FACTS
FOR
BAPTIST CHURCHES.
COLLECTED, ARRANGED AND REVIEWED
BY
A. T. FOSS, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE,
AND
E. MATHEWS, OF WISCONSIN.

I have felt very happy this evening, that this poor slave can lie
down and sleep, without that heavy chain.—Ann H. Judson.

UTICA:
PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN BAPTIST FREE MISSION SOCIETY.
ROBERTS & SHERMAN, PRINTERS.
1850.
CHAPTER II.

Correspondence between the English and American Baptists—Disingenuous conduct of the Acting Board in suppressing the English Letter—Providential development of their secret workings—The Letter—The Board's secret reply—An open reply by a Baptist Convention.

Desiring that the reader may clearly understand the bearings of the following correspondence, the compilers, in introducing it, deem it necessary to present a brief description of the parties by whom it was conducted.

The Baptist Union is a body in England composed of members elected by the churches. These representatives elect annually an Executive Committee which performs various duties connected with the interests of the churches, among which is the presenting of an epistle descriptive of their moral and religious progress.

This body holds slavery to be always and everywhere a sin. To use its own words, "Slavery is a sin to be abandoned—not an evil to be mitigated." It had lent its powerful aid to the glorious work of West India emancipation. This body commenced the correspondence. The correspondence on our side of the Atlantic was conducted by the Boston Board of the Triennial Convention, with whose history we shall suppose the reader to be somewhat familiar.

To one feature of this Convention we shall invite special attention. Under its Constitution slaveholders and non-slaveholders united on terms of social and moral equality. This was the fatal error. It caused the Convention, from its birth to its dissolution, to sanction as Christian a slavehold-
ing religion. Observe its operation in the election of Presidents. The first was Richard Furman, a slaveholder of South Carolina. He filled the office till 1830, when another slaveholder, Robert B. Semple of Virginia, succeeded him and was President till 1832, when Spencer H. Cone of New York was elected, who held the office till 1841, when another slaveholder, William B. Johnson of South Carolina, was elected, at the close of whose term of office, 1844, Francis Wayland became President. Thus for twenty-one of the thirty years of the existence of this organization—slaveholders were its Presidents.

While, therefore, the Baptist Union of England, was identified with emancipation, the Boston Board was identified with American slavery.

Slavery in America was bound to slavery in the West India islands by a ligament vital as that which unites the twin Siamese. God, the Supreme Historian, had in those islands wrought out a class of facts, a knowledge of which would nerve the arm of the American churches for a conflict with the slave power, a conflict possibly severe, but inevitable in its results to deliver the enslaved. The hand of the slave power, however, was on the religious press of our land. Respecting West India emancipation, it breathed naught but Israelitish murmurs. An account of the triumph which the truth had achieved was forwarded by the Baptists of England to the Baptist denomination in our country, together with an exhortation urging us to press forward to aid the oppressed. This communication was addressed "To the Pastors and Ministers of the Baptist denomination throughout the United States of America." It was directed to "Rev. Spencer H. Cone, President; the Board of Managers; and the Delegates of the Baptist Triennial Convention." Our English brethren afterwards explained why they employed this superscription. Having read the Constitution of the Triennial Convention, they thought that body would be the most simple and ready medium of access to our churches, mistakenly supposing that its Board had a supervision over all the various benevolent operations of American Baptists. Eld. Howard Malcom, now a slaveholder in Kentucky, was at that time Clerk of the Convention. The letter coming into his hands, we are credibly informed that he carried it to a meeting of the Board, and, as he threw it on the table, exclaimed—*There is a fire-
brand for our churches." That letter was kept latent for several months, during which time it was forwarded to Elds. Cone and Sommers, of New York, and by them returned to the Board. Finally, a Committee, two of whom were Elds. Knowles and Stow, were appointed to prepare a reply. They reported one, written by Eld. Knowles, which was adopted by the Board and forwarded to England, as the dates show, seven months after the letter from our brethren there had been received.

The secrecy of this reply was objectionable as its delay. So careful was the concealment, one of the members of the Board, resident in the city of Salem, was kept in entire ignorance of the transaction. To explain this we will go into particulars.

The Board of Education and that of Missions both held their business meetings in Boston. Elds. Babcock and Grosvenor, then pastors in Salem, and being members of both Boards, agreed for mutual convenience, that the former should attend the meetings of the Mission and the latter those of the Education Board, and that each should inform the other of the proceedings of the Board with which he met.

In the following singular manner, Eld. Grosvenor learned that the Board had made a communication to our English brethren. Opening one day the New York Observer, a paper which he regularly perused, this communication met his eye in its columns. It appears that on reaching the English Baptists it had been published by them, together with

* We copy the following from the Georgetown Herald published in "Scott County, Kentucky, Aug. 15, 1849."

"Georgetown College.

"The Rev. Dr. Malcom, who has presided over Georgetown College for the last nine or ten years, with such distinguished ability, and general satisfaction, felt it his duty to vote for the emancipation candidate, at our election. The storm of disapprobation was so violent, that it was plain he could no longer be of use to the College, and he has resigned his office."

"The office has now been filled, and we fear that the Trustees of the College will find it difficult to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of an officer, so faithful, and so devoted to the interests of the College, as President Malcom has been."

Remarks.—Eld. Malcom is at length able to appreciate the generosity of slaveholding friendship and liberality and the value of that confidence he has so long reposed in the robbers of God's poor. His experience will do him good.
their own letter which had called it forth. By this means it came to the Observer press and its editor, gratified with its pro-slavery spirit, hastened to lay it before his slaveholding subscribers. Until that time, neither that nor the letter of our English brethren had ever been developed through Baptist or other American channels. On gaining this intelligence, Eld. G. immediately wrote to the editor of the "Christian Watchman," requesting its publication in Baptist papers. The editor through his columns replied that, when the request arrived, the letter was already in type; and a fortnight afterwards the letter from our English brethren also appeared in the same paper.

Thus thirteen months elapsed, after the date of the English letter, before the event we have just described took place. The circumstances were published in detail in The Spectator, a periodical then published in Boston.

In commenting on this transaction, we say with the honored Horace Mann, whoever intercepts the light in its progress to the human mind, evinces a willingness to blot out that part of the works of God, which that light reveals. This attempt to keep in ignorance the churches of our country, is without excuse. It betrayed a cold-hearted indifference to the slave. Committed in the postoffice, such an act would expose the Board to a severe legal penalty. It was a result of the union of the Board with slaveholders.

[From the Free Missionary, June, 1845.]

LETTER

FROM THE BOARD OF BAPTIST MINISTERS IN AND NEAR LONDON TO THE PASTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Dear Brethren:—We, the members of the Board of Baptist Ministers in and near London, desire affectionately and with much earnestness, to commend ourselves to your candid and Christian attention. Partaking of the same faith as yourselves, we have long been solicited to cultivate a more intimate and influential intercourse with you, in the hope that we might mutually benefit each other, and extend the kingdom of our common Lord. We have heard, with satisfaction and delight, of the steadfastness of your faith, and of the ardor and activity of your zeal. The tokens of divine favor by which you have been distinguished have awakened our gratitude, and led to earnest and united prayer, that similar blessings might be conferred on ourselves. We have rejoiced in the revivals you have experienced from time to time, and have not forgotten to supplicate for you a continuance and increase of these blessings.

Permit us then, dear brethren, to solicit a candid construction of the
present communication, in which, with all the freedom Christian affection prompts, we express our views respecting the character of negro slavery, and as to the course enjoined by religious principle on the household of faith. You have, doubtless, heard of the circumstances which have recently transpired in connection with our Jamaica Mission. Our beloved brethren, laboring in that island, had frequent occasion to complain of the frequent obstructions which the slave system placed in the way of a faithful and efficient discharge of their ministry. Their character was aspersed, their labors were represented as incompatible with the welfare of the colony, and every means unprincipled men could devise, was employed to frustrate their pious and benevolent purpose. We were not at first aware that the objections urged against our brethren were partially founded in truth. We did, indeed, suppose that Christianity would ultimately effect the extinction of slavery, but had no expectation of this being accomplished until a period comparatively remote. But the opponents of our Missionary brethren clearly saw the tendency of their Christian labors, and the issue to which they must lead. They therefore availed themselves of the slave insurrection of 1832, to commence a malignant and furious persecution of our brethren and their converts. Many of the latter suffered death, whom we deliberately regard as martyrs for Christ; and this would have been the case with some of the former also, but for the signal interposition of the overruling providence of God. Power was given to Satan, and he was permitted for a season, to prevail. Our beloved Missions were thrown into prison as felons, and tried on charges affecting their lives. The churches they had gathered were scattered abroad, and the houses in which they had preached the gospel of peace were razed to the ground. It was openly proclaimed throughout the colony, that slavery could not be maintained, if the Missionaries were allowed to continue their labors. Christianity was represented as inconsistent with the social economy of the island, and its banishment was, therefore, clamorously demanded.

This state of things led us to examine the principles of our past conduct, and to inquire, with much diligence and prayer, what our future course should be. These inquiries issued in a deep conviction of the unchristian and inhuman character of the slave system; and a strong feeling of obligation to put forth all our energies to effect its speedy overthrow. It appeared to us as a sin to be abandoned, and not an evil to be mitigated; a high crime against the Majesty of heaven, for the suppression of which, every believer in Christ was bound sternly and prayerfully to labor.

