



***THEODORE
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***THE BIBLE
AGAINST
SLAVERY***

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The Bible Against Slavery

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THE BIBLE AGAINST SLAVERY.

The spirit of slavery never seeks shelter in the Bible, of its own accord. It grasps the horns of the altar only in desperation—rushing from the terror of the avenger's arm. Like other unclean spirits, it "hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest its deeds should be reprov'd." Goaded to phrenzy in its conflicts with conscience and common sense, denied all quarter, and hunted from every covert, it vaults over the sacred inclosure and courses up and down the Bible, "seeking rest, and finding none." THE LAW OF LOVE, glowing on every page, flashes around it an omnipresent anguish and despair. It shrinks from the hated light, and howls under the consuming touch, as demons quailed before the Son of God, and shrieked, "Torment us not." At last, it slinks away under the types of the Mosaic system, and seeks to burrow out of sight among their shadows. Vain hope! Its asylum is its sepulchre; its city of refuge, the city of destruction. It flies from light into the sun; from heat, into devouring fire; and from the voice of God into the thickest of His thunders.

DEFINITION OF SLAVERY.

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If we would know whether the Bible sanctions slavery, we must determine *what slavery is*. A constituent element, is one thing; a relation, another; an appendage, another. Relations and appendages presuppose *other* things to which they belong. To regard them as *the things themselves*, or as constituent parts of them, leads to endless fallacies. A great variety of conditions, relations, and tenures, indispensable to the social state, are confounded with slavery; and thus slaveholding becomes quite harmless, if not virtuous. We will specify some of those.

1. *Privation of suffrage*. Then minors are slaves.
2. *Ineligibility to office*. Then females are slaves.
3. *Taxation without representation*. Then slaveholders in the District of Columbia are slaves.
4. *Privation of one's oath in law*. Then disbelievers in a future retribution are slaves.
5. *Privation of trial by jury*. Then all in France and Germany are slaves.
6. *Being required to support a particular religion*. Then the people of England are slaves. (To the preceding may be added all other disabilities, merely *political*.)
7. *Cruelty and oppression*. Wives, children, and hired domestics are often oppressed; but these forms of cruelty are not slavery.
8. *Apprenticeship*. The rights and duties of master and apprentice are correlative and reciprocal. The *claim* of each upon the other results from his *obligation* to the other. Apprenticeship is based on the principle of equivalent for value received. The rights of the apprentice are secured, equally with those of the master. Indeed, while the law is *just* to the master, it is *benevolent* to the apprentice. Its

main design is rather to benefit the apprentice than the master. It promotes the interests of the former, while in doing it, it guards from injury those of the latter. To the master it secures a mere legal compensation—to the apprentice, both a legal compensation and a virtual gratuity in addition, he being of the two the greatest gainer. The law not only recognizes the *right* of the apprentice to a reward for his labor, but appoints the wages, and enforces the payment. The master's claim covers only the *services* of the apprentice. The apprentice's claim covers *equally* the services of the master. Neither can hold the other as property; but each holds property in the services of the other, and BOTH EQUALLY. Is this slavery?

9. *Filial subordination and parental claims.* Both are nature's dictates and intrinsic elements of the social state; the natural affections which blend parent and child in one, excite each to discharge those offices incidental to the relation, and constitute a shield for mutual protection. The parent's legal claim to the child's services, while a minor, is a slight return for the care and toil of his rearing, to say nothing of outlays for support and education. This provision is, with the mass of mankind, indispensable to the preservation of the family state. The child, in helping his parents, helps himself—increases a common stock, in which he has a share; while his most faithful services do but acknowledge a debt that money cannot cancel.

10. *Bondage for crime.* Must innocence be punished because guilt suffers penalties? True, the criminal works for the government without pay; and well he may. He owes the government. A century's work would not pay its drafts on him. He is a public defaulter, and will die so. Because laws make men pay their debts, shall those be forced to pay who owe nothing? The law makes no criminal, PROPERTY. It restrains his liberty, and makes him pay something, a mere penny in the pound, of his debt to the government; but it does not make him a chattel. Test it. To own property, is to

own its product. Are children born of convicts, government property? Besides, can *property* be guilty? Are chattels punished?

11. *Restraints upon freedom.* Children are restrained by parents—pupils, by teachers—patients, by physicians—corporations, by charters—and legislatures, by constitutions. Embargoes, tariffs, quarantine, and all other laws, keep men from doing as they please. Restraints are the web of society, warp and woof. Are they slavery? then civilized society is a giant slave—a government of LAW, *the climax of slavery*, and its executive, a king among slaveholders.

