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DOES THE BIBLE SANCTION SLAVERY?

We must first settle the meaning of the term *slavery*. "A slave," says the law of Louisiana, "is one who is in the power of the master to whom he *belongs*. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labor: *he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master.*" "He is a *chattel personal*," says the law of South Carolina, "*to all intents, constructions, and purposes, whatsoever.*" It may be added, that he came into this relation (the relation of a *thing* to an owner) without any fault or consent of his own. This definition of slavery, furnished by law, is a true description of it in fact. This, then, is what we mean by *slavery*, the being held in the relation of a mere *thing* to some man. This is the American meaning of the word. And it is in regard to this meaning that we inquire whether the Bible sanctions it.

In that comprehensive summary of Bible doctrine called the Ten Commandments, the *right of property* is recognised and guarded by the prohibition, "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL." This prohibition is of universal application, meaning thou shalt not steal from any body; therefore it presupposes in every man a right to use the products of his own labor, and much more the limbs with which he labors, as he pleases. No man is allowed to take from another his property without his consent. The word *steal* covers the whole ground of *fraud*, whether secret or open. Now, it is no matter whether you call slaveholding, as above defined, stealing, or not. It is at war with the doctrine of the eighth commandment, because it destroys in the slave the *right of property*, which the commandment sacredly guards. It does, by one comprehensive and perpetual process, all which that commandment solemnly prohibits. There is no doubt that I violate the eighth commandment, if, meeting a man upon the highway, I order him to stand and deliver,—if I take his watch and his purse. But those things are perhaps the avails, over and above his food and clothing, of a year's labor. Should I have done less violence to the commandment, if I had met the same man a year sooner, and compelled him to work a year on my farm, feeding and clothing him, to be sure, but taking all the profits? Should I have done less, if I had compelled him to work for life? Should I have done less, if, instead of seizing the man, I had seized his mother before his birth, compelled her to work for me, and laid the claim of absolute ownership to her child?

soon as it was born? Surely not. There would be little use of the eighth commandment, if men could get round it so conveniently. But whether slaveholding be profitable or not, it violates the prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal," inasmuch as it sets utterly aside the right which the prohibition was designed to guard.

Before we go any further, then, it may be remarked, that IF the Bible sanctions slavery, the Bible is totally inconsistent with itself, and consequently is unworthy of any respect. So, if our inquiry turns out in favor of slavery, it is the Bible that must fall, and not the rights of human nature.

Now, says the slaveholder, slavery was recognised in the very ten commandments from which you have quoted. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's *man-servant*, nor his *maid-servant*, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." Here, continues the slaveholder, the man-servant and the maid-servant are spoken of as *belonging* to the neighbor, just as much as the ox or the ass. Let us look at this argument. The slaveholder assumes that the servants are here put upon the same relation to their master as his ox or his ass. But the commandment first says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant," &c. On the slaveholder's argument, the *wife* too is placed in the same relation to her husband as his house, or his ox, or his ass. This is proving a little more than even a slaveholder would wish. But if the relation of the wife to her husband is not the same as that of an ox to its owner, it follows that the relation of the servant to his master *may not be* the same. The argument proves too much to be good for any thing.

If *servant* necessarily meant *slave*, we might possibly be driven to grant that the very prohibition against *coveting* a man's property, is a good warrant for *taking* the man, property, and all. But as there is no necessity of understanding servant to mean *slave*, and as it is no more than fair to allow, while we may, that the tenth commandment is not a piece of nonsense, we must be permitted to wonder that a *slaveholder* should dare to meddle with it. THOU SHALT NOT COVET ANY THING THAT IS THY NEIGHBOR'S. How, then, canst thou pretend to be the *owner* of thy neighbor himself? How canst thou say that thy neighbor can "possess nothing, nor acquire any thing," but what must be thine? "Thou shalt not covet," cries the preacher, and at the same moment he holds several of his neighbors as mere "*chattels personal*," under an overseer whose business it is to get out of them as much work as he can, *without paying for it*. Every hour of the slave's labor is coveted, every blow he strikes is coveted; if it were not so, he would be free. Here, then, we take our stand on the tenth commandment; it cuts up the whole system of American slavery, branch and root; it digs under, and turns out of the soil, the whole thing. The slaveholder violates no positive commandment, it is said. Nay, he violates the tenth commandment, from one end of it to the other; and more than violates it, for he not only covets his neighbor's property, all that is his, but he covets all that he *may or can have*—he covets the man himself, and *puts his covetousness thoroughly in practice*. There is but one road which leads to slaveholding, and

that is the road of *covetousness*. The Bible forbids a single step in that road. How, then, did the slaveholder get to the end of it without violating the commandment?

