holy name, and to whom He vouchsafed to give the character of "perfect, upright, fearing God and eschewing evil" (Job i. 8)—that all these men were slaveholders, does it not strike you that you are guilty of something very little short of blasphemy? And if you answer me, "Oh, in their time slaveholding was lawful, but now it has become a sin," I in my turn ask you, "When and by what authority you draw the line?" Tell us the precise time when slaveholding ceased to be permitted, and became sinful?" When we remember the mischief which this inventing a new sin, not known to the Bible, is causing; how it has exasperated the feelings of the South, and alarmed the conscience of the North, to a degree that men who should be brothers are on the point of embruining their hands in each other's blood, are we not entitled to ask the reverend preacher of Brooklyn, "What right have you to insult and exasperate thousands of God-fearing, law-abiding citizens, whose moral worth and patriotism, whose purity of conscience and of life, are fully equal to your own? What right have you to place

yonder grey-headed philanthropist on a level with a murderer, or yonder virtuous mother of a family on a line with an adulteress, or yonder honorable and honest man in one rank with a thief, and all this solely because they exercise a right which your own fathers and progenitors, during many generations, held and exercised without reproach or compunction. You profess to frame your "moral instruction of the race" according to the "requirements" of the New Testament—but tell us where and by whom it was said, "Whosoever shall say to his neighbor, *Raca* (worthless sinner), shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of the judgment." My friends, I find, and I am sorry to find, that I am delivering a pro-slavery discourse. I am no friend to slavery in the abstract, and still less friendly to the practical working of slavery. But I stand here as a teacher in Israel; not to place before you my own feelings and opinions, but to propound to you the word of God, the Bible view of slavery. With a due sense of my responsibility, I must state to you

the truth and nothing but the truth, however unpalatable or unpopular that truth may be.

III. It remains for me now to examine what was the condition of the slave in Biblical times and among the Hebrews. And here at once we must distinguish between the Hebrew bondman and the heathen slave. The former could only be reduced to bondage from two causes. If he had committed theft and had not wherewithal to make full restitution, he was "sold for his theft." (Exod. xxii. 3.) Or if he became so miserably poor that he could not sustain life except by begging, he had permission to "sell" or bind himself in servitude. (Levit. xxv. 39 *et seq.*) But in either case his servitude was limited in duration and character. "Six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing" (Exod. xxi. 2). And if even the bondman preferred bondage to freedom, he could not, under any circumstances, be held to servitude longer than the jubilee then next coming. At that period the estate which had originally belonged to his father, or remoter ancestor, reverted to his

possession, so that he went forth at once a freeman and a landed proprietor. As his privilege of Hebrew citizen was thus only suspended, and the law, in permitting him to be sold, contemplated his restoration to his full rights, it took care that during his servitude his mind should not be crushed to the abject and cringing condition of a slave. "Ye shall not rule over one another with rigor," is the provision of the law. (Lev. xxv. 46.) Thus he is fenced round with protection against any abuse of power on the part of his employer; and tradition so strictly interpreted the letter of the law in his favor, that it was a common saying of Biblical times and homes, which Maimonides has preserved to us, that "he who buys an Hebrew bondman gets himself a master." Though in servitude, this Hebrew was in nowise exempt from his religious duties. Therefore it is not for him or his that the Ten Commandments stipulated for rest on the Sabbath of the Lord; for his employer could not compel him to work on that day; and if he did work of his own accord, he became guilty of death, like any other

Sabbath-breaker. Neither does the prohibition, "thou shalt not covet the property of thy neighbor," apply to him, for he was not the property of his employer. In fact, between the Hebrew bondman and the Southern slave there is no point of resemblance. There were, however, slaves among the Hebrews, whose general condition was analogous to that of their Southern fellow sufferers. That was the heathen slave, who was to be bought "from the heathens that were round about the land of Israel, or from the heathen strangers that sojourned in the land; they should be a possession, to be bequeathed as an inheritance to the owner's children, after his death, for ever" (Levit. xxv. 44-46.) Over these heathen slaves the owner's property was absolute; he could put them to hard labor, to the utmost extent of their physical strength; he could inflict on them any degree of chastisement short of injury to life and limb. If his heathen slave ran away or strayed from home, every Israelite was bound to bring or send him back, as he would have to do with any other portion of his neighbor's



property that had been lost or strayed. (Deut. xxii. 3.)