Influenced by these convictions, we took a decided part in the antislavery struggle lately carried on in this country, and are very thankful that, by doing so, we greatly contributed to its successful termination. The principle we adopted was, the utter repugnance of the colonial system to the spirit and precepts of the Christian faith, and we demurred of our legislature its immediate and entire destruction. Leaving to others the commercial and political bearings of the question, we felt it a sacred duty loudly to denounce negro slavery as a palpable violation of the law of God. The Christian population of Great Britain responded to our appeal as the heart of one man, and their conduct has been sanctioned by the blessing of Heaven.

We have entered into these details, dear brethren, for the purpose of explaining the object of our present communication, and of justifying
ourselves in your esteem. We desire with all Christian love and respect, to solicit your attention to the principles we have adopted, and the line of conduct we have been pursuing. We indulge the hope that you will seriously inquire whether, as the disciples of Jesus Christ, it is not your imperative duty, without delay, to raise your voice against the cruel and degrading bondage in which our African brethren and their descendants are held in various parts of your land.

We understand that the number of slaves in the United States is considerably above two millions, while the system under which they are held is said to be characterized by some features peculiarly revolting and oppressive. But it is not our purpose to enter into details; we wish rather to fix your attention on the system as a whole—its unchristian character, its degrading tendency, the misery it generates, the injustice, cruelty and wretchedness it involves. Is it not an awful breach of the Divine law, a manifest infraction of that social compact which is always and everywhere binding? And if it be so, are you not, as Christians, and especially as Christian ministers, bound to protest against it, and to seek, by all legitimate means, its speedy and entire destruction? You have a high and holy part, dear brethren, to act; and future generations will bless your name, and the God whom you serve will approve your conduct, if you are prompt and diligent in its performance. An opportunity is now offered you of extending the happiness of your species; of raising a degraded class of your population to freedom, intelligence, and virtue; of redeeming yourselves from reproach; and of vindicating the character of your most holy faith.

We conceive that you have only to act in the spirit and with the firmness of Christian principle, and under the Divine blessing, your efforts must succeed. The evil is so monstrous, its opposition to the rights of humanity and to the spirit of the gospel is so palpable, that it needs only to be brought forward to the light of day, to awaken universal abhorrence. Even in this country, where we find various obstructions to the healthful exercise of a religious influence, our efforts were triumphant. Though the evil was at a distance, and a numerous party, formidable by their wealth and talents, was arrayed in its defense, yet as soon as the religious part of the public stood forth against it, the issue of the contest was no longer doubtful. If such were the case with us, we feel assured it would much more certainly be so with you. The communication of thought and feeling among you is represented to us as so free and rapid as to insure your ready access to the public mind: and in what character can you appear more appropriately than as the advocates of the oppressed, the practical imitators of Him who came to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound!

We presume not to proffer advice as to the way in which you may best prosecute the object we commend to your support. This we leave with confidence to your wisdom, contenting ourselves with an affectionate and brotherly representation of the general principle. Neither should we advert to your "Colonization Society," were it not possible that its existence may be urged as superseding the necessity of the course we have ventured to recommend. Let the principles of that Society be as upright, and its tendency as beneficial, as its warmest supporters allege, it should not prevent a more comprehensive and efficient system of operations. "These things," we shall still say, "ye ought to have done, and not have left the other undone." Nothing in our de-
liberate opinion, can satisfy the claims of justice, or fulfill the responsibility of the Christian character, short of the course we have pursued.

And now dear brethren, we leave ourselves and our communication to your candor and charity. We have written as brethren for we rejoice to consider you as such. If we have expressed ourselves freely, it is because we are jealous for your honor; and we heartily invite you to use the same liberty in return. We commend you, and the people of your charge, to the care and blessing of our heavenly Father, and remain your affectionate brethren in the gospel of Christ.

(Signed in behalf of the Board.)

W. H. MURCH, Chairman,
Theological Tutor, Stepney College.

LONDON, Dec. 31, 1833.

[From the London Baptist Magazine, January, 1835.]

SLAVERY IN AMERICA.

A LETTER FROM THE BAPTIST BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS IN AMERICA IN ANSWER TO ONE FROM THE BOARD OF BAPTIST MINISTERS IN AND NEAR LONDON, DATED DECEMBER 31, 1833.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY ROOMS, BOSTON, Sept. 1, 1834.

Dear Brethren:—Your communication, dated London, Dec. 31, 1833, was received some time since, by one of the officers of the Baptist General Convention; but as the Convention to which it was chiefly addressed, will not convene till April, 1835, the communication was, after some delay, presented to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, as the executive organ of the Convention. The Board referred it to a Committee, and we now communicate to you a copy of their report, and of the resolutions adopted by the Board. We commend them to your

*The Committee to whom was referred a communication from "the Members of the Board of Baptist Ministers in and near London," directed to "The Rev. Spencer H. Cone, President; the Board of Managers; and the Delegates of the Baptist Triennial Convention, United States, North America;" addressed "To the Pastors and Ministers of the Baptist Denomination throughout the United States of America;" the principal object of which communication is, to express the views of the writers respecting the character of negro slavery, and as to the course enjoined by religious principle on the household of faith," present the following report:

That they have examined the communication with much care, and have granted the spirit of Christian affection, respect and candor, which it breathes. They receive it as a pleasing omen of a more intimate correspondence, and a more endeared fellowship with our Baptist brethren in Great Britain. The Committee however are of opinion, that, as a Board, and as members of the General Convention, associated for the exclusive purpose of sending the gospel to the heathen, and to other heathenized men not belonging to our own country, we are precluded, by our Constitution, from taking any part in the discussion on the subject proposed in said communication.

They, therefore, recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Board reciprocate, with great pleasure, the assurances of respect and affection, which our brethren, "the Members of the Board of Baptist Ministers in and near London," have uttered in their communication.

Resolved, That the Board earnestly desire a closer intimacy with the Baptist brethren in England, believing that the cause of truth in both countries, and throughout the world, would be promoted by a more cordial union and co-operation of the two great branches of the Baptist family.

Resolved, That the Board have viewed with grief and anxiety, the calamities which have befallen the Baptist Mission in Jamaica; and they rejoice that the Mission has been resumed with cheering prospects of success.
Boston Board’s Reply.

Counselor, with a confident belief that you will do justice to the views and feelings of the Board, encompassed as they are by difficulties which cannot be fully understood by persons in other countries.

It may assist you to form a more correct opinion of the whole subject, if we allude to a few of the circumstances which make slavery in this country a matter of peculiar difficulty, and which, consequently, require those who would promote the real welfare of the colored race, to act with great caution.

In the first place, the political organization of the United States is widely different from that of England; and this difference makes it impossible to adopt here a course similar to that which the British Parliament have adopted in reference to slavery in the West Indies. This country is not one of a state with an unrestricted legislature, but a confederacy of States, united by a Constitution, in which certain powers are granted to the National Government, and all other powers are reserved by the States. Among these reserved powers is the regulation of slavery. Congress have no power to interfere with the slaves in the respective States; and an act of Congress to emancipate the slaves, in those States, would be as wholly null and void, as an act of the British Parliament for the same purpose. The Legislatures of the respective States cannot interfere with the legislation of each other. In some of the States, where laws forbidding emancipation exist, the minority cannot, if disposed, give freedom to their slaves. You perceive, then, that the National Government, and the people of the Northern States, have no power nor right, to adopt any direct measures in reference to the emancipation of the slaves in the Southern States. The slaveholders themselves are the only men who can act definitely on this subject, and the only proper and useful influence which the friends of emancipation in other States can use, consists in argument and entreaty. The existence of our union, and its manifold blessings, depend on a faithful adherence to the principles and spirit of our Constitution, on this, and all other points.

This view of the case exonerates the nation, as such, and the States in which no slaves are found, from the charge of upholding slavery. It is due, moreover, to the Republic, to remember that slavery was introduced into this country long before the colonies became independent States. The slave trade was encouraged by the Government of Great Britain, and slaves were brought into the colonies against the wishes of the colonists, and the repeated acts of some of the colonial Legislatures. These acts were negatived by the King of England; and, in the Declaration of Independence, as originally drawn by Mr. Jefferson, it was stated among the grievances which produced the Revolution, that the King of England had steadily resisted the efforts of the colonies to prevent the introduction of slaves. Soon after the Revolution, several

Resolved, That, while as they trust their love of freedom, and their desire for the happiness of all men, are not less strong and sincere than those of their British brethren, they cannot, as a Board, interfere with a subject that is not among the objects for which the Convention and the Board were formed.

Resolved, That the preceding resolutions be communicated to the "Board of Baptist Ministers in and near London," together with the subjoined letter; to be signed by the acting President, and the corresponding Secretary of the Board.

(Signed)  
DANIEL SHARP,  
First Vice President of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in the United States.  
LUCIUS BOLLES, Cor. Sec.
of the States took measures to free themselves from slavery. In 1787, Congress adopted an act, by which it was provided, that slavery should never be permitted in any of the States to be formed in the immense territory northwest of the Ohio; in which territory the great States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois have since been formed. There are now thirteen out of the twenty-four States, in which slavery may be said to be extinct. Maryland is taking measures to free herself from slavery. Kentucky and Virginia will, it is believed, follow the example. We state these facts to show, that the Republic did not originate slavery here, and that she has done much to remove it altogether from her bosom. She took measures earlier than any other country for the suppression of the slave trade, and she is now zealously laboring to accomplish the entire extinction of that abominable traffic.

