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Daily Appeal.

SLAVERY IN THE METHODIST CHURCH.

THE REPORTS TO THE N. E. CONFERENCE SITTING AT BUFFALO.

MAJORITY COMMITTEE REPORT.

The committee on slavery offer the following report:

[After an exordium of general remarks the report proceeds:]

The opinions of our revered founder need not be recounted here. Imbibing in larger measure than was common in his day the spirit of His whose sympathies gush forth as an ever-lasting fountain toward the poor and oppressed, Mr. Wesley uttered a testimony against slavery, innumerable in its only sense.

Hingeonins sons to the gospel have followed his example. The conference of 1780 declared slavery to be "contrary to the laws of God, man and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not that others should do unto us."

The general conference of 1784 declared the practice of slaveholding to be "contrary to the golden law of God, and contrary to the inalienable rights of mankind, as well as to every principle of the revolution." The conference say "We think it our bounden duty, therefore, to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us; and for that purpose we add the following to the rules of our society."

Then followed a plan of emancipation, specifying the age at which everybody held in slavery should be free; and declaring that no person thereafter being slaves should be admitted into the society of the Lord's supper till he had previously complied with these rules concerning slavery. A note followed these stringent measures, declaring that these were to effect the members no further than they were consistent with the laws of the States in which they resided; and also in view of peculiar circumstances, giving the members in Virginia two years in which to comply with these regulations. As these measures were admitted to constitute a new term of membership all persons were allowed to choose between voluntarily retiring and being expelled.

About six months after, it was thought best to suspend, for the time, the execution of these rules, and give the members a longer time before the months should be enforced. The suspension proved to be indefinite, but immediately following the suspension is the declaration, "We do hold in the deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery, and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means." In 1796 the General Rule read, "The buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women and children, with an intention to enslave them." In 1799 it read, "The buying or selling of souls, women and children, with an intention to enslave them." From 1796 until now the rule has read as at present, save knowing how the as-rule to be substituted by AND

For seventy-six years the question at the head of our present chapter on slavery has remained substantially what it now is: "What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" During all this period, and more, there has no day intervened in which our church has not testified against slavery as a great evil, and one whose extirpation is to be sought by all lawful and Christian means.

But why should we seek any change in our discipline, if it has worked so well?

We answer: 1. Much of our present chapter on slavery has become obsolete by the changed circumstances since its introduction, and the chapter is now in consequence so sufficient answer to the question with which it commenced. Owing to the changes which have taken place in the slave States, the rule in the chapter can have no practical application where we have any considerable membership.

2. Within a comparatively recent period, differences of opinion have sprung up as to the bearing our present general rule has on the subject of slave holding. A few among us have contended that the rule condemns only the African slave trade. Others believe it condemns both the foreign and domestic traffic. Others, that while it condemns the traffic, it thereby legitimates the holding of slaves. And we think by far the larger portion, hold that while the rule in express terms condemns the traffic for a certain purpose, it also by fair implication condemns the holding for the same purpose.

What is the specific thing which the terms of the general rule forbid? Not the bare buying or selling of a human being simply, but the buying or selling with an intention to enslave. What is the meaning of the phrase—"with the intention to enslave them?" The only meaning that can be given is, it means with the intention to continue them in slavery, by continuing to hold and use them as slaves.

Nor has any acknowledged evil been produced by the adoption of good fruits. There is a power in the truth, when faithfully uttered, to influence the conscience of mankind. The testimony which our church has borne has done much toward the formation of a correct public opinion. Under its influence, many thousands of slaves have been set free; and many thousands, who otherwise would have been slaveholders, have refrained; and many thousands more who are still holding slaves, are doing so with consciences ill at ease. But for this testimony, a number of Western States now free, and embracing a vast range of territory, would probably to day be slave states.

It is the realizing by the continued holding and using as slaves, which gives criminality to the buying and selling. As the intention to continue their enslavement is the only sinful element so far as the rule condemns it, the spirit of the rule must condemn the holding and using, as well as the buying and selling. That action which proceeds from a principle to act, and without which the act would not be criminal.

In short there is not, in our judgment, one distinctive attribute of chattel slavery, which is not incompatible with the golden rule.

While we have no sympathy with, and no the other hand strongly condemn, the wild projects of reckless and desperate men, who in defiance of law, seek by violent means either to establish or destroy slavery, we earnestly pray that the time may speedily come when, through the blessed principles of the gospel of peace, slavery shall cease throughout the length and breadth of this fair land.

From the foregoing considerations it appears to us that the general rule should in plain words embody the honest doctrine of the church, as well on the subject of slaveholding as on that of the slave trade. If the rule be for mercenary and selfish purposes should be condemned, so also should be the holding. And if, as is almost universally admitted among us, the spirit of the rule condemns mercenary and selfish slaveholding, then why may we not clothe this spirit in a visible body, and insert it in our book? In our present rule, subject to the same discriminating chance as the buying and selling? Such a rule would read, "The buying, selling, or holding of men, women or children, with an intention to enslave them." This we think is only embodying in plain language the true doctrine of our church on the subject.

