

Moral Machinery Simplified.

**D I S C O U R S E,**

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BY  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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If the leading principle of this discourse is founded in truth, it is very important that it should be received and acted upon. Its adoption twenty years ago by this community, if it could then have been universally received, would have prevented a great amount of profitless agitation. One thing is plain; and that is, that voluntary associations of some kinds, and for some purposes, are to be encouraged; and some of other kinds, and for other purposes, are to be rejected. And the labor of this discourse has been directed in search of some simple principle, that shall aid in drawing the line between what is, and what is not to be approved. The writer is aware that the positions here taken, are contrary to current opinions, and he would not be disappointed if they should call forth discussion. Such discussion he invites. If errors can be shown, affecting subordinate branches of the argument, they who point them out, will help to remove defects in the argument, and to the establishing of a principle, which in the writer's view, involves the best interests of man. And if the main position of the discourse can be shown to be unsound, they who detect its unsoundness, will deserve his gratitude, for delivering him from a serious error. And they need not, (except for their own reasons,) be very careful of the manner and spirit with which they write. If with candor they come directly to the overthrow of the main positions, they will make conviction easy. But if they merely nibble at the drapery and the outskirts, they shall have credit for the crumbs of refutation which they afford. And if they wrap strong argument in strong denunciation, it will be easy to separate the husks from the kernel; and to gather the good into vessels, and cast the bad away.

## DISCOURSE.

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COMMUNITIES, like individuals, gather wisdom from experience. And the experimenter in science, turns even his unsuccessful experiments to some good account, in aiding him to find what is *not* the way to the desired result. So the numerous experiments made of late in the course of improvement in morals, may aid us to the same kind of negative instruction. If the adage, "It is lawful to be taught by an enemy," is true, it is certainly lawful to extract wisdom from folly. And Providence has ever been instructing the world on this principle, making the follies of one age the means of instruction to the next. And we may hope that all the new developments of the spirit of the present age, however ill-tempered that spirit may be, and all the wrecks of unfortunate enterprises, as well as all successful works of reform, will aid us in finding the more excellent way. Through all past history, and all passing events, Providence is reading to us a lesson as to what he will have us do.

And never were such helps more needed; never was it more difficult to ascertain what is duty, in relation to the use of our public responsibilities, than it now is. While many are crying, *Lo here*, and *Lo there*, reflecting minds are in a maze of perplexity. And this age of discovery would do enough for one age, if it could discover to us the path of duty, and lay open the channel in which the quickened energies of the public mind, may most safely and beneficently flow forth for reform and human improvement. And this discourse is designed to contribute its mite towards such a discovery.

The matter which will come under discussion, touches the lawfulness and expediency of the principle of voluntary association, in reforming enterprises. I cannot agree with those who wholly exclude the voluntary principle of association, in the cause of benevolence. When the object of the association is to feed the hungry, or to supply the spiritual wants of the destitute, and where large out-

lays are contemplated, requiring the coöperation of large bodies of men, I see no objection to the principle. Some would contend, that in such cases the funds should be gathered and expended by the constituted authorities of the church. And that those denominations whose theory makes all the individual churches in their communion, but so many subordinate branches of one church, can conduct their benevolent enterprises more efficiently, and more for their denominational interests, without separate organizations, and under the hand of the constituted authorities of the church, is what we as Congregationalists are not interested to affirm nor deny. For Congregationalism, making each individual church essentially independent of the rest, and having no constituted authorities above the single church, has no hands to conduct benevolent enterprises, on a large scale, but what is created by voluntary combination. All our associations larger than a church, united for any purpose, are by the necessity of the case, voluntary associations. If, for instance, we were to conduct the work of foreign missions, by a society composed of a delegation from all the churches that contribute to the funds, or by such bodies as the General Association of Massachusetts, the work would then not be conducted by ecclesiastical authority. For Congregationalists know no permanent authorities, between the single church and the great Head of the church. The General Association is only a voluntary society, disclaiming all authority. And the Consociation admitted by some Congregationalists, is a departure from the principles of Congregationalists, and is but another name for a Presbytery. Congregationalism then, does not admit of our conducting benevolent enterprises on any other than the voluntary principle.

But there is a class of voluntary associations which are seriously objectionable. I mean those *whose object is the forming of a desired public sentiment in relation to any particular sin, in order to use that public sentiment as the instrument of reform.* The objection is not against reforming by proper influences a vitiated public sentiment; but against the *kind of machinery* employed for the purpose, and against the *design and use for which* it is formed. The question is not whether those erroneous opinions of men, behind which sin has entrenched itself, shall be removed, but by what means shall we attempt their expulsion? By the symmetrical development of gospel truth, brought to bear upon the particular sin which we

seek to remove, in connection with others, and striking at the root of all sin, by insisting on evangelical repentance and fruits meet for repentance? or by mustering a promiscuous combination of good and bad men, and all, that for any reason can be enlisted in opposition to that one sin, and annihilate the sin by force of numbers arrayed against it? And another question is,—whether public opinion, when made to order, so as to fit exactly, let the means by which it is made be what they may, is the proper instrument of reform, the proper motive to present to a sinner, to induce him to abandon his sins?—whether we should assail the sinner with lightnings plucked from the brow of a frowning public, or with those plucked from the thundering and quaking mount of God?—whether we should say to the sinner, repent or be despised by men, or whether we should say, repent or burn under the inflictions of eternal justice?