Since, then, from the character of our political institutions, the emancipation of the slaves is impossible, except with the free consent of the masters, it is necessary to approach them with calm and affectionate argument. They claim to be better acquainted with the real condition and the true interests of the negro, than other persons can be. Multitudes among them freely lament and acknowledge the evils of slavery, and earnestly desire their removal in some way consistent with the welfare of the slave himself, and with the safety of the whites. Some persons among them, it is true, are not convinced that slavery is wrong in principle; just as many good men in England, half a century since, believed the slave trade to be just and right. Such individuals must be convinced before they will act.

In the next place the number and character of the slaves form an appalling difficulty. It is not believed, by many of the sincere friends of the slave, that their immediate emancipation would be conducive to their own real welfare, or consistent with the safety of the whites. To let them loose without any provision for the young, the feeble, and the aged, would be inhuman cruelty. Slaves who have regarded labor as an irksome task, can have little idea of liberty, except as an exemption from toil. To liberate them, without some arrangement for their subsistence, would produce starvation, or impel them to acts of lawless violence. Emancipation must, therefore, as those friends of the slave contend, be gradual and prospective. The British Parliament have not decreed an immediate emancipation in the West Indies; thus recognizing the principle, that the slaves must be prepared for freedom by moral and intellectual culture. But this preparation must be commenced and conducted by the masters; and they must of course become the willing and zealous friends of emancipation before it can be accomplished.

We have thus shown that the slaves in this country cannot be emancipated except by the free consent of the masters; and that they cannot be prepared for freedom, without the voluntary and energetic co-operation of the masters. For both these reasons it is necessary to adopt a kind and conciliating course of conduct towards the slaveholders. The British Parliament might assume a peremptory tone towards the slaveholders in the West Indies; because the power of Parliament is not restricted like that of the American Congress; and because the situation of slaves in the West Indies renders the preliminary preparation less necessary to the safety of the white population. In the British West Indies the slaves are dispersed among eighteen or twenty islands, where the military and naval power of the mother country might be easily ap-

In the United States, there are now two millions of slaves, spread over a part only of the surface of the Union, with no large military force to overawe them, and no obstacle to a rapid combination of insurgents. We presume that the people in England would think somewhat differently on this subject of emancipation, if the slaves were among themselves, and the perils of this moral volcano were constantly impending over their own heads.

Besides these general considerations, there is one which affects the duty of the Baptist General Convention. There is now a pleasing degree of union among the multiplying thousands of Baptists throughout the land. Brethren from all parts of the country unite in our General Convention, and co-operate in sending the gospel to the heathen. Our Southern brethren are liberal and zealous in the promotion of every holy enterprise for the extension of the gospel. They are, generally, both ministers and people, slaveholders; not because they all think slavery right, but because it was firmly rooted long before they were born, and because they believe slavery cannot be instantly abolished. We are confident that a large portion of our brethren at the South would rejoice to see any practicable scheme devised for relieving the country from slavery.

We have the best evidence that our slaveholding brethren are Christians, sincere followers of the Lord Jesus. In every other part of their conduct, they adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. We cannot, therefore, feel that it is right to use language or adopt measures which might tend to break the ties that unite them to us in our General Convention, and in numerous other benevolent societies; and to array brother against brother, church against church, and association against association in a contest about slavery.

We have presented these considerations, dear brethren, as among the reasons which compel us to believe that it is not the duty of the Baptist General Convention, or of the Board of Missions, to interfere with the subject of slavery. It ought, indeed, to be discussed at all proper times and in all suitable modes. We believe that the progress of public opinion in reference to slavery is very rapid; and we are quite sure that it cannot be accelerated by any interference which our Southern brethren would regard as an invasion of their political rights, or as an impeachment of their Christian character.

Most earnestly praying that the Father of Lights will illumine our path, and guide us to the adoption of such measures as shall advance His glory, and secure the temporal and eternal happiness of all men,

We are, dear brethren,
Your affectionate fellow-servants,
Lucius Bolles, Cor. Sec'y.

Another reply was made to our English brethren. In presenting it to the reader, we invite attention to the difference between its spirit and the response of the Boston Board. Its author, Bro. C. P. Grosvenor, bad, in obedience to the command of Christ, "opened his mouth for the dumb." The acting Editor of the Baptist Magazine, Eld. J. N. Brown,* briefly reviewed an anti-slavery address of

*Now pastor of a slaveholding church in Lexington, Va.
Bro. Grosvenor's, which had then just been published; this review we here insert. It shows how the generous impulses of Eld. Brown's soul were stirred by the tones of liberty. Transitory enjoyment! The "counsels and cautions" given to him checked the uprisings of these ennobling feelings. Under this influence his soul withered. In submission to the dictation of Eld. L. Bolles, the Corresponding Secretary, a pledge that the Magazine should be silent on the sin of slavery, which we copy below, was published by Mr. Brown in the August number of the Magazine. Letters had been written by slaveholders requiring this pledge as a condition of their continued patronage of the Magazine. This was a virtual compact between the Board and slaveholders that the Magazine should silently acquiesce in the sin of slavery.

[From the Baptist Magazine, July, 1834.]


An able and discriminating view of a subject of great and growing interest. It has all the author's usual power and pungency, with unusual richness of illustration, and many passages of thrilling and subduing pathos. The generous spirit of liberty—civil and religious liberty—the joint offspring of justice, philanthropy and piety, warms every argument, throbs in every line, and triumphs over every objection. It would do honor to Patrick Henry.

The Constitution of the Society claims the immediate, simultaneous emancipation, with a view to their employment as hired laborers, of all the slaves in the Union. May God speed the right!

[From the Baptist Magazine, August, 1834.]

The Editor having ascertained that a Literary Notice inserted last month, is regarded as a departure from the settled purpose of the Board of Missions, not to make the Magazine a vehicle for the discussion of slavery, takes this opportunity of saying that nothing further on that subject will be admitted.

Literary notices of productions favorable to Christian liberty have from that hour been excluded from the Magazine. The Editor's treasonable expression, "May God speed the right," has never been reiterated. This act of despotism and the conduct of the Papal Board of Censors, who decide what books shall be printed, are so nearly alike that we are unable to see the difference. At this time the Board was preparing its pro-slavery letter to England.
Reply of Baptist Convention. 25

[From the Free Missionary; August, 1845.]

LETTER

TO ENGLAND FROM A BAPTIST CONVENTION HELD IN BOSTON, MAY 26
AND 27, 1833. MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SIGNATURES
WERE OBTAINED TO IT.

To the Members of the Board of Baptist Ministers in and near London:—Respected and Dear Brethren:—The undersigned are Pastors and Ministers of the Baptist denomination in the United States of America. Your letter addressed to us in common with our brethren throughout our country, dated London, Dec. 31, 1833, and signed in your behalf by W. H. March, Chairman, Theological Tutor, Stepney College, has but recently reached us, or we should have given you an earlier reply. Indeed the fact that your letter had been received in America, was not known by most of us, until the month of February of this year. We sincerely regret that we and our churches, and the denomination at large, did not earlier receive the light which your excellent letter sheds on our duty, as Christians, and to feel the sacred influence it is so happily adapted to exert on our hearts.

We do not attempt to exonerate the nation as such from the charge of upholding slavery. This cannot be done so long as the laws of the nation hold, or allow to be held, in bondage a single slave; and the number of persons now so held in the District of Columbia and the territories, which sections of country are under the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, is about twenty-six thousand, whose posterity, if the present state of things should continue a half century longer, will amount to several times that number. Emigration to those territories is so rapid from the slave States, that, during the period named, the slave population may reasonably be expected to increase to a million or more. Neither can the free States be exonerated from the charge of upholding slavery so long as they aid in the restoration of the slaves who escape from their masters. We are verily a guilty nation before God, touching the inalienable rights of many of our fellow-men.

Partakers of the same faith, it is reasonable that Christians should desire "to cultivate," as you remark, "an intimate and influential intercourse, that they may mutually benefit each other and extend the kingdom of our common Redeemer." Distance of place ought, certainly, never to occasion distance of feeling between intelligent beings—brethren—who expect soon to meet in one society, and be forever "fellow-citizens" in that city whose Builder and Maker is God.

It is not to be denied that, as patriots, Christians owe special regard to the community or nation of which they are constituents. But we know and feel that, between the citizens of the different nations of the world, the gospel of equal and universal love sets up, and allows its disciples to set up, no high wall of separation, obstructive of the salutary religious and moral influence which they may mutually exercise. On the contrary, it breaks down every such wall of separation, and gives explicit promise, that union shall be effected by it among all men of all nations, so that "there shall be one fold and one shepherd." By such union the true interests of the several nations are not put in jeopardy, but rather secured, for mutual benevolence begets mutual benefit. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor," which is as true of nations as of individuals. And, when this bond shall unite all nations, then shall swords be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks, and the
world shall learn WAR no more. Armies and navies will be superseded by the better bulwarks of righteousness and peace.

