

The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

"TO SPEAK HIS THOUGHTS IS EVERY FREEMAN'S RIGHT."—Thomas Jefferson.

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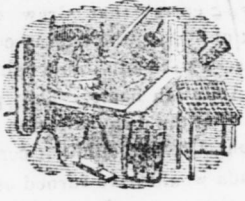
NEW SERIES,

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June, 3rd, 1863

MAYNARD'S HOTEL, TUNKHANNOCK, WYOMING COUNTY, PENNA. JOHN MAYNARD, Proprietor.

HAVING taken the Hotel, in the Borough of Tunkhanock, recently occupied by Riley Warner, the proprietor respectfully solicits a share of public patronage. The House has been thoroughly repaired, and the comforts and accommodations of a first class Hotel, will be found by all who may favor it with their custom. September 11, 1861

M. GILMAN, DENTIST.

M. GILMAN, has permanently located in Tunkhanock Borough, and respectfully tenders his professional services to the citizens of this place and surrounding country. ALL WORK WARRANTED, TO GIVE SATISFACTION. Office over Tutton's Law Office, near the Post Office. Dec. 11, 1861.

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Fresh Ground Plaster in Quantities and at prices to suit purchasers, now for sale at Meshoppen by E. MOWAT JR

Poet's Corner.

From the Luzerne Union
LOOKING BACK.

BY STELLA OF LACKAWANNA

Fold me still closer—I am cold,
And shivering in the grey November;
And yet, 'tis not the autumn chill,
So much as some things I remember,
That I should utter this complaint,
With trembling lips, that faint and falter;
My heart, my heart is bitter cold—
No ember left upon its altar.

When summer days of faded old,
Drooped nightly, folding o'er the clover,
And heather wild, and garden hower,
With summer blooms lay tangled o'er,
Some strange bright touch may bring sweet,
'Til every pulse was manly leaping,
And joy within its heart-entired,
A rapt babe awaked from sleeping.

Teardrop stole softly through
The starry leaves, now near to lower;
And white throbed from every stem,
Alone late timid soul grew stronger;
All time alone unscathed wings,
With shadows faded from my vision,
As I had found at last, at last,
A misty way-gate of Elysium.

Softly pushed aside the veil,
Flung like mist-wreath at its portal,
And the gods had spread a feast,
Whom were were love, and youth immortal
Nor thought to wear again,
The crown robe of sorrow's weaving;
Nor thought the jewels of care;
Nor deem'd the gods were so deceiving.

Would I know how long I hang upborne,
So far from earth—so near to Heaven?
Suffice it days as moments were,
When toward my poor wings were driven,
No need all on frail rocks,
The year that whirled around me—
The vestiges, soft-arms and feet,
Bristled thro' to deepen round me

A summons came tosing by,
Wing-lawith are balia of healing,
That drop from my broken life,
Till hope grew, in strong revealing,
And the garden that sung me so,
Like purple joy by sunlight driven,
Dreeter and I lit my sky
Serene, as calm twilight even,

But, eye, that some carrels tone
From the shore of memories'olden,
Stole through the autumn hush,
And mapless undroped and golden;
Why come the forbidden spell,
That I waver never remember?
It asks me yet, so bitter cold,
And shiver the grey November

BIBLE VIEWS ON SLAVERY.

BY J. H. HOPKINS,
Bishop of the State of Vermont.

The word "Slave" occurs but twice in our English Bible, but the term "servant" is commonly employed by translators, has the meaning of slave in Hebrew and the Greek originals, as a general rule, where it stands alone. We find, however, in many places, of "hired man" and of "bond man and bondmaid." The first were not slaves, but the other; the distinction being precisely the same which exists in our own day. Slavery, here, may be defined as *servitude for life extending to the offspring*. And this kind of bondage appears to have existed as an established institution in all the ages of our world by the universal evidence of history, whether sacred or profane.

This understood, I do not oppose the prevalent idea that slaving an evil in itself. A physical evil it may be, this does not satisfy the judgment of the zealous adversaries, since they contend that it is a *moral evil*—a positive *sin* in a human being in bondage, under circumstances whatever, unless as a punishment inflicted on crimes, for the safety of a community.

Here, therefore, lies the aspect of the controversy. And it is here that it can only be settled by the Bible. For every Christian is bound to assess the rule of the inspired Apostle, that "the transgression of the law," namely the law laid down in the Scriptures by authority of God—the supreme "Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy." For his Word there can be no appeal. No man can be so atrocious in his sight as which dares to rise against his government, blasphemy can be more unpardonable than that which imputes sin or moral evil to the decrees of the eternal Judge, who is perfect in wisdom, in knowledge, and love.