Without expressing an opinion here, as to the constitutional right of the general conference to place an official and legal exposition of the general rule in the discipline, without the concurrence of the annual conference, we judge it the more prudent course, that the expositions should be embodied in the rule itself, by a process which will leave no doubt as to its constitutionality.

We therefore recommend for adoption the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, by the delegates of the several annual conferences, in general conference assembled, that we recommend the amendment of the general rule on slavery, so that it shall read: "The buying, selling, or holding of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them."

2. *Resolved*, That we recommend the suspension of the fourth restrictive rule, for the purpose set forth in the foregoing resolution.

3. *Resolved*, By the delegates of the several annual conferences in general conference assembled, that the following shall hereafter be substituted in the place of the present seventh chapter on slavery.

QUESTION—What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?

ANSWER.—We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery. We believe that the buying, selling or holding of human beings as chattels, is incompatible with the golden rule, and that that rule is our discipline which requires all who desire to continue among us, to "do no harm, and to avoid evil of every kind." We therefore, affectionately admonish all our preachers and people to keep themselves pure from this great evil, and to seek its extirpation by all lawful and Christian means.

C. KINGSLEY, Chairman.

B. F. CRARY, Secretary.

REPORT OF THE MINORITY OF THE COMMITTEE.

After a long resume of the history of the Methodist Episcopal church, in relation to the matter of slavery, and a recapitulation of the causes and results of the division of the church in 1844, the minority report proceeds:

During the eight years immediately succeeding the separation, the conference, by her official action and sympathy was faithful to her pledge, to abide by the discipline as it is.

In 1860, the danger of future aggression on the part of the North and East, was distinctly foreshadowed. And between the sessions of the general conference in 1852 and 1856, this application on the question of slavery in the church made its first real development. The papers in those portions of the church began to denounce their brethren on the border, and this so far influenced the popular opinion in the North as to shake its confidence in the ministry of those conferences. *Here was the origin of the outside pressure, which the North now plead, as the only reason, why the discipline should be changed on the subject.*

In the general conference of 1856, the first official effort to change the discipline was made by the minority of the North, unhappily the support of the membership. Out of 790,000 not quite 5,000 petitioned for a change, and most of these were obtained by the personal efforts of preachers. That this first act of aggression was made by the ministry was admitted in 1856,—the reason assigned was, that twenty-nine annual conferences out of thirty-eight, had asked the general conference to make a change in our discipline on the subject of slavery. In obedience to this demand the first committee on slavery for eight years was appointed, and a report presented in accordance with their views. That report presented two propositions—one for a general rule by the constitutional process, to prohibit "the buying, selling, or holding a human being as property;"—the other, for a new chapter, making slaveholding a *prima facie* evidence of guilt, and declaring the man charged with the offense to be guilty until he proved himself innocent. That chapter was laid on the table, and the new rule failed to receive the votes necessary to assent to the annual conferences. The failure of this first effort on the part of the ministry only redoubled their exertions. They have, during the four years just, employed both the pulpit and the press to the almost extent, in preparing the sentiment of the church for action at the present session. This controversy has been marked by most peculiar features, and attended with most deplorable results. Churches in the North have been torn and severed, new and independent societies have been organized, papers in opposition to official organs supported, the friendship of years destroyed, confidence and fraternal affection between the North and the border lost, our preachers mobbed by lawless and pro-slavery men, and bitterness of feeling engendered, until it has become almost impossible for us to remain a united people.

There are now two parties in the church, the one contending for an alteration in our discipline on the subject of slavery, and the other opposed. The question vital to this issue, therefore, is: Which one of these two parties has changed its position? We answer most emphatically, the border has not. The border was truly anti-slavery in 1844; it is as truly so now. It resisted the encroachments of the South then, it resists the encroachments of the South now. It has steadily resisted the South till this present moment, at fearful cost, and with constant conflict. It has resisted pro-slavery assaults in the pulpit, on the platform, and through the press. The border has stood faithfully to the discipline, under the charge of pro-slaveryism from the north and of abolitionism from the South. It has never asked, nor has it anti-slavery; it could not if it would, and would not if it could. The border stands now where it has ever stood, and though pressed sorely by the friends of both extremes, and by the foes it has always resisted, its representatives come to this general conference, asking for no change in the discipline, and willing to abide by it as it is. We have always taught, and still teach, that slaveholding for mercenary and selfish purposes is wrong. But we have never held that the mere fact of owning a slave, when other necessary or material, is sinful. On this principle we have received the slaveholders into the church.