Let me here make the distinction between the two kinds of associations plain. The one kind, for brevity's sake, I shall call benevolent societies, and the other I shall call public opinion societies. When I call those which are in my view allowable, benevolent societies, I do not insinuate that the others are not benevolent in their *intent*. I call the one benevolent societies, because the main purpose of their existence, is to gather and apply funds to benevolent uses; and I call the other public opinion societies, because their main purpose is, to form, and to use for reforming men, a public opinion of a desired cast. The one class of societies raises and applies funds, it may be for relieving the temporal wants of men, and it may be for relieving their spiritual wants, by giving the Bible or sending the preachers of the gospel, or working the press for the diffusion (not of one specific principle, but) of evangelical knowledge as a whole. Public opinion societies have a use for funds. But it is to sustain presses and lecturers, to work up a public sentiment, which public sentiment they expect will do the work of reform. But those which, by way of distinction, I call benevolent societies, lay out their funds directly to supply the wants of the destitute, or to reform the vicious through the agency of the whole gospel, directly and appropriately applied; such as foreign missionary and home missionary and tract societies. These all labor for the inculcation of the gospel as a whole, and seek to act directly on the sinner, and not upon him through the medium of other's indignation, first wrought up for the purpose.

The only one of them which is at all capable of being made a seeming exception to this remark, is the Tract Society. But a moment's reflection will show that religious tract societies do not belong to the same category with public opinion societies, even though they may publish tracts on one subject. The American Tract Society exists, not for the purpose of impressing any one or any number of subjects on the public mind, nor for the purpose of giving public opinion a specific direction, and applying that opinion so as to make the sinner smart under its lashes, but for the general diffusion of evangelical knowledge. Denominational tract societies, such as the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian tract societies, exist for the purpose of preaching the whole gospel, as it is understood in their respective denominations. So the Doctrinal Tract Society of our denomination, is virtually a denominational society, enabling us in connection with the American Society's publications, to preach the whole gospel as we understand it. And all these societies differ from the Anti-Slavery Society, for instance, when that publishes tracts, in this, that they do not seek the formation and use of a public opinion on any particular subject. But they seek to reach the sinner's heart and conscience at once, by rightly dividing and presenting the gospel as a whole. The Anti-Slavery Society expends its funds in tracts, to circulate in the non-slaveholding community, expecting there to arouse and embody a force of public indignation, which shall eventually do away the sin of slavery, in another community. In this the difference between it and religious tract societies is apparent.

Having then, as I would hope, made clear the distinction between public opinion societies and benevolent societies, I am prepared to show that such benevolent societies, on the voluntary principle, are approvable and safe. They have a virtual warrant in the New Testament. On one occasion the suffering Christians in Jerusalem, were alleviated by voluntary contributions, collected by systematic means, by each church, upon each first day of the week; and agents were sent around to visit the churches and excite them to the duty. Paul, said he "thought it necessary to *exhort* the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty." Now however others may interpret this, Congregationalists can make nothing more of it, than agencies constituted by voluntary means, acting by the "*exhortation*" and not by

authoritative appointment of Paul. Each church collected funds for the object; then all brought them together and distributed them through one agency, just as our missionary funds are now raised and spent. Here were all the essentials of our voluntary benevolent action. Paul was the general agent for receiving and distributing the funds. But this was evidently because he was then going to Jerusalem. Nothing appears to show that he acted by any ecclesiastical authority, and that he did what he might not have done without an official character.

And nothing in the nature of these voluntary societies shows their action to be unsafe or inexpedient. Where the form of acting is simply by collecting and laying out the free contributions of the benevolent, to relieve temporal wants, or to send Bibles or a preached gospel to the destitute, these are all the guards against a perversion of influence and funds, that common prudence would ask. The publicity of all collections and expenditures, the assurance that a misapplication of funds would stop their income, is a sufficient guard against official delinquency; and neither officers nor members, have a temptation to come in for the purpose of turning the society's machinery to private ends. Machinery constructed simply for opening the treasures of the gospel to the destitute, is less capable of being turned to sinister ends. And the steady and onward march of these benevolent societies for a long time, in the diffusion of good, comprehensive and almost unmixed with evil, is an encouraging token, that the smiles of heaven rest upon this method of doing good. But this is a matter which I shall not be required to labor, inasmuch as few who will take an interest in this discussion will dispute it.

The next branch of my subject will bring me most into collision with current opinions, and here I shall have need to fortify my positions. My main position here is, that mere public opinion societies are unwarrantable. Or to state it more precisely, associations based on the voluntary principle, for the purpose of reforming sinners, by first forming against them a strong public sentiment, and then coercing them into reformation by force of that public sentiment, are liable to serious objections. The objections which I have to allege, will arrange themselves into two classes. First, against the manner of constituting the societies, and second, against the immediate purpose for which they are constituted.

My first general objection then is this, *that the gospel held forth*

*by its ministry, and other agencies appropriate, and appointed by itself, is God's appointed instrument for reforming men, from all sins, and for correcting all vicious public sentiments; and that promiscuous combinations of men, of all characters, having no bond of union but an agreement in opposition to one specific sin, are