Now, you may, perhaps, ask me how I can reconcile this statement with the text of Scripture so frequently quoted against the Fugitive Slave Law, "Thou shalt not surrender unto his master the slave who has escaped from his master unto thee" (Deut. xxiii. 16). I answer you that, according to all legists, this text applies to a heathen slave, who, from any foreign country escapes from his master, even though that master be an Hebrew, residing out of the land of Israel. Such a slave—but such a slave only—is to find a permanent asylum in any part of the country he may choose. This interpretation is fully borne out by the words of the precept. The pronoun "thou," is not here used in the same sense as in the Ten Commandments. There it designates every soul in Israel individually; since every one has it in his power, and is in duty bound to obey the commandments. But as the security and protection to be bestowed on the runaway slaves are beyond the power of any individual, and

require the consent and concurrence of the whole community, the pronoun "thou" here means the whole of the people, and not one portion in opposition to any other portion of the people. And as the expression remains the same throughout the precept, "With thee he shall dwell, even among ye, in the place he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best," it plainly shows that the whole of the land was open to him, and the whole of the people were to protect the fugitive, which could not have been carried out if it had applied to the slave who escaped from one tribe into the territory of another. Had the precept been expounded in any other than its strictly literal sense, it would have caused great confusion, since it would have nullified two other precepts of God's law; that which directs that "slaves, like lands and houses, were to be inherited for ever," and that which commands "property, lost or strayed, to be restored to the owner." Any other interpretation would, moreover, have caused heartburning and strife between the tribes, for men were as tenacious of their

rights and property in those days as they are now. But no second opinion was ever entertained; the slave who ran away from Dan to Beersheba had to be given up, even as the runaway from South Carolina has to be given up by Massachusetts; whilst the runaway from Edom, or from Syria, found an asylum in the land of Israel, as the runaway slave from Cuba or Brazil would find in New York. Accordingly, Shimei reclaimed and recovered his runaway slaves from Achish, king of Gath, at that time a vassal of Israel (Kings ii. 39, 40). And Saul of Tarsus sent back the runaway slave, Onesimus, unto his owner Philemon. But to surrender to a ruthless, lawless heathen, the wretched slave who had escaped from his cruelty, would have been to give up the fugitive to certain death, or at least to tortures repugnant to the spirit of God's law, the tender care of which protected the bird in its nest, the beast at the plough, and the slave in his degradation. Accordingly, the ex-tradition was not permitted in Palestine any more than it is in Canada. While thus the owner possessed full

right over and security for his property, the exercise of that power was confined within certain limits which he could not outstep. His female slave was not to be the tool or castaway toy of his sensuality, nor could he sell her, but was bound to "let her go free," "because he had humbled her" (Deut. xxi. 14). His male slave was protected against excessive punishment; for if the master in any way mutilated his slave, even to knock a single tooth out of his head, the slave became free (Exod. xxi. 26, 27). And while thus two of the worst passions of human nature, lust and cruelty, were kept under due restraint, the third bad passion, cupidity, was not permitted free scope; for the law of God secured to the slave his Sabbaths and days of rest; while public opinion, which in a country so densely peopled as Palestine must have been all-powerful, would not allow any slave-owner to impose heavier tasks on his slaves, or to feed them worse than his neighbors did. This, indeed, is the great distinction which the Bible view of slavery derives from its divine source. The slave is a

person in whom the dignity of human nature is to be respected; *he has rights*. Whereas, the heathen view of slavery which prevailed at Rome, and which, I am sorry to say, is adopted in the South, reduces the slave to a *thing*, and a thing can have no rights. The result to which the Bible view of slavery leads us, is—1st. That slavery has existed since the earliest time; 2d. That slaveholding is no sin, and that slave property is expressly placed under the protection of the Ten Commandments; 3d. That the slave is a person, and has rights not conflicting with the lawful exercise of the rights of his owner. If our Northern fellow-citizens, content with following the word of God, would not insist on being “righteous overmuch,” or denouncing “sin” which the Bible knows not, but which is plainly taught by the precepts of men—they would entertain more equity and less ill feeling towards their Southern brethren. And if our Southern fellow-citizens would adopt the Bible view of slavery, and discard that heathen slave code, which permits a few bad men to indulge in

an abuse of power that throws a stigma and disgrace on the whole body of slaveholders—if both North and South would do what is right, then “God would see their works and that they turned from the evil of their ways;” and in their case, as in that of the people of Nineveh, would mercifully avert the impending evil, for with Him alone is the power to do so. Therefore let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, we approach Thee this day, our hearts heavy with the weight of our sins, our looks downcast under the sense of our ingratitude, national and individual. Thou, Father all-bounteous, hast in Thine abundant goodness plentifully bestowed upon us every good and every blessing, spiritual, mental, temporal, that in the present state of the world men can desire. But we have perverted and abused Thy gifts; in our arrogance and selfishness we have contrived to extract poison from Thy most precious boons; the spiritual have degenerated into unloving self-righteousness; the mental have rendered us vain-glorious and conceited; and the temporal have degraded us into Mammon-worshipping slaves of

avarice. Intoxicated with our prosperity, we have forgotten Thee; drunken with pride, we reel on towards the precipice of disunion and ruin. What hand can stay us if it be not Thine, O God! Thou who art long-suffering as Thou art almighty, to Thee we turn in the hour of our utmost need. Hear us, Father, for on Thee our hopes are fixed. Help us, Father, for thou alone canst do it. Punish us not according to our arrogance; afflict us not according to our deserts. Remove from our breasts the heart of stone, and from our minds the obstinacy of self-willed pride. Extend thy grace unto us, that we may acknowledge our own transgressions. Open our eyes that we may behold and renounce the wrong we inflict on our neighbors. God of justice and of mercy, suffer not despots to rejoice at our dissensions, nor tyrants to triumph over our fall. Let them not point at us the finger of scorn, or say, "Look there at the fruits of freedom and self-government—of equal rights and popular sovereignty—strife without any real cause—destruction without any sufficient motive." Oh, let not them who trust in