But again, suppose for the sake of the argument that the manservant and the maid-servant were slaves in the Carolina sense of the word. Does it follow, because I may not *covet* George McDuffie's slaves, that he has a right to hold them? Or, does it follow from the fourth commandment, that because George McDuffie has no right to make his slaves work on the sabbath, he *has* a right to drive them to his cotton fields every other day in the week? No such thing. No matter whether the people to whom the Decalogue was addressed *did* have slaves or not, both the eighth and the tenth commandments settle the question that they *ought not to have had them*. They were solemnly prohibited from taking a step *towards* having them.

So far as the cause of immediate emancipation is concerned, we might rest the case here. After getting the command, Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of a certain tree, we see no need of waiting for another command, Thou shalt not eat a bushel of that fruit; nor of ransacking the sacred pages to find a permission directly to the contrary. But as slaveholders will have it that slavery is a divine ordinance, for *the Bible's sake* we will endeavor to find what ground they have to stand on. We will endeavor to find where it is that the charter of the world's liberties makes merchandise of men,—in what part of the tidings of “peace on earth and good-will to men,” it is, that some men are made the property of others.

THE CURSE OF NOAH.

And Noah said, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” Gen. ix, 25.

Slaveholders must perform two impossibilities before they can get any authority for their deeds from this text.

1. They must prove that this passage is a command, or at least a permission to enslave the descendants of Canaan, and not a mere prophecy that they would be enslaved. For a mere prophecy would no more justify them, than the abundant prophecies of Christ's death justified his murderers.

2. They must prove that the very people they hold as slaves are the *bonâ fide* descendants of Canaan. It will not do to say that they are probably descended from Ham the father of Canaan. Ham had three sons besides Canaan; viz., Cush, Misraim, and Phut. And we are not told that either of these or their father was placed under the curse. If the slaveholders must needs be the executioners of the divine sentence upon the devoted descendants of Canaan, let them see to it that they do not get hold of the wrong victims. The sheriff who hangs a man not named in his warrant, becomes a murderer. There are surely ten chances to one that the southern slaves are Cushites and not Canaanites; but, if they were Canaanites, how do their oppressors know that the curse has not spent its force? One would think from the scripture history, that the punishment of the wretched Canaanites did not lack much of being complete some scores of centuries ago.

Patriarchal Servitude.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had servants born in their houses, and bought with their money.

It would be difficult, however, to show that their conduct in this matter is commended to us as an example, any more than their having a plurality of wives. But suppose it an example. What is it? They had *servants*, and their having a great many went to show their riches. Some of their servants were bought with their money, and some were born with them. But were any of them *slaves*? Yes, the slaveholder will say, if they were *bought*. We say, no. This will depend upon the questions, who was the seller, and what were the conditions of the *sale*. It may have been that the persons bought were *parties to the bargain*, and instead of selling the absolute ownership of their lives and limbs, they only stipulated to perform certain *services*. It is impossible for the slaveholder to prove that this was *not* the case, while there are several reasons why we may fairly presume it was.

1. The fact that in those primitive times it was customary for a man, who was become poor, to sell himself as the servant of some rich man. See Leviticus xxv, 47, and Genesis xlvii, 19. The phrase, to sell one's self, is common in Scripture. See 2 Kings xvii, 17; Isa. l, 1, and lii, 3.

2. From the occupation and mode of life of the patriarchs, their servants could have been of no value at all to them, unless they acted *voluntarily*. It is difficult to see how wandering shepherds, whose slaves, if we must call them such, were employed in tending their flocks, could have prevented any one from escaping when he pleased, or have recovered any one after his escape. Think of the awkwardness of setting a driver, with his slave-whip, to drive a parcel of slaves *to look after his master's cattle*, as they browse over the hills.