The report proceeds to quote at length from the address of the bishops to the last general conference in 1856 on this subject. That address recites that there are six annual conferences in the church which are wholly, or in part, slave territory; that these conferences have a white church membership of 130,000, and a colored of 27,000, a portion of whom are slaves; that the existence of these conferences and churches does not tend to extend or perpetuate slavery; and that they are organized under the well-known anti-slavery discipline of the M. E. Church, which is emphatic in its requirements of emancipation wherever practicable. The report continues:

This testimony of the bishops in 1856 was corroborated by the delegates from the border, and the committee on slavery appointed at that session, confirmed its truth by the following report, viz:

It is affirmed and believed that the administration of disciplina within the bounds of slave territory have faithfully done all that in their circumstances they have considerably proved to be in their power, to answer the ends of the discipline in exterminating that great evil.

Such is the position of the church on the border, and it is the position held by most of the members of this general conference. Very few, indeed, of the members of this body, hope or wish that slaveholding, wherever it exists, should be suddenly or entirely abolished, nor do they wish it should be made a test of membership. Our view of the subject is sustained by the Scriptures, and also by Mr. Wesley, who received slaveholders into his societies, and is in strict accordance with the instructions given by the Wesleyan connection to their missionaries in Jamaica. Those instructions are in the following words, viz:

"As in the Colonies in which you are called to labor, a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, it is our duty strongly call to your recollection what was so fully stated to you when you were accepted as missionaries to the West Indies, that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition." Who, then, have changed position on the subject? *The border preachers have not.* The change of ground is with those who ask for an altered discipline, a new term of membership.

The report of the minority concludes by making the following points:

1. That the action proposed in the report of the majority has been recommended without proper consideration.

2. That the desire of the church at large for any important change in our rules on the subject of slavery, is not sufficiently indicated in the petitions that have been referred to this committee to demand such action as is set forth in the report of the majority. The whole number of petitioners is less than one in twenty of the entire membership.

The action of the annual conferences does not indicate such a desire for a constitutional change as to call on this general conference to inaugurate an attempt to secure it.

Twenty-nine annual conferences (the majority is the most stirs of all the changes which have been proposed, being nearest to that recommended by the Providence convention.

The form of the change proposed by the majority, will not be considered by the church as embodying sufficient advantages over the present chapter to warrant the risk incurred in striking any change.

The action proposed in the report of the majority will very greatly embarrass, and cripple, if it does not altogether destroy our church in the slave-holding States, and along the border.

The minority still further believes that such a result would involve a loss of position and influence in slave-holding territory.

The action proposed would operate most disastrously upon the interests of the enslaved.

The action which proposes the minority representing the conferences located in non-slaveholding territory, also submit that the action proposed in the report of the majority, would expose our ministerial brethren, and their families, in the border work, to privations and perils.

The testimony of the representatives of the south in this committee, in this committee, proves that the results of the action proposed in the report of the majority, would be highly disastrous in that quarter.

The minority would be the enfeebling of the prestige and moral power of the whole Church, by the strifes and divisions that may ensue.

The minority are not insensible to the fact that an embarrassing pressure produced by misrepresentations of our anti-slavery position is felt in some portions of our work in non-slaveholding territory, but they believe that this may be relieved by a distinct and emphatic testimony on the subject, in a mode which would not hazard the disasters apprehended from the course to which they object. They therefore recommend the adoption of the following

RESOLUTIONS.

1. *Resolved*, That the M. E. Church has, in good faith, in all the periods of its history, opposed to itself the question, "What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" and it has never ceased, openly and before the world, to bear its testimony against the sin, and to exercise its disciplinary powers to the end, that its members might be kept unspotted from criminal connection with the system, and that the evil itself be removed from among us.

2. *Resolved*, That any change of our discipline upon the subject of slavery, in the present highly excited condition of the country, would accomplish no good result, but on the contrary would seriously disturb the peace of our church, and would be especially disastrous to our ministers and members in the slave States.

3. *Resolved*, That the committee on the pastoral address be instructed to state our position in relation to slavery, and to give such counsel to our churches as may be suited to the necessities of the case.

JOHN S. POTTER, Chairman.

P. Cooper, Secretary.

Buffalo, May 26, 1860.

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M. GOLDBERG,

WOULD respectfully call the attention of the Ladies to his extensive stock of

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Also testimonials of the highest character can be shown, testifying to its unequaled virtues. It is made of roots, and is therefore perfectly harmless in its composition, and can be used with the utmost safety by the hair.

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Carriages, Top Buggies, Open Buggies, Hacks, and a large assortment of Trotting Buggies and Harness.

G. A. SMITH.

The Memphis Appeal.

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10	5.50	7.00	8.50	10.00	11.50	13.00	15.00	18.00	20.00	40.00
12	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	14.00	16.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	45.00
15	7.50	10.00	12.50	15.00	17.50	20.00	22.50	25.00	30.00	50.00
20	10.00	13.00	15.00	17.50	20.00	22.50	25.00	30.00	35.00	60.00
25	12.50	15.00	17.50	20.00	22.50	25.00	30.00	35.00	40.00	70.00
30	15.00	17.50	20.00	22.50	25.00	30.00	35.00	40.00	50.00	80.00
35	17.50	20.00	22.50	25.00	30.00	35.00	40.00	50.00	60.00	90.00
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