We believe that frequent intercourse between Christians of different lands, by literary correspondence and personal representation, is a happy and efficient means of accomplishing the prophecies of millennial blessedness. If Great Britain and America shall never again dash against each other in mortal conflict, it will be owing to the gospel being understood, and felt, and obeyed alike by both nations on the great duties which, in its principles and by its precepts, are enjoined on all men towards God and towards each other.

Among these latter duties is that of counseling, warning, rebuking and encouraging each other. Is it a duty of love which one man owes to another, not to suffer sin upon him, but, by the power of truth, and a generous and kindly exercise of personal influence, to arrest his progress in wrong, and convert him from the error of his ways? How much more imperative and urgent is this duty between large bodies of men! If the vice of intemperance, for example, has become prevalent in one community, and its destructive effects are spread before the eyes of another, once equally guilty, but now penitent and reformed, it cannot be reasonably objected that the voice of remonstrance, if lifted up by the latter, addressing itself in tones of entreaty and alarm to the conscience of the former, is an unworthy intermeddling with the concern of others. For to sin is not the right of any one, and sin can never be practiced by any in the remotest corner of the earth, without interference with the real and proper welfare and rights of some men. If there were but a single individual on the globe given to a vicious practice, the united voice of all men beside might, with the strictest propriety, be raised against him for polluting by one sin a world otherwise unsullied.

It is, moreover, peculiarly fitting that the penitent man—and so the penitent nation, should rebuke the same vice in others, of which that man or nation has been guilty, but has reformed. Such is the ordinance of Divine Wisdom and saving Mercy. The commission of Christ was given to penitent men, whom he had called away from sin and sanctified to the work of reforming the rest of the world—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," indicates the order in which the reformation of mankind is to be effected. This order is necessary, since moral reform never springs up in the sinner spontaneously, but proceeds from a purer source—all moral reform having its origin in the holiness of God, and being effected by the instrumentality of men.

In view of these considerations, we certainly regard your entire communication not only as unexceptionable, but as a strictly proper and benevolent exercise of the moral power with which our common Benefactor has blessed you that you might be a blessing to us and to others circumstanced like ourselves.

Slaveryholding is now the most heinous sin with which America is chargeable. Of the same great sin Great Britain has for centuries been guilty; but the world now beholds her penitent and reformed. And for this reformation, important as the sin was great, surpassing in enormity any other sin, all nations ought to rejoice and give God thanks. Its bearings on the destinies, the welfare of the rest of the world, must correspond with its magnitude and the mighty moral influences which.
at the same time that they fettered thousands of her subjects, bound her-
self, and limited—immensely abridged—her power of accomplishing
the good which, previous to this noble act of justice, she was disposed to
execute in other departments of Christian enterprise. We are not care-
less spectators of the evils which existed in awful, shameful asso-
ciation with slavery in the British West India Colonies. We saw
the immense expenditure of human happiness—nay, of life—to gratify
the cupidty of those to whom the power of enslavement appertained,
thus nourishing that covetousness which is idolatry, and that sin of op-
pression so often, so severely condemned in the Holy Scriptures, and so
often punished by the heaviest infictions of retributive justice ever exe-
cuted on nations. We saw the arrogance and unholy pride which lift-
ed up the heart of the oppressor against God, and put his authority at
defiance, while it degraded, and crushed, and brutalized thousands of
immortal beings. We saw the Missionaries of the Cross putting their
own ease and earthly interests, and the hazard of their lives out of the
account, and standing amidst the cruelly heighthed and perishing, as the
Heaven-ordained messengers of glad tidings to both the oppressor and
the oppressed, and we saw those servants of the Most High God treat-
ed with obloquy and scorn, and severer persecution, and the poor souls,
who had gladly received their word, suffering as martyrs for Christ's
sake.

But we also saw, in Great Britain, the majestic rising up of a Godlike
spirit and power, amidst the churches, to hush the tempest of anarchy
and wild misuse in the Western Colonies, to deliver the oppressed and
persecuted, and to vindicate the honor of insulted Christianity. The
first day of August, 1834, we hailed as the harbinger of good things to
the emancipated, and to the world. We thought of the probable effect the
change would produce on the slavery of our own beloved country—that
the eyes of the nation would be opened by it to see the things which be-
long essentially to her own peace. And we still indulge the animating
belief that America will not long persist in a course which God has
taught the world in every age, is sure, if not abandoned, to terminate in
disaster and ruin. Your letter, for which we thank you and bless God,
will yet, we believe, produce a good and powerful result among our own
denomination and even others. It is now going out through the length
and breadth of our extensive country. Thousands have already ac-
nowledged its excellence, and thousands more will shortly feel its in-
fuence, and be moved to action by its weighty appeals. The cause of
emancipation is already occupying the minds of many of our fellow-citizens,
and exciting the anxious inquiry: "What must be done?"—and
to this inquiry a host stand ready always to give that reply which Jeho-
vah has put into their lips—"Let the oppressed go free." Scriptural
views are becoming more generally embraced. Still, we are aware, the
work is in but an incipient state. Erroneous speculations are general
to an alarming extent. Even the churches of all denominations have not
yet fully emerged from the darkness which has brooded over them on
this subject. Some of our ministers remain lamentably inactive. Compa-
rotationally few even now venture to preach on this great moral subject,
which certainly presents claims as high as any other on the solemn and
prayerful consideration of both ministers and churches in every part of
the land and of the world. We are pleased that you urge our duty by
motives purely religious, leaving all strife's about political measures to
those whose faith reaches not to the precepts, and doctrines, and promis-
Reply of Baptist Convention.

es of God. "The principle we adopted was," you say, "the utter repugnance of the colonial system to the spirit and precepts of the Christian faith. Leaving to others the commercial and political bearings of the question, we felt it a sacred duty loudly to denounce negro slavery as a palpable violation of the laws of God."

It is not wonderful that, so acting, you "greatly contributed to the successful termination of the anti-slavery struggle lately carried on in your country." We, dear brethren, have adopted, and desire to act upon the same principle, believing it to be the only method which is in agreement with Divine Wisdom, and therefore, the only method which is adapted to the work. That this application of the gospel's power to the sin of slaveholding, for its removal, is adequate, admits of no question in our minds. We should soon question its adequacy in the case of any other sin as of this. Our hope is, therefore, strong, and our confidence entire and unwavering.

You have prefixed the word "negro" to the word "slavery." Allow us to remark that we esteem the enslavement of one class of men as heinous a sin, and as Heaven-daring an outrage as that of another class. The simple inquiry with us is,—are the slaves men? and we regard them as really men as were their African ancestors, the Egyptians and Ethiopians, the posterity of Mizraim and Cush, two of the three sons of Ham, who, agreeably to the true intent of the often perverted prophecy of Noah, were made masters of their youngest brother Canaan, whose posterity, for sins most foul, foreknown to God, were doomed to be punished with menial servitude. It must not be overlooked, however, that even that servitude was restricted and regulated by Divine precept, so that it differed essentially from modern slavery. In our country about one-third of the slaves are naturally related to the whites—some of them being as light in complexion as their masters. The same was probably true of the slaves in the West India Colonies. We suppose you regard this point as we do; but we think it worthy of notice, so that in your future communications the word "negro" may be omitted. We usually employ the phrase American slavery, or the word slavery, since, of whatever complexion, the enslaved may be found, he is a man, and ought to be regarded as a man, and treated in all respects as a man, having equal inalienable rights with all other men. To the cause of the oppressed, wherever we may find them, whether in slavery or in nominal freedom, we are, and desire ever to be, solemnly pledged. And so also to every cause of virtue and Christian philanthropy, in opposition to all error and sin. The broad ploughshare of gospel truth and moral influence ought to be thrust deep beneath the foundations of all unsound principle, and all wrong practice, and driven all the way through the great Babylon of sin, till the place that she now occupies, cucumbers and pollutes, shall know her no more forever. Slavery, be assured, appears to us as to yourselves—a sin to be abandoned and not an evil to be mitigated; a high crime against the Majesty of heaven, for the suppression of which every believer in Christ is bound strenuously and prayerfully to labor." Other species of oppression are generally, at the worst, but partial—this is entire.

We doubt not, you will sympathize and co-operate with us, and that you will be much in prayer for us and for those, both slaves and masters, for whose good it is our purpose to labor in the use of weapons not carnal but mighty through God to the overthrow of this as well as every other work of wickedness.
Mission of Cox and Hoby.

Many other topics of deep interest present themselves to our minds, and solicit the expression of our thoughts; but our letter has already spread beyond the limits we had prescribed, and we must omit them. It is probable that you will receive communications from other brethren in our country on the subject of your letter, which we take to be intended for our churches as well as for ourselves; and, we are happy to say, we commend it to their serious perusal and prayerful consideration; and we hope that, in some form, they will duly acknowledge the receipt of it.

And now, dear brethren, we commend you to God and to the Word of His Grace, and pray that the Father of Lights will pour His light on your future path—and that He will bless your country, and every nation and all people with the special influences of His Holy Spirit, that His way may be known in all the earth.

This letter was prepared and approved in a Convention of more than fifty Baptist ministers, held in the city of Boston on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 26 and 27, 1835. It is signed by the subscribers individually as our personal act.