3. We read in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, that Abraham *armed* 318 of his trained servants, and led them out on a military adventure. Such a procedure would be madness on the part of a southern slaveholder. It shows that Abraham's servants were not slaves whom he held against their will, but rather the free subjects of a liberal prince.

Again, the mere act of buying a man with money does not make him a slave. Men are sometimes bought for the very purpose of setting them *free*. I may buy a man with the expectation of receiving in his services a compensation for the purchase money, and yet lay no claim of property to the man, and pretend to no right to sell him, or to dispose of his person and his labor. A man may sell himself as a servant for life, it being understood that in rendering such service he is ever to be voluntary. But it is absurd to suppose that a man should sell himself to be a *personal chattel*, like the American slave; for in that case the very price received by him at once becomes his master's. When, therefore, we read of the patriarchs buying men with money, and of men selling themselves for money, we are called upon to believe nothing more than that the parties bargained together, the one party paying money, and the other service—we surely are not called upon

to believe that either party annihilated itself or bargained itself into a nullity, as the servant must have done if he became a slave.

As to the servants who were born in the families of the patriarchs, they could not have been born to a worse condition than that into which their parents had sold themselves—viz., a condition of voluntary service.

What likeness any mortal can discover between Abraham as a master of servants, and one of our southern planters as the owner of his *gang*, it is utterly beyond our power to imagine. Whoever thinks it would have comported with the character of the father of the faithful to encourage kidnappers and land-pirates by buying their booty, or that it would have become his sanctity and heavenly-mindedness to steal and enslave poor unoffending men and women with his own hands, must enjoy his opinions alone, so far as we are concerned.

We affirm that patriarchal servitude was perfectly *voluntary*, and challenge proof to the contrary. The burden of proof justly lies on those who hold as good authority an example, which, according to their interpretation of it, was openly at war with the moral law of God.

THE MOSAIC BOND SERVICE.

“Both thy bondmen and thy 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 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 for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession: they shall be your bondmen for ever.”
LEVIT. XXV, 44—46.

This means a great deal more to the ear of an American slaveholder than it ever meant to the ear of a Hebrew. The former supposes bondmen and bondmaids to have been men and women *slaves*. He supposes these bondmen might be sold by their masters, that they could “possess nothing, nor acquire any thing,” but what would belong to their masters. He supposes they were *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners. In all these suppositions he is mistaken, for the following reasons:

1. There is a total want of proof that they could be sold or alienated in any way.

2. These bondmen and bondmaids could not have been *stolen* men and women, because man-stealing was a capital crime by the law of Moses. “He that *stealeth* a man and *selleth* him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” Ex. xxi, 16. This law was of universal application to both Hebrews and heathen, and it is very important to study its bearing. When Moses gave the law, there were of course no bondmen in Israel. The question is, how there could come to be any, according to law. An Israelite might buy a heathen if he had the money; but who should *sell* him? No Israelite or sojourner could take or *steal* a heathen for the market. No heathen from abroad could bring *stolen* heathen into Israel for sale. Nor would it do to go abroad and buy a man who was *stolen*. There could be no legal

bargain for a bondman, except in the one case where the seller and the sold were the same identical party. In other words, the Israelites could not *buy*, unless the sojourner or the heathen should *sell himself*. But if he sold himself, he must retain his rights as a party, otherwise the sale would be but a trick—man-stealing under another name.


But if the purchased bondmen and bondmaids were not slaves, what were they? In what condition did they serve? We answer, they were people, who, for a valuable consideration, bound themselves to obey all lawful commands of a master till the year of Jubilee, if they should live to see it. Their bodies and souls, and their offspring, were their own; their service was their master's; and to this extent they were his possession, and might be handed down to his children.