12. *Compulsory service.* A juryman is empanelled against his will, and sit he must. A sheriff orders his posse; bystanders *must* turn in. Men are *compelled* to remove nuisances, pay fines and taxes, support their families, and "turn to the right as the law directs," however much against their wills. Are they therefore slaves? To confound slavery with involuntary service is absurd. Slavery is a *condition*. The slave's *feelings* toward it, are one thing; the condition itself, is another thing; his feelings cannot alter the nature of that condition. Whether he desires or detests it, the condition remains the same. The slave's willingness to be a slave is no palliation of the slaveholder's guilt. Suppose the slave should think himself a chattel, and consent to be so regarded by others, does that *make* him a chattel, or make those guiltless who *hold* him as such? I may be sick of life, and I tell the assassin so that stabs me; is he any the less a murderer? Does my *consent* to his crime, atone for it? my partnership in his guilt, blot out his part of it? The slave's willingness to be a slave, so far from lessening the guilt of the "owner," aggravates it. If slavery has so palsied his mind that he looks upon himself as a chattel, and consents to be one, actually to hold him as such, falls in with his delusion, and confirms the impious falsehood. These very feelings and convictions of the slave, (if such were possible) increase a hundred fold the guilt of the master, and call upon him in

thunder, immediately to recognize him as a MAN, and thus break the sorcery that cheats him out of his birthright—the consciousness of his worth and destiny.

Many of the foregoing conditions are *appendages* of slavery. But no one, nor all of them together, constitute its intrinsic unchanging element.

We proceed to state affirmatively that, ENSLAVING MEN IS REDUCING THEM TO ARTICLES OF PROPERTY—making free agents, chattels—converting *persons*, into *things*—sinking immortality, into *merchandize*. A *slave* is one held in this condition. In law, "he owns nothing, and can acquire nothing." His right to himself is abrogated. If he say *my* hands, *my* feet, *my* body, *my* mind, MYSELF, they are figures of speech. To *use himself* for his own good, is a CRIME. To keep what he *earns*, is stealing. To take his body into his own keeping, is *insurrection*. In a word, the *profit* of his master is made the END of his being, and he, a *mere means* to that end—a *mere means* to an end into which his interests do not enter, of which they constitute no portion.¹ MAN, sunk to a *thing*! the intrinsic element, the *principle* of slavery; MEN, bartered, leased, mortgaged, bequeathed, invoiced, shipped in cargoes, stored as goods, taken on executions, and knocked off at public outcry! Their *rights*, another's conveniences; their interests, wares on sale; their happiness, a household utensil; their personal inalienable ownership, a serviceable article, or a plaything, as best suits the humor of the hour; their deathless nature, science, social affections, sympathies, hopes—marketable commodities! We repeat it, *the reduction of persons to things*; not robbing a man of privileges, but of *himself*; not loading with burdens, but making him a *beast of burden*; not *restraining* liberty, but subverting it; not curtailing rights, but abolishing them; not inflicting personal cruelty, but annihilating *personality*; not exacting involuntary labor, but sinking him into an *implement* of labor; not abridging

human comforts, but abrogating human nature; not depriving an animal of immunities, but despoiling a rational being of attributes—uncreating a MAN, to make room for a *thing!*

That this is American slavery, is shown by the laws of slave states. Judge Stroud, in his "Sketch of the Laws relating to Slavery," says, "The cardinal principle of slavery, that the slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among *things*—obtains as undoubted law in all of these (the slave) states." The law of South Carolina thus lays down the principle, "Slaves shall be deemed, held, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to ALL INTENTS, CONSTRUCTIONS, AND PURPOSES WHATSOEVER."—Brevard's Digest, 229. In Louisiana, "A slave is one who is in the power of a 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."—Civ. Code of Louisiana, Art. 35.

This is American slavery. The eternal distinction between a person and a thing, trampled under foot—the crowning distinction of all others—alike the source, the test, and the measure of their value—the rational, immortal principle, consecrated by God to universal homage, in a baptism of glory and honor by the gift of His Son, His Spirit, His word, His presence, providence, and power; His shield, and staff, and sheltering wing; His opening heavens, and angels ministering, and chariots of fire, and songs of morning stars, and a great voice in heaven, proclaiming eternal sanctions, and confirming the word with signs following.

Having stated the *principle* of American slavery, we ask, DOES THE BIBLE SANCTION SUCH A PRINCIPLE?² "To the *law* and the *testimony*?" First, the moral law. Just after the Israelites were emancipated from their bondage in Egypt, while they