With entire correctness, therefore, your letter refers the question to the infallible criterion—the Word of God. It were a matter to be determined by personal sympathies, tastes, or feelings, I should be as ready as any man to condemn the institution of slavery, for all my prejudices, education, habit, and social position, are entirely opposed to it. But as a Christian, I am solemnly warned not to be "win my own conceit," and not to "lean to my own understanding." As a Christian, I am compelled to submit my weak and erring intellect to the authority of the Almighty. For then only can I be safe in my conclusions, when I know that they are in accordance with the will of Him, before whose tribunal I must render a strict account in the last great day.

I proceed, accordingly, to the evidence of the sacred Scriptures, which, long ago, produced complete conviction in my own mind, and must, as I regard it, be equally conclusive to every candid and sincere inquirer. When the array of positive proof is exhibited, I shall consider the objections, and examine their validity with all the fairness in my power.

The first appearance of slavery in the Bible is the wonderful prediction of the patriarch Noah: "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.—Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."—(Gen. 9: 25)

The heartless irreverence which Ham, the father of Canaan, displayed toward his eminent parent, whose piety had just saved him from the deluge, presented the immediate occasion for this remarkable prophecy; but the actual fulfilment was reserved for posterity, after they had lost the knowledge of God, and become polluted by the abominations of heathen idolatry. The Almighty, foreseeing this total degradation of the race, ordained them to servitude or slavery under the descendants of Shem and Japhet, doubtless because he judged it to be their *fittest condition*. And all history proves how accurately the prediction has been accomplished, even to the present day.

We come next to the proof that slavery was sanctioned by the Deity in the case of Abraham, whose three hundred and eighteen bond servants, born in his own house, (Gen. 14: 14) are mentioned along with those who were bought with his money, as proper subjects for circumcision. (Gen. 17: 12.)—His wife Sarah had also an Egyptian slave, named Hagar, who fled from her severity.—And "the angel of the Lord" commanded the fugitive to return to her mistress and submit herself. [Gen. 16: 9] If the philanthropists of our age, who profess to believe the Bible, had been willing to take the counsel of that angel for their guide, it would have preserved the peace and welfare of the Union.

The third proof that slavery was authorized by the Almighty occurs in the last of the Ten Commandments, delivered from Mount Sinai, and universally acknowledged by Jews and Christians as the moral law: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's" [Exod. 20: 17] Here it is evident that the principle of property—"any thing that is thy neighbor's"—runs through the whole. I am quite aware, indeed, of the prejudice which many good people entertain against the idea of property in a human being, and shall consider it, in due time, amongst the objections. I am equally aware that the wives of our day may take umbrage at the law which places them in the same sentence with the slave, and even with the horse and the cattle. But the truth is none the less certain. The husband has a real property in his wife, because she is bound, for life, to serve and to obey him. The wife has a real property in her husband, because he is bound for life to cherish and maintain her. The character of property is doubtless modified by its design. But whatever whether person or thing, the law appropriates to an individual, becomes of necessity his property.

The fourth proof, however, is yet more express, as it is derived from the direct rule established by the wisdom of God for his chosen people, Israel, on the very point in question, namely:

"If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years, shall he serve, and in the seventh he came in shall go out free:—if he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and the children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself." [Exod. 21 1-4.] Here we see that the separation of husband and wife is positively directed by the divine command, in order to secure the property of the master in his bond-maid and her offspring. But the husband had an alternative, if he preferred slaving to separation. For thus the law of God proceeds: "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever." [Exod. 21: 5, 6.] With this law before his eyes, what Christian can believe that the Almighty attached immorality or sin to the condition of slavery?

The treatment of slaves, especially as it regarded the degree of correction, which the master might administer, occurs in the same chapter, as follows: "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." [Exod. 21: 20, 21.] And again, "If a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his

maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." (Exod. 21: 26, 27.) Here we see that the master was authorized to use corporal correction toward his slaves, within certain limits. When immediate death ensued, he was to be punished as the judges might determine. But for all that came short of this, the loss of his property was held to be a sufficient penalty.