But were they not to be "bondmen *for ever*?" Does not this mean that they were to serve for life, and their children after them, from generation to generation? Certainly not. The law of the Jubilee was express and universal.* "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land TO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF." The clause, "and they shall be your bondmen forever," must be interpreted in consistency with this law of Jubilee. If we look again attentively at the whole verse, we shall see that the heathen are distinguished, in regard to bond service, from the Israelites; so that the sense is, your servants shall always be of the heathen, but over your own brethren, the Israelites, ye shall not exercise such authority. Why God made this distinction between the Israelites and the heathen, it may not be necessary for us here to inquire; it is sufficient to know that the law did not allow the infringement of any man's rights—it did not tolerate the slavery of even a heathen.

But some one may ask, did not the Israelitish master, under the law, have power to beat and bruise, to flog and maul, his bond servant? Does not the law say, that if the master smite his servant so as to kill him, but not within a day or two, he shall not be punished, "for he (the servant) is his money?" So it does. But this surely does not confer upon the master the *right* to beat with the rod. It only presupposes that he *might do so*, and points out the law of evidence by which he should be judged. The facts, that the servant was worth money to the master, and that he continued a day or two, were evidence that the master did not *design* to kill him.

But, let us interpret the permission to buy bondmen as we will, there was another provision of the law which made it absolutely impossible to hold bondmen as slaves. Such a provision of law, if proclaimed now in these United States, in the ears of bond and free, would put an end to slavery almost as soon as an act of universal, immediate abolition. If it had been the law of the land from the first, slavery would never have existed. What would our slaveholders say of an act of congress, giving to slaves universally permission to run away; or, what is the same thing, forbidding the delivering up of any fugitive? They would call it the destruction of their peculiar property, and very justly. Yet, when they quote the passage in Leviti-

* The fact is manifestly recognised by the Saviour, when he says, John viii, 36, "The servant abideth not in the house *for ever*, but the son abideth ever."

cus as a divine permission of slavery—the sacred ordinance thereof—they are sure to forget that there is in Deuteronomy precisely such a law as we have described—a law which protected every fugitive *in remaining in the place which he chose*. You may buy, says the divine law, as many bondmen of the heathen as you please; but remember, you buy them under the following law:  "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. xxiii, 15, 16. Talk about property in human flesh under such a law! Could language more jealously guard the LIBERTY of the servant? If we are led to wonder why the divine law should thus disregard the claim of the master, who had paid his money, and might be able to show before the elders of the city to which his servant had escaped, that the said servant owed him service or labor, we can have full explanation in the fact that the Hebrews were to be kept in mind of their own servitude in the land of Egypt. "Thou shalt not oppress a *stranger*: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Ex. xxiii, 9. "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a *bondman* in the land of Egypt," &c. (DEUT. xv, 15—xvi, 12—xxiv, 18, 22, and many other places.) Hence the divine law took the very fact of a bondman's fleeing as good evidence against the master's claim, and allowed him to offer no proof, nor enter into any proceedings whatever, for his recovery. O how we wish this humane, this Godlike law, were the statute law of our land! But let slaveholders and their abettors remember, that in the court of conscience it is law yet. Its principle and moral force has never been annulled.

How, then, stands the matter of Mosaic bondservice? Thus: the liberty of every poor man, Hebrew or heathen, is guarded by the sword of Jehovah, before and behind. The permission to *buy* bondservants *stands between* two effectual safeguards of inalienable rights.

1. The law awarded *death* to the man who sold another without his consent.

2. It shielded any and every fugitive from the possibility of an involuntary recovery.

And all this was not enough. Lest, even under these safeguards, the rich should take too great advantage of the poor, and forget that God has made men equal, every fiftieth year proclaimed LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND TO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF.

Hallelujah to the God of the Bible! We ask no better act of abolition than this.

* It is objected by some commentators that this law applied only to foreign servants escaping into Israel. But, in the first place, the comment is wholly gratuitous, and, in the second, if Israel had given this protection to foreign slaves, foreign masters would have taken good care to accommodate fugitive Israelites.

THE PROPHETS.

“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; *that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work*;—did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.” JER. xxii, 13—16.

Jeremiah was called an incendiary in his own day, and thrust into a filthy dungeon, from which he was relieved by the kindness of a certain negro, named Ebedmelech. He was not a man to flatter oppressors, and we might quote many more passages from his writings, which we presume are never preached from in southern pulpits. His *‘woe’* rests upon every slaveholder. Yet his prophecy is to be found within the lids of the Bible.