With Christian courtesy and affection, we are, dear brethren,

Yours in a common Redeemer.

CHAPTER III.


Soon after the preceding correspondence, Elds. Cox and Hoby, delegates from the Baptist Union, visited this country. The influence of the Triennial Convention, was employed to keep them as silent as possible in regard to the enormous sin of American slavery. The measure of its success will be seen in the proofs which we shall hereafter adduce. As the conduct of the deputation is examined at length in the fifteenth chapter we add nothing now respecting it to the above brief remark.
Extracts from English Baptists' Letter.

Let us then follow these brethren back to the parent country, hear their report, and observe its effect upon the English Baptist churches.

The deputation made a report to the Union at its twenty-fourth annual meeting, held in London, June 20, 1, 2, 3 and 4, 1836.

"The letter from the Committee of the General Convention of Baptists in America was read, whereupon it was moved by Eld. J. Price seconded by Eld. J. Briscoe, and resolved unanimously, That the Committee take an early opportunity of drawing up a letter to the Executive of the Triennial Convention, and conveying the resolutions passed on Wednesday morning last; and that a copy of the same be sent to Eld. Baron Stow, as a member of the Corresponding Committee."—Union Reports.

The resolutions are contained in the fifteenth chapter. Extracts from the letter are here subjoined.

Extracts from a Letter of the English Baptists.


Dear Brethren:—Our deputed brethren, although they did not mention the subject of slavery in the public proceedings of the Convention, at a private meeting, assembled for the purpose, made known the feelings of pain and lamentation with which our body, in common with all religious bodies in this country, at that time regarded the state of American society, and American churches, in reference to it. Since that period our feelings have grown far more deep and solemn. The facts which have been brought to light have affected us beyond measure, and have made us feel it our imperative duty to put into a channel of public utterance the sentiments of the united churches, in the series of resolutions, which were passed unanimously at the public meeting on the 22d of June, and which we transmit to you herewith.

We are not uninformed of the degree in which, in the American Union, slavery is either incorporated in the social system, or upheld by public opinion; nor have we been unobservant of the sensitiveness with which remarks on it, whether foreign or domestic, have been almost universally received. We have no wish to give offense, but our duty to God and man will not permit us to be silent, nor can we believe after what you have written, that you wish us to be so. You will not refuse to consider what, "as faithful brethren," we address to you; and most sincerely do we add our prayer, "the Lord give you understanding in all things."

It is surely a position which admits of no dispute, that in this, as in other matters, a line of conduct may be expected from the disciples of Christ, materially different from that which may be expected from men of the world. Of what use, otherwise, are the rectitude and tenderness of conscience, the holy light, and the exalted principles which characterize a Christian? Now, it is to the churches of which you are the representatives, that we make our appeal. Professors of the name of Christ! whatever others do, we entreat you, neither hold a slave, nor countenance slavery. According to some allegations, indeed, which, with whatever truth, have been made on behalf of American slave-
holders, we are called upon to believe, that, through the force of iniquitous laws, the liberation of slaves is impracticable. Otherwise, we are assured, many would gladly set them free; but, in existing circumstances, it is necessary, and even obligatory, to detain them. Of course, we understand this as the language of lamentation and complaint. Here is a practical, and avowedly regretted, restriction on the liberty of the holder of the slave; he may not give the freedom he wishes to give. The duty of a person thus situated surely becomes obvious in an instant. We say to him, if a law which either imposes an impossible condition on manumission, or decrees the seizure of a manumitted slave, makes it imperative on you to detain him for the moment, ought you not to be making restless endeavors for the repeal of that law; and using every means to prepare for the easy acquisition and the safe possession of that freedom, which it is your right to give and his to enjoy? Without such endeavors, it becomes manifest that the existence of the law is but a pretext for the slaveholder, and his acquiescence in it renders him a partaker of its iniquity.

In ordinary cases, however, we conceive we cannot be in error in regarding slavery as optional. Now we raise an argument on this ground; and we cannot hesitate to affirm, that, however it might be repelled by a man of the world, it ought to be enough for a Christian. To hold a fellow-creature in bondage, is to keep him in a condition of personal degradation and disadvantage; a condition, as it now exists, which denies him access to the various sources of instruction and avenues of advancement which are open to others; which allows no sacreedom to domestic ties, but sets at naught the Divine institution of marriage, and with it both the affections and the duties of the conjugal and parental relations; which makes man an outcast from society, and repels him, not as an alien merely, but as a brute, from the community, of which he is nevertheless a constituent and vital part; which, in the great majority of instances, involves labors which shorten life, and, in too many cases, the almost murderous extinction of it; and which, in fine, impedes most grievously a slave’s religious instruction, fosters his vices of every kind, and renders, all but impossible, for the most part, his glorifying God on earth, or his learning the way to heaven. Now, we suppose it to be at the option of a Christian, whether he will hold a fellow-creature in a condition like this. Can it for a moment be doubted what his choice will be? Or can any one call him a Christian who chooses to have a slave? What! is Christianity reduced, not merely to a name, but a mockery? Does its loud proclamations of “good will to men,” mean nothing more than a sanction for the right of power? Is it no longer the law of our acknowledged Sovereign, “Do ye to others, as ye would that they should do unto you?” Are equity, benevolence, and compassion, no more the characteristics and indispensable virtues of our profession?

If any one should meet this appeal by saying, that he treats his slaves as his children; we must be permitted to reply—first, that he can in no way do so well for them as by breaking their chains; secondly, that he cannot tell who may come after him, nor how soon; and, thirdly, that his example upholds abominations which he refuses to practice, and would appear to condemn.

Nor should we be silenced, by being informed, of what we very well know, that, in the southern States, “slavery is a political institution.” We are not political meddlers. But we suppose that even the
"political institution" of slavery does not deprive the freeman of his liberty. We appeal, therefore, still to the heart of a Christian, as to his individual choice. Our language is—fellow-Christian! and, if a fellow-Christian, man of benevolent spirit, of universal love! will you hold a slave?

How can we conceive the heart of a Christian dictating, or permitting, any other answer than one to this question? I will not:—We must think the case decided, therefore, with every Christian, if it be merely at his option. But we cannot let it rest here. While it may assuredly be expected, that a Christian would break every yoke if he might, it is important for him to remember, not only that he may, but that, if he can, he must. The declarations, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and "Whatsoever things ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," are the voice of authority, and have the unquestioned force of law. It is not at our option whether we fulfill these commands. It is required of us by Jesus Christ, our Lord. All His professed subjects are bound to obey Him. Every faithful subject will obey Him.

Is it not certain, dear brethren, that a consistent obedience to these precepts would lead to the immediate liberation of a large number of slaves? Is it not also certain, that such a proceeding, taken by Christian professors at large, in the slaveholding States, or by any considerable portion of them, would exhibit the subject in a new light; would arouse the whole community, and shake the entire system of slavery to its foundation? Is not the overthrow of this system an object to which, under the force of the same reasons, all Christians ought earnestly to address themselves? Is there any other probable method of achieving this inestimable consummation? Will it not constitute a noble and a characteristic triumph for Christianity? And is not the abetting of slavery, and even acquiescence in it, a sin, of which every disciple of Christ ought immediately to wash his hands?

The resolutions we transmit to you, dear brethren, do not refer exclusively to the letters which bind the slave; they advert also to the prejudices which afflict the colored freemen. We cannot say that we feel at all less strongly on this subject than on slavery itself. There are, indeed, reasons which make it to us the more afflicting of the two. The degradation of the free blacks is certainly not a "political institution" of any part of the Union, nor is it founded on any different relation which they bear to the body politic, as compared with the whites. And, whatever pretext might be found for their oppression in a region of slaves, there obviously can be none where slavery is unknown. Yet a strong and general prejudice against people of color is cherished even in the northern States, where it must be a matter of mere prejudice, generated by the pride which it subsequently fosters, and as ungenerous and unholy as it is proud.

It is to us nothing less than marvelous, that this grievous oppression, both of the bond and the free, should exist, and be slung to by a nation which glories in its liberty, and which was the first to proclaim to other lands that the rights of all are equal, but it is not for us to bewail this inconsistency, nor the injury it has done, in the eyes of the world, to the otherwise noble institutions which it impairs and undermines. It is however, more than marvelous to us; it is almost incredible, that the indefensible and cruel prejudices against persons of color should have been adopted by the churches of Christ, and manifested in the worship and
ordinances of His house! He was meek and lowly in heart. Are His followers not to copy His example? Would He have treated persons of African descent, as the slightest mixture of tainted blood causes them to be treated among you? You know that He would not; and if you imitate Him, you will do no more. Degrading distinctions, which say not "I am holier," but only "I am whiter than thou," will instantly be banished from places of Divine worship; and the reformation begun here will be extended to the entire system of which these are a part.

In pressing the fulfillment of this duty upon you, dear brethren, we have the advantage of being able to say, that it is impeded by no obstacle. There can be no case in which the retention of the prejudice we are combating can be obligatory or imperative. In indulging it, you are only either pampering the pride of your own hearts, or yielding to the current of feeling around you. As Christians, you are called on to mortify the former, and stem the latter. Nothing hinders you from beginning, and even from triumphing, at once. The object may be achieved the first moment you are determined to achieve it. And, permit us to assure you, that, whenever this moment shall arrive it will be inferior to none in the history of your churches, for honor to the Name you profess, for prosperity to the churches you compose, and for prosperity to the country you adorn. Dear brethren, "our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged."