Thee be put to shame, or those who seek Thee be disgraced. Almighty God, extend thy gracious protection to the United States. Pour out over the citizens thereof, and those whom they have elected to be their rulers, the spirit of grace and of supplication, the spirit of wisdom and brotherly love, so that henceforth, even as hitherto, they may know that union is strength, and that it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity. And above all things, Lord merciful and gracious, avert the calamity of civil war from our midst. If in Thy supreme wisdom Thou hast decreed that this vast commonwealth, which has risen under Thy protection, and prospered under Thy blessing, shall now be separated, then we beseech Thee let that separation be peaceable; that no human blood may be shed, but that the canopy of Thy peace may still remain spread over all the land. May we address our prayers to Thee, O Lord, at an acceptable time; mayest Thou, O God, in Thy abundant mercy, answer us with the truth of Thy salvation. Amen.

THE END.

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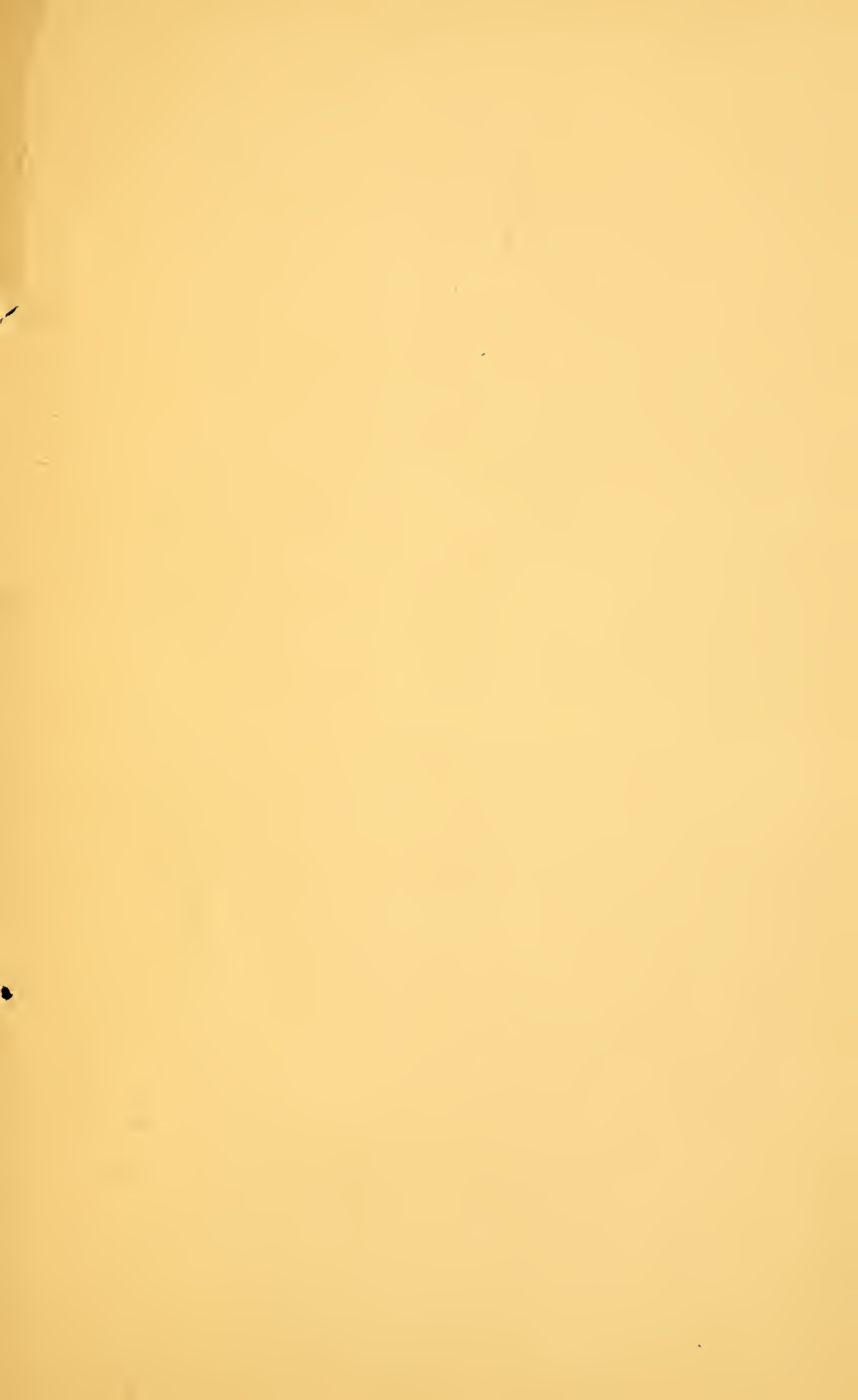
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