But Jeremiah is not the only anti-slavery prophet. Isaiah, the son of Amoz, wrote very severe things against slaveholders. Indeed, he “lifted up his voice like a trumpet” on the very subject of immediate emancipation. For there were in his time a set of people who made great pretensions to *piety*, put on long, sanctified faces, fasted and afflicted their souls religiously, but in the midst of it all *exacted* the labor of the poor, and made great use of the “fast of wickedness.” Isaiah plainly tells them what sort of fasting would be more acceptable to the Lord. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and *to let the oppressed go free*, and that ye **BREAK EVERY YOKE?**” Some learned divines of our day tell us that this does not refer to the yoke of slavery, but to the oppression of poor debtors. Very well. Our argument is much obliged to the reverend doctors. The crime, then, of the sanctimonious aristocrats whom the prophet here rebukes, was that of rigorously exacting labor of their poor debtors. This was the yoke they were to break. What would he not have said if they had been guilty of exacting labor with the cart-whip of those who owed them not a penny? Ah! would he have hushed his voice and spared his crying aloud, if every sixth man in Israel had been reduced, without either crime or debt, to the condition of a chattel—a brute beast? Our slaveholders make as much show of piety, but their oppression is tenfold more cruel, and of course the language of the prophet applies to them with tenfold force.

This is only a sample of the language of the prophets. No man can read a tittle of their generous and indignant denunciations of oppression of all sorts, and believe that the Bible sanctions the mean,

piratical, abominable system of property in human flesh. We hasten to say a few words of

CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” *Matt. vii, 12.*

Ingenuous slaveholders (for there are such) are often troubled with this divine interpretation of the “law and the prophets.” And well they may be. None so careful as slaveholders to exact of others due deference to their rights;—“the loudest yelps for LIBERTY” are from the drivers of negroes, and their consciences may well ask them, in view of Christ’s rule, Why don’t you extend to others what you are so ready to require of them?

CHRIST. Are you willing men should hold you in bondage, as mere merchandise?

SLAVEHOLDERS. No. We would die first.

CHRIST. Then release your slaves instantly.

This is the whole of the matter, as it stands between Christ and slaveholders. Now see how they writhe on the point of the divine argument. They say, to be sure, we ought to do to our slaves what we, in a change of circumstances, should wish them to do to us; *consistently with the relation existing between us.** A pretty way to beg the question! The very point to be considered is, whether the *relation* itself is consistent with the Saviour’s rule.—Do to others as you would be done by. Would you think it right for another, under any pretences, to place himself in the relation of an *owner* to you? No. Then why do so to him? “Oh,” says Professor Dew,† “the benevolence of the Omnipotent has made the mind of man pliant and susceptible of happiness in almost every situation and employment.” Hence, he infers, we should not judge the slaves by ourselves. They may be much happier than we are. This is the same logic that the tender-hearted fishmonger applied to his eels, which suffered less when *skinned alive*, because they were *used to it*. The slaves have become accustomed to the yoke, and it is no longer an inconvenience to their necks, though with our habits and feelings we would rather die than wear it. Thus do some slaveholders get along with the Saviour’s rule, break it all to pieces, and do as they like.

Others acknowledge that in the abstract the rule forbids slavery, but then, why did not Christ and his apostles so apply it? Slavery

* See Rev. Dr. Furman’s Exposition of the Views of the Baptists of S. C.

† Anti-Slavery Record, Vol. I, p. 47

existed in their days, yet they never once said it was opposed to the "law and the prophets." They did not "preach up an abolition crusade." Well, suppose they did not. Here are the "law and the prophets," which speak for themselves. The rule is as clear as the multiplication table. I might as well say, To be sure, by the multiplication table, applied to the question, the interest on a thousand dollars for one year, at six per cent., is sixty dollars; *but* the inventor of the table made no such application, although there were dollars and interest in his day as well as ours,—therefore I'll not believe in interest! But how do we *know* that Christ did not apply his rule to the slaveholders of his day? Why, because it is not written in his history. Well, is every thing that he did recorded there? No. St. John says, if it had been, the world itself could not have contained the books! Hence the wisdom of applying the general principles of the Saviour only where we *know* that He applied them. Let us put the compass He has left us in our pockets, and go only where we can see the wake of His boat on the waters, and His foot-prints on the sand!