But we speak not alone. We call to remembrance, that we are addressing a body, the sentiments of some of whom, and a number rapidly increasing, are in unison with our own. We rejoice in the abundant evidence which has reached us of the fact that the attention of many has been awakened, and that the voices of many have been heard. Yes, America has heard on this subject the voice of many of her sons; and, with delight, we have seen among the band of her abolitionists (and many, in spirit, we trust are such who have not adopted the name) a large number of our own denomination. No words can express the warmth of our sympathy with them, or the ardor of our desire, that, on this great occasion, our entire denomination may be of one heart and one mind. Be assured, dear brethren that the extinction of oppression, whether of the bond or free, is a work which lies with the churches of Christ. They can do it. They must do it. They will be responsible for the continuance of oppression, with all its crimes and horrors, if they do it not. And as no portion of the United States is more influential than your own—and as none has been more abundantly blessed with these extraordinary operations which exhibit religion in its mightiest energies—as none is more prompt or more vigorous in all other works of faith and labors of love, so we entreat you to suffer none to be more forward, or more vigorous, in this good cause. We know that over the same cause both our fathers and ourselves slept too long; but it would be poor evidence that we had been awakened, if we were to use no efforts for the arousing of our brethren. We wish to believe that whatever number remains among you, is but that of inadvertency and inconsideration. It cannot be that you will refuse to put away this "accursed thing," when its true aspect shall have appeared to you. An enlightened conscience and a melting heart will be far more prompt and effectual than our importunities; and, perhaps, even while we are writing, may be rendering our importunities needless.

Can we, dear brethren, without showing unreasonable fears, again entreat you to receive in kindness what we have written, in the fullness of
our hearts? Or, can we hesitate to anticipate that serious consideration of our remarks—that willing acquiescence in evident truth—and that ready fulfillment of admitted duty—which shall fully convince us that you are, indeed, our brethren in Christ, and justify the fervor with which, on the behalf of our brethren at large, we subscribe ourselves,

Yours in Christian love,

W. H. MURCH,
JOSEPH BELCHER, Secretaries.
EDWARD STEANE.

The following reply was made to the above, by Eld. Bar-on Stow, of Boston.

LETTER
FROM ELD. BARON STOW, A. M., OF BOSTON, TO ELD. W. H. MURCH.

BOSTON, (U. S. A.), Jan. 7, 1837.

My Dear Sir:—Your favor of Oct. 7, 1836, came duly to hand, accom-
panied by "a copy of the Resolutions passed at the Annual Meeting of
the Baptist Union," held in June last, and also a copy of "a Letter from
the Baptist Union in England to the Board of the Triennial Convention
of the Baptist Churches in the U. S." And within a few days I have
received from Mr. Belcher a copy of the "Report of the Baptist Union,
1836," by which I perceive that I have the honor to be a member of the
Corresponding Committee of the Union.

The Board, of which I am a member, also received a copy each of
your Letter and Resolutions, and directed the Secretary, the Rev. Dr.
Bolles, to prepare a reply. The spirit of your letter was much admired
and commended, as truly fraternal and Christian. The effect will as-
sumably be good. As, however, the constitution of the Board limits
them to the business of Foreign Missions, they will not, under existing
circumstances, intermeddle in any way with the question of slavery. As
individuals, they are free to entertain opinions and act upon them accord-
ing to the dictates of duty; but in their corporate capacity they have
one object, one duty—the sending of the gospel to the unevangelized.
Whatever communication, therefore, you may choose to make to this
Board, on the subject of slavery, the only reply which at present you
will receive, will be a disclaimer of jurisdiction in the case. Several
members of the Board are sincere and pledged abolitionists, but they
do not feel at liberty to urge the consideration of the subject in the meet-
ings of the Board. Our constitution limits us to one object. The Board
will not even publish your communications upon this subject. I there-
fore sent to the Editor of the Christian Watchman the Letter and Reso-
lations, copies of which you were so kind as to send me, and thus they
met the eye of the public. They have been copied into many papers,
and read by many thousands. Such documents are useful in various
ways.

1. They show that you feel deeply, and are in earnest with us respect-
ing the great sin of slavery.

2. They breathe the spirit of Christian kindness, and must soften and
subdue rather than exasperate. If any thing will melt down the pro-
slavery spirit, either at the South or the North, it will be Christian love.
So long as the Baptists in England maintain the kind, generous spirit
exhibited in your Letter and Resolutions, they can speak to us with the
assurance of being heard calmly and fraternally. There are thousands among us who will welcome such communications, and thank you for them as proofs of a benevolence that is highly evangelical.

You say that "the general feeling among the various denominations in this country (England) is, that to the Baptists in America more than to any other part of the Christian community must be imputed the sin of slaveholding, and that among them chiefly, even in the Northern States, is to be found the pro-slavery spirit." I am confident, my Christian brother, that this comparison is unjust. In several of the slaveholding States, the Baptists are the most numerous denomination. But I am not aware that they hold more slaves than others, or that they do more to uphold the system of slaveholding. The leading men of all denominations at the South, both clergy and laity, justify the holding of slaves, and the traffic in slaves as right and scriptural! Some of our ablest preachers at the South have published their views upon the subject, and I have been challenged by them to produce a single passage of Scripture that will show slaveholding to be sinful! But Baptists in this matter only occupy common ground with other sects. Presbyterians and Methodists are as violent and as ultra as our own brethren. Nor is it true that among Baptists chiefly, "even in the northern States, is to be found the pro-slavery spirit." Thousands and tens of thousands of them are opposed to "immediate emancipation," and severe in their hostility to abolitionists. But I am sure they do not exceed in numbers or violence the other denominations.

You add, "we are repeatedly told that the number of Baptists who profess abolition principles is but a very small minority." Here, too, I am confident you are wrongly informed. I am endeavoring to collect facts on this point, such as will convince you of the mistake. In the mean time I feel safe in assuring you that in the ranks of the active abolitionists, the Baptists are more numerous than any other denomination: ex. gr., in the State of New Hampshire, there are about 50 Baptist ministers, mostly established pastors. All but three or four are known to be abolitionists. In several other States more than half of our ministers are members of the Anti-Slavery Society; they preach against slavery, and pray for its speedy extinction.

I shall endeavor to put you in possession of facts touching the sentiments and action of the denomination upon this painful subject—not questioning but it will be grateful to you to know the truth and the whole truth. Soliciting a continuance of your favors,

I am, dear sir, Yours very truly,

BARN STOW.

The following Resolutions were adopted in May and June, 1836, by English Baptist Associations. The fear of unduly swelling this work, leads us to omit those passed by the following Associations:

East Kent, Essex, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Weston, Berks and West London, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Baptist Union Reports, Official Documents.

MIDLAND.

That as we are convinced slavery is inimical to the dictates of humanity, and utterly opposed to that Word which Christians receive as the
English Baptist Resolutions.

rule of their faith and practice, while, as it existed in the British Colonies, and as it now exists in the United States, it has assumed characters of frightful enormity, we should depurate such union between the British and American Baptist churches, as might seem to imply an approbation, or even toleration, of so monstrous an evil, but would rather solemnly warn and earnestly entreat, our American brethren faithfully to exert themselves to put from them the accursed thing.

KENT AND SUSSEX.

That having learned with surprise and regret that slavery in its worst forms is encouraged by many of the churches of America, and that ministers, deacons, and private members of Baptist churches in that country, equally participate in this flagrant abomination, and fearing that the intercourse recently opened between these churches and our denomination in this country, may be considered as implying our sanction of such inhuman and unholy conduct, we feel it our duty to record our public protest against the iniquity, as utterly at variance with every principle of Christianity.

BRISTOL.

That prompted by these views, and with the kindliest feeling towards the American people, and with unfeigned admiration of much that is exemplary in the American character, we earnestly entreat the followers of the Redeemer, and especially those of our denomination in that country, to give to this state of things their earliest and dispassionate attention; and, instead of attempting to extenuate its guilt, or to justify its continuance for one day beyond the time needed for the proper legislative enactments on the subject, they will at once unite their counsels, their efforts and prayers, for its entire extinction.

SUFFOLK AND NORFOLK.

That as we are unwilling to be "partakers of other men's sins," we cannot desire any union with the American Baptist churches, unless they will listen to the remonstrances against this crying abomination, which Christian duty must elicit from British Baptists.

LEICESTERSHIRE.

That while the churches in America can tolerate the sin of slavery in their midst, we must receive with great suspicion reports which reach us of their religious revivals; believing, as we do, that their conduct must repel, rather than attract, the Spirit of God, and that it has a fatal tendency to promote infidelity both in the church and in the world.

That nothing would afford us sincerer pleasure than to hear that the question of slavery was occupying the deliberate consideration of all professing Christians in America whose hands are stained by it, and that the firm but affectionate remonstrances of the British churches was causing them to relax their hold of this inhuman system, while we unfeignedly regret that the deputation from Great Britain sent out by the Baptist Union should have retained silence on this subject—conduct which, in our opinion, no considerations of expediency or feelings of policy could justify.