The next evidence furnished by the divine law appears in the peculiar and admirable appointment of the Jubilee. "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a Jubilee unto you and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man to his jami y." (Lev. 25: 10) This enactment, however, did not affect the slaves, because it only extended to the Israelites who had "a possession and a family," according to the original distribution of the land among the tribes. The distinction is plainly set forth in the same chapter, namely:

"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 a hired servant and as a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of Jubilee, and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, they shall not be sold as bondsmen. Both thy bondmen and bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land, and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance of your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever; but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor. For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 25: 40-46, with v. 55)

The distinction here made between the temporary servitude of the Israelite and the perpetual bondage of the heathen race, is too plain for controversy. And this express and positive law furnishes the true meaning of another passage which the ultra abolitionists is very fond of repeating: "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." (Deut. 23: 15, 16)

This evidently must be referred to the case of a slave who had escaped from a foreign heathen master, and can not, with any sound reason, be applied to the slaves of the Israelites themselves. For it is manifest that if it were so applied, it would nullify the other enactments of the divine Lawgiver, and it would have been an absurdity to tell the people that they should "buy bondmen and bondmaids of the heathen and the stranger, to be their possession and the inheritance of their children for ever," while, nevertheless, the slaves should be at liberty to run away and become freemen when they pleased. It is the well-known maxim, in the interpretation of all laws, that each sentence shall be so construed as to give a consistent meaning to the whole. And assuredly, if we are bound to follow this rule, we are bound to follow this rule in the legislation of the Almighty. The meaning that I have adopted is the only one which agrees with the established principle of legal construction, and it has invariably been sanctioned by the doctors of the Jewish law, and every respectable Christian commentator.

Such then, is the institution of slavery, laid down by the Lord God of Israel for his chosen people, and continued for fifteen centuries, until the new dispensation of the Gospel. What change did this produce? I grant, of course, that we, as Christians, are bound by the precepts and example of the Savior and his apostles. Let us now, therefore, proceed to the all-important inquiry, whether we are authorized by these to presume that the Mosaic system was done away again; then we ask what the divine Redeemer said in reference to slavery. And the answer is perfectly undeniable: HE DID NOT ALLUDE TO IT AT ALL. Not one word upon the subject is recorded by any of the four evangelists who gave His life and doctrines to the world. Yet slavery was in full existence at the time, throughout Judea;—and the Roman empire, according to the historian Gibbon, contained sixty millions of slaves on the lowest probable computation! How prosperous and united would our globe be at this hour, if the eloquent and pertinacious declaimers against slavery had been willing to follow their Savior's example!

But did not our Lord substantially repeal the old law, by the mere fact that he established a new dispensation? Certainly not, unless they were incompatible. And that

he did not consider them incompatible is clearly proved by his own express declaration. "Think not," saith he, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."—(Matt. 5: 17.) On that point, therefore, this single passage is perfectly conclusive.

It is said by some, however, that the great principle of the Gospel, love to God and love to man, necessarily involved the condemnation of slavery. Yet how should it have any such result, when we remember that this was no new principle, but, on the contrary, was laid down by the Deity to his own chosen people, and was quoted from the Old Testament by the Savior himself? And why should slavery be thought inconsistent with it? In the relation of master and slave we are assured by our Southern brethren that there is incomparably more mutual love than can ever be found between the employer and the hireling. And I can readily believe it, for the very reason that it is a relation for life, and the parties, when rightly disposed, must therefore feel a far stronger and deeper interest in each other.

The next evidence which proves that the Mosaic law was not held to be inconsistent with the Gospel occurs in the statement of the apostles to St. Paul, made some twenty years, at least, after the establishment of the first Christian church in Jerusalem. "Thou seest, brother," said they, "how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous of the law." (Acts 21: 20.) How could this have been possible, if the law was supposed to be abolished by the new dispensation?

But the precepts and the conduct of St. Paul himself, the great apostle of the Gentiles, are all sufficient, because he meets the very point, and settles the whole question. Thus he saith to the Ephesians: "Servants (in the original Greek, bond servants or slaves) be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your hearts, as unto Christ. Not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there any respect of persons with him."—(Eph. 6: 5-6)

Again, to the Colossians, St. Paul repeats the same commandments. "Servants, (that is, bond servants or slaves) obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God."—(Col. 3: 22) "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Col. 4: 1)

Again the same inspired teacher lays down the law in very strong terms, to Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke," (that is, the yoke of bondage) "count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. Every man teach otherwise, as a whole-som words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." [1 Tim 6: 1-8]