But the testimony of the New Testament against slavery, as it now exists, is not confined to its pure and philanthropic general principles. Paul classes *men-stealers* with the vilest of criminals.* The word he uses is *andrapodistai*, literally *enslavers, man-merchants*. It designates all those who are guilty of bringing their fellow-men into, or retaining them in the condition of *andrapoda*—slaves. Here the apostle strikes at the foundation of American slavery, as a system of *man-merchandise*. He classes all who take part in it with murderers, whoremongers, liars, and perjured persons. Let it not be said that he elsewhere speaks of masters as "worthy of all honours," &c. These masters he calls *despotai* or *kurioi*, and the servants *douloi* or *oiketai*, words which every Greek scholar knows to be perfectly general, and to include masters and servants, who stand on a perfect equality of rights, as well as others. Before slaveholders can claim that they were favorably noticed by the apostle, they must prove that he noticed them at all, except under the epithet "*men-stealers*." In all that he has said about *despotai* and *kurioi*, he *may* have referred only to those who were the masters of voluntary servants. He certainly did not refer particularly to slaveholders; whereas, the word *andrapodistai* refers exclusively to them. American slaveholders are all **ANDRAPODISTS**, and their poor slaves are emphatically **ANDRAPODES—men trampled under foot—down-trodden**.

* 1 Tim. i, 10.

Again, the apostle James denounces expressly those who withhold the *HIRE* of the laborer. "Behold, the *hire* of the laborers who have ~~reaped~~ ^{ploughed and sown} your fields, which is of you kept back, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." JAMES V, 4. What could be more pointedly and expressly aimed at slaveholders? They keep back the *hire* by system. The profits of labor belong of right to the laborer. The slaveholder takes the whole to himself. No matter how great the demand for labor, the slave reaps from it only loss, and stripes, and tears. He is driven the harder, and fares no better. The prosperity of his master is woe to him. The riches of the whole South is built on the *hire* of the laborer, **KEPT BACK!**

Again, Paul says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi, 10), "Be not deceived,—neither thieves nor covetous,—nor *extortioners*,—shall inherit the kingdom of God." Here are three classes of violators of their neighbors' rights. The latter epithet designates those who *force* others to contribute to their wealth. It will be applicable to slaveholders so long as slavery is a system of *compulsory* labor.

But our opponents will tell us that all servants are commanded to obey their masters, no exception being made of slaves. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor,"—i. e. *respect—observance—why?* Mark the reason which the apostle assigns, "*that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*"* The apostle nowhere enjoins obedience to masters because they have a *right* to it, as parents have to that of their children. The very reason here assigned implies that they *might* not have. Christian servants were to submit to extortion for the *gospel's sake*.

But were there not "*believing* masters," who held servants "under the yoke?" Doubtless masters were converted who *had* held servants in that manner. But as believing masters, they could do so no longer. They must now "give unto their servants that which is *just and equal.*" Servants are exhorted not to "despise," that is, to continue in the service of such masters, not, surely, because the "*yoke*" was a righteous one, but because the brotherhood of the gospel had broken it.

What does Paul say to Philemon in the case of Onesimus? "Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to *enjoin* thee that which is convenient,"—i. e., *right*, or *just*,—"yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee," &c. And what did he beseech? Why, that Philemon should receive Onesimus, "not now as a *servant*, but above

* 1 Tim. vi, 1

a servant, a *brother* beloved,—both in the *flesh* and in the Lord.” And Paul further says to Philemon, “having confidence in thy *obedience*, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.” Does this look like sanctioning *Philemon's property* in Onecimus?

Oh! it is a foul slander to say that the Bible, either by its words or its silence, sanctions holding men as merchandise. It is blasphemy against the blessed Saviour, who came to “preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised,” to say that he lends his sanction to the chains of a merciless personal bondage.