That with these impressions we decline to extend the hand of fellowship to those societies in America calling themselves churches of Christ, while the abomination of slavery is cherished among them; and that we think it a violation of consistency to receive any deputation from these assemblies to the churches of Christ in Great Britain.
EAST AND NORTH RIDING IN YORKSHIRE

That this Association is exceedingly anxious to impress upon the Committee of the Baptist Union, the importance of conveying to the deputation of our sister churches in America the sentiment of the denomination on the subject of slavery as connected with their body and especially of employing that moral influence which their pastors and members must possess for the entire and speedy extinction of this crying evil.

MINISTERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Of the Baptist churches of St. Mary's, St. Clements, and Orford Hill, Norwich, and those of Lynn, Yarmouth, Denham, Swaffham, Worstead, Aylsham, Neatishead, Ingham, Poulsom, and Cossey, in the county of Norfolk.

That while on the one hand we remember with gratitude the distinguished part which our denomination has taken in the overthrow of slavery throughout the British dominions, we cannot but feel on the other hand the deepest sorrow and humiliation to learn from the official report of the American churches, that they have not only taken no clear and decided stand, as a religious body, against the crying evils of American slavery, but that their "Southern brethren are generally, both ministers and people, slaveholders." And that this fact is alleged by their General Board, in justification of their declining to listen to the affectionate and faithful remonstrance of our London Ministers in December, 1833—because such interference would be regarded by their slaveholding brethren as an impeachment of their Christian character; and we are yet more grieved by their invidious and anti-Christian exclusion of all colored persons from communion with whites at the table of the Lord, and by consequence from Christian fellowship generally.

That so long as such shall continue to be the position deliberately maintained by the American Baptists, in reference to slavery—such their avowed estimate of its relation to Christian character—and such their determination to submit to no remonstrances on the subject—so long shall we feel it to be our corresponding and imperious duty, sorrowfully, but firmly, to decline any fraternal union with them, either by sending address or deputation to their body, or by giving to their deputation expected at our impending public meetings any other reception than that dictated by Christian courtesy and English hospitality, accompanied, however, by affectionate exhortation, and by our fervent prayer that it may speedily please our Heavenly Father to show them "a more excellent way."

At the anniversary of the English Baptist Union, May 1-4, 1837, a resolution of sympathy with American abolitionists was adopted. A Committee was also appointed to prepare a Letter to the Baptist churches in America. We present it entire.

LETTER

FROM ENGLISH BAPTISTS TO THE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES, THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN SENDETH CHRISTIAN SALUTATION.

Dear Brethren:—In your profession of the faith of Christ,—in your solemn pledges of devotedness to His service, in your dependence on the operations of His Spirit,—and finally in your practical vindication of
Christian baptism from the misapplication and conception to which it has been subjected, we feel that a basis is laid for fellowship between us more sacred and enduring than the interests of this transitory world can originate.

We have often glorified God for the special tokens of His favor which have rested on you; we have heard with grateful joy of your zealous and increasing efforts to promote His kingdom in the world; and we have experienced the kindlings of holy emulation and desire, while we have exclaimed, Hast thou not a blessing for us, even for us also, O Lord our God? Thus, dear brethren, admiration, not envy, thankfulness on your account, not suspicion concerning you, has dwelt in our minds, and it was far from our expectation that there should devolve on us the duty of remonstrance and entreaty on account of any blot on your Christian character.

To fulfill that unwelcome duty is our design in this communication. Receive it, brethren, from those who profess toward you the sincerest friendship,—a friendship that may not suffer sin to rest upon your souls. We have not been ignorant that slavery existed in the States, entailed, we are ashamed and humbled to acknowledge, by British influence, authority, and example. But we had until of late no conception of the extent to which multitudes of professing Christians in your land, by indifference, by connivance, by apology or by actual participation, are implicated in it.

The complete portraiture of slavery would be odious and revolting to the last degree, and though we do not accuse or suspect every proprietor of perpetrating all the wrongs to which the system leads, we are compelled to entertain the suspicion that these wrongs are perpetrated to a fearful amount, even where professedly Christian owners are directly responsible.

The slaves are regarded as the property of their masters. Their labor is no more available for their own benefit, than is that of the beast of the field for theirs. By the law they are reckoned as cattle. By some proprietors, thousands are reared, and bought and sold with an entire disregard of everything that raises man above the brute. Their conjugal rights are exposed to melancholy violation, and all their affections to reckless outrage. And, worst of all, "their claim to feed upon immortal truth!" to peruse for themselves the inspired Word of God, is, in the majority of the slave States resisted and trampled upon, by an enactment which prohibits their learning to read, and thus dooms them to the scantiest and most precarious supply of that knowledge which their immortal welfare demands, and which God has freely given for the benefit of the world.

Such a system, brethren, must be fruitful of oppression, injustice and crime; and yet among yourselves, your churches, your deacons, your pastors, this system finds apologists, advocates, abettors; and unashamed by the symbols of incarnate and redeeming love, it tramples itself at the table of our dying Lord.

Brethren, are these things so? Would to God we could doubt their reality! but that relief is denied us. Some of your provincial assemblies have attempted, alas! with what infatuation and dishonor, to shield and extenuate the crime.

Oh, brethren, how long shall this wickedness defile you? How long shall the cause of our common Christianity be dishonored and injured
Letter from English Baptists.

by a vain attempt to place under its sanction a flagrant violation of the rights of man and the laws of God?

Shall we be told that the question of slavery is political, and therefore not cognizable before a Christian tribunal? We reply that, with what political considerations soever it may be complicated, it is, as actually existing among you essentially a moral question, and that if slavery were purified from all that is unrighteous and anti-Christian, its most strenuous political defenders would abandon it. Moreover, we beseech you, brethren, not to suffer imaginary civil benefits to array themselves in hostility to paramount moral obligations.

Is it maintained that emancipation is encompassed with difficulties? Allowing their existence, we nevertheless believe that they may be greatly magnified by a worldly, selfish, distrustful spirit. Difficulties in a righteous cause are but the tests of principle, and passive resistance against sin even unto blood, is binding on every Christian. Bear with us, dear brethren, while in faithful affection we suggest what appears to us to be your duty.

At whatever cost, listen to the cries of the oppressed, and vindicate their cause, already too long neglected; yield to the dictates of genuine philanthropy; demand full scope for the Word of God among your negro population; seek the immediate repeal of the law which forbids slaves to read the tidings of salvation, and meanwhile let the iniquitous enactment be promptly disregarded; let the work of redemption by Christ exert, without restraint, its equalizing, uniting influence within the precincts of the Lord's house,—there let the distinction between bond and free melt away and disappear. Let the pulpit solemnly utter the denunciations of the Almighty against those who build their houses by unrighteousness, and their chambers by wrong, who use the service of their fellow-men without wages, and pay them not for their work. Let the slaveholder who may be found in your solemn assemblies hasten to proclaim liberty to his captives, or let his profession be distrusted, and his conscience be appealed to by the terrors of the Lord. Let your influence upon the local governments of those States which sanction slavery, be sincerely devoted to the cause of justice and freedom. Endeavor to enlighten the minds of your citizens, that they may discontinue and forbid the sanction which Congress bestows on the iniquitous system. These things, brethren are clearly and solemnly your duty. Arise therefore and gird yourselves for the work. You are summoned to the honorable service of Him who stands pledged to deliver the needy when he crieth and to break in pieces the rod of the oppressor. Imbibing His benevolent spirit and fulfilling His righteous commands, you may surely confide in His protection and await His blessing.

Some amongst you, brethren, are entitled to our warmest affection, and to our unreserved confidence, for you have enrolled your names in favor of prompt emancipation. May the band of philanthropists to which you have joined yourselves, be strengthened by daily accessions of the generous, the just, and the wise, till its moral influence, guided and impelled by the Almighty Hand, shall bear down all opposition.

The man enslaved in your land attracts to himself the sympathy of benevolent minds. His efforts to regain freedom gain the approval of the just, while the generous will aid them, and all exult in their success. To the slave, and the colored partaker of his milder wrongs, we owe the expressions of our sympathy. We tell the bondman of America to be of good courage, to trust a righteous God, for that the day of redemption
draweth nigh. Whether their oppressors forward their emancipation, or resist it, they have an Almighty Vindicator of their rights, who will utterly destroy a system which reckons an immortal being (even though a freedman of the Lord) amongst goods and chattels. The cries of uncompensated toil have entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, nor will they be heard in vain.

If, as we cheerfully believe, thousands and tens of thousands of our brethren in the United States long for the immediate and entire liberation of the enslaved, let them regard with encouragement the numerical power of the professing church of Christ in their land,—a power that while it may animate to the most strenuous exertions, should create a solemn sense of responsibility, lest the perpetuity of slavery should be chargeable on the disciples of Christ. But above all, let the church's moral power be consecrated to this noble and Godlike service, and slavery shall speedily expire, smitten as with terror from the presence of the Lord.

Signed on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

I. W. HINTON, Chairman.

Signed by order of the Committee.

W. H. MURCH,

JOSEPH BELLCHER,

EDWARD STEANE,

SECRETARIES.

LONDON, Jan. 19, 1838.

LETTER

FROM BARON STOW, A. M., OF BOSTON, TO ELDR. W. H. MURCH.

BOSTON, Jan. 11, 1839.