Lastly, St. Paul, in his Epistle to Philemon, informs him that he had sent back his fugitive slave, whom the apostle had converted to the Christian faith during his imprisonment, asking the master to forgive and receive his penitent disciple. "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus," saith he, "whom I have begotten in my bonds, which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me, whom I have sent again; thou therefore receive that is mine own bowels, whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. But without thy mind would I do as nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him forever, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If thou countest me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee or oweeth thee ought, put that on mine account. I will repay it; albeit I do not own him. I will repay it; albeit I do not own his soul besides." [Ep. to Philemon 5: 10-19]

The evidence of the New Testament is thus complete, plainly proving that the institution of slavery was not abolished by the gospel. Compare now the course of the ultra abolitionist with that of Christ and his inspired apostle. The divine Redeemer openly rebukes the sanctimonious Pharisees, "who made void the law of God by their traditions." He spares not the wealthy, infidel Sadducees. He denounces the hypocritical Scribes, who "loved the uppermost rooms at feasts and to be called of men, Rabbi Rabbi."

He calls the royal Herod "that fox," entirely regardless of the king's displeasure. He censures severely the Jewish practice of divorcing their wives for the slightest cause, and vindicates the original sanctity of marriage. He tells the deluded crowd of his enemies that they are "the children of the devil, and that the lusts of their fathers they would do." He makes a scourge of small cords, and drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple. And while he thus rebukes the sins of all around him, and speaks with divine authority, he proclaims himself the special friend and patron of the poor—preaches to them his blessed doctrine, on the mountain, by the seaside, or in the public streets, under the open canopy of heaven—heals their diseases, partakes of their humble fare, and passing by the rich and great, he chooses his apostles from the ranks of the publicans and the fishermen of Galilee. Yet he lived in the midst of slavery, maintained over the old heathen races, in accordance with the Mosaic law, and uttered not one word against it! What proof can be stronger than this, that he did not regard it as a sin or a moral evil? And what contrast can be more manifest than this example of Christ on the one hand, and the loud and bitter denunciations of our anti-slavery preachers and politicians, calling themselves Christians, on the other? For they not only set themselves against the Word of God in this matter, condemning slavery as the "monster sin," the "sum of all villainies," but—strange to say they do it in the very name of that Saviour whose whole line of conduct was the very opposite of their own!

Look next at the contrast afforded by the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles. He preaches to the slave, and tells him to be obedient to his Master for Christ's sake, faithful and submissive, as a main branch of religious duty. He preaches to the master and tells him to be just and equal to his slave, knowing that his Master is in heaven. He finds a fugitive slave, and converts him to the Gospel, and then sends him back again to his old home, with a letter of kind recommendation. Why does St. Paul act thus? why does he not counsel the fugitive to claim his right to freedom and defend that right, if necessary by the strong hand of violence, even unto death? Why does he not write to his disciple, Philemon and rebuke him for the awful sin of holding a fellow-man in bondage, and charge it upon him, as a solemn duty, to emancipate his slaves, at the peril of his soul.

The answer is very plain. St. Paul was inspired, and knew the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was only intent on obeying it. And who are we, that in our modern wisdom presume to set aside the Word of God, and scorn the example of the divine Redeemer, and spurn the preaching and the conduct of the apostles, and invent for ourselves a "higher law" than those holy Scriptures which are given to us as "a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths," in the darkness of a sinful and polluted world, and reward as duty? Who are we, that are ready to trample on the doctrine of the Bible, and tear to shreds the Constitution of our country and even plunge the land into the untold horrors of civil war, and yet boldly pray to the God of Israel to bless our very acts of rebellion against his own sovereign authority? Woe to our Union when the blind become the leaders of the blind! Woe to the man who dares to "strive against his Maker!"

Yet I do not mean to charge the numerous and respectable friends of this popular delusion with a willful or conscious opposition to the truth. They are seduced, doubtless, in the great majority of cases, by the feelings of a false philanthropy, which palliates, if it can not excuse, their dangerous error. Living far away from the Southern States, with no practical experience of the institution, and accustomed, from their childhood, to attach an inordinate value to their personal liberty, they are naturally disposed to compassionate the negro race, and to believe that the slave must be supremely wretched in his bondage. They are under no special inducement to "search the Scriptures" on this particular subject, nor are they, in general, I am sorry to say, accustomed to study the Bible so thoroughly as they read the newspapers, the novel and the magazine. There they find many revolting pictures of slavery, and they do not pause to ask the question whether they are just and faithful. Perhaps a fugitive comes along who has fled from his master, and who in justification of himself, will usually give a very distorted statement of the facts, even if he does not invent them altogether. And these good and kind-hearted people believe it all implicitly, without ever remembering the rule about hearing both sides before we form our opinion.

[Concluded next week.]