Dear Sir:—The communication of the Committee of the Baptist Union, which accompanies yours of Feb. 1, was immediately inserted in the Christian Watchman, and from that transferred to other religious journals which favor the cause of emancipation. Be assured, no effort shall be wanting on my part to get such appeals before our churches. Conceived and expressed in the kindest fraternal spirit, they cannot be turned aside without expressing a most unchristian and unmanly prejudice. That such prejudice exists, and is often developed, I admit; but I am happy to believe that it is wearing away before the light of truth, and the influence of judicious Christian effort.

Our friends in England must have patience with us, and not think us tardy in accomplishing an object which we, as well as they, are anxious for humanity's sake, and for Christ's sake, to see immediately effected. We have obstacles to overcome of which they are not at all aware, or which they do not, and cannot fully appreciate. Among these obstacles, I might name the inhuman prejudice against color, as the badge of servitude and debasement; the peculiar organization of our government, reserving to the State the entire control of slavery within their own limits; the opposition of Christians in all the slaveholding States to abolition, and in the free States to all agitation of the subject.

It would not be difficult to show that the influence of the American church is, at present, the main pillar of American slavery.

But, my dear brother, God is on our side, and the cause will prevail. Every day it is gaining friends, and though less rapidly than we could wish, yet steadily and surely advancing towards the desired consummation. Still help us by your prayers and remonstrances, and antici-
pate with us the joyful day when Republican America shall be purified
of this soul and deadly leprosy.

In the kingdom and patience, &c.;

Your brother affectionately,

BARON STOW.


The Midland, General Baptist, Shropshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Southern, Glamorganshire, East and North Riding of Yorkshire, and Southwest Essex Association, passed resolutions strongly condemnatory of American slavery, and the Western, Bristol, and Berks and West London Associations, addressed letters to the American Baptist churches on the same subject.*

ANTI-SLAVERY RESOLUTION OF ENGLISH BAPTIST UNION.

Twenty-seventh Annual Session of the English Baptist Union, April 29th to May 1, 1839.

LONDON, June 7, 1839.

ELD. C. P. GRÖSVENOR—Dear Brother: We are directed to forward to you the following resolution, unanimously adopted at the annual meeting of the Baptist Union, held in New Park Street Chapel, the 1st of May; Eld. Thomas Severn, of Birmingham, in the chair. Your past kindness in serving the Union, assures us of your readiness to give this resolution all the publication in your power.

We are, dear brother,

Very cordially yours,

W. H. MURCH,

JOSEPH BELCHER, { Secretaries.

EDWARD STEANE,

3. That further, this Union desire to repeat their deepest regret that so many of the churches of Jesus Christ in America should continue to sanction, either directly or indirectly, a system so manifestly hostile to the improvement of mankind, so destructive to social happiness, and so utterly abhorrent from the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion; They therefore solemnly beseech their transatlantic brethren at large, and the members of their own body in particular, that, laying aside the prejudices incident to their circumstances, and the maxims of a temporizing and carnal policy, they will forthwith address themselves, in a spirit of impartiality and prayer, to the calm consideration of the enormity, guilt and fearful peril of refusing any longer to come forth to the help of the Lord against this mighty and crying evil.

*As these letters have never, to our knowledge, been published in America, we have deemed it our duty to open a correspondence with our English brethren in regard to them. Should we succeed in obtaining them, we shall present them to the churches.
Another communication was made in 1840. It was directed to the Secretaries of the Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention. We present extracts:

[From the Christian Reflector.]

RESPONSE OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS.

By the Acadia we have received from our English brethren the following communication, directed to the care of "the Secretaries of the American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention;" and we hasten to reply to the request of "the Committee of the Baptist Union," expressed in their note of introduction as follows:

Dear Brethren:—We are directed by the Committee of the Baptist Union to forward to you the annexed address for publication in whatever ways you may judge desirable.

Earnestly praying for the entire and speedy abolition of slavery in your land,

We are, dear brethren,

Very cordially yours,

W. H. MURCH, D. D.,

JOSEPH BELCHER,

EDWARD STEANE,

Secretaries.

Our brethren attached to the American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention will regard the communication as a fraternal and emphatic response to the appeal made by them through their delegates, who in person made known to the "Union" the state of things existing in American Baptist churches. The delegates can bear witness to the deep and solemn interest felt by the members of that respected body, from whom this address emanates, in the spiritual welfare of our churches, and to that truly Christian concern they feel for the one great cause in which all the disciples of Jesus are so intimately joined.

By one passage in the address in particular, the reader will observe the spirit of reciprocal action for mutual improvement which is inculcated by the gospel above all the religious and philosophical systems of the world. Mark their language:

"On whatever there may be unloveliness or unchristian among us, we invite your brotherly animadversion."

Let such as imagine that we are guilty of intermeddling with foreign affairs, when we raise our humble voice of remonstrance against certain practices among our English brethren, see, in this frank invitation of "brotherly animadversion," how we were regarded by those whom we faithfully rebuked—for the remonstrance to which we allude was repeatedly uttered in their presence, and had also reached them across the Atlantic before this passage was penned by them.

We doubt not, the American church will honor our English brethren both for their willingness to receive admonition and for their faithfulness in administering it. When the church shall once come to possess this spirit in a large measure, then will her reformation and her glory constrain the observing world to respect her, and to say—"Of a truth, the Lord is in the midst of her." And we cannot but remark here, how evident it is that the sectarian divisions which have so long weakened and dishonored the church would cease at once, if all Christians were imbued with this spirit.
Response of the English Baptists.

To the Ministers, Deacons and Members of the Baptist Churches in the United States, admitting Slaveholders to Communion: with Christian salutations from a Committee of the Baptist Union, meeting in London.

Dear Brethren:—By the Convention recently held in London of delegates sent from various nations, and advocating the use of peaceful and moral means for the extinction of slavery, your case with many others, has been prominently brought before the Christian public. By what we knew before, we have been often grieved, but the facts recently set before us have so forcibly exhibited the extent to which Baptist churches, as well as other sections of the Christian community, are implicated in the great offense of slavery, that we feel bound by conscience, by the claims of humanity, and the laws of Christ, to state our feelings on this all-important subject.

At this Convention, after a long and deeply interesting discussion, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1. That it is the deliberate and deeply settled conviction of this Convention, which it thus publicly and solemnly expresses to the world, that slavery in whatever form or in whatever country it exists, is contrary to the eternal and immutable principles of justice, and the spirit and precepts of Christianity, and is therefore a sin against God, which acquires additional enormity when committed by nations professedly Christian, and in an age when the subject has been generally discussed, and its criminality so thoroughly exposed.

2. That this Convention cannot but deeply deplore the fact, that the continuance and prevalence of slavery are to be attributed, in a great degree, to the countenance afforded by many Christian churches, especially in the Western world, which have not only withheld that public and emphatic testimony against the cause, which it deserves, but have retained in their communion without censure those by whom it is notoriously perpetrated.

These resolutions having been taken under the most serious consideration by us, they have been deliberately affirmed, as the sense of the Committee, and we now feel it our duty as members of the Baptist denomination, linked with you by the profession of a common faith, to address you, by a serious and affectionate appeal.

Brethren and Fathers! In the name of our common Lord, we beseech you to lend us a patient and prayerful hearing. Affection for you prompts to the duty; let the same affection on your part induce a listening ear. On whatever there may be unlovely or unchristian among us, we invite your brotherly animadversion: we beseech you to indulge us with the same freedom in return.

In the first place, we acknowledge—and we do it with shame for our country—that the system now cherished among you originated while your country was in dependence upon Great Britain; and the recollection of this fact gives additional earnestness to our appeal. But while this is true as it respects the origin of the system, have you not since that period made it eminently your own by the tenacity with which you cling to it, and the determination with which you resist every effort to deliver you from its criminality and curse? Brethren—we would fail to come to your rescue; we beseech you to receive us as fellow-workers with our Divine Master, whose mission was "to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."
Organization of Baptist A. S. Convention.

[The letter then shows the injury inflicted on religion by its professors holding slaves, rebukes their apologists, condemns the practice as impure, the motive as base; points out the increased guilt consequent upon superior intelligence; urges to active and vigorous opposition to the enormity; and closes thus:]

Praying that in this and all things, you may be guided and blessed by the Father and Redeemer of all our spirits.

We are, dear brethren,

Yours in Christian affection,

W. H. MURCH,

JOSEPH BELCHER,

EDWARD STEANE,

Secretaries.

London, Nov. 10, 1840.

CHAPTER IV.

Organization of the National Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention—Address to Southern Baptists—Threats of the Slaveholders—Southern Analysis of the Boston and other Boards—The declaration of neutrality by the Boston Board—Slaveholders still dissatisfied—Agents posted South to conciliate them—Address of the A. & F. B. Society declaring neutrality.

Pursuant to a call signed by more than seven hundred Baptists, a National Convention was held in the city of New York, April 28, 1840, in McDougall Street Baptist House of Worship, for the purpose of considering the connection of the denomination with slavery, and of inquiring, "what could be done?" by Baptists to relieve the benighted and suffering slaves of our country, and to disconnect the anti-slavery portion of the denomination, from a practical support of the slave system, in which they were involved in their church and associational relations.

At this meeting an organization was effected, much truth by discussion was elicited, and committees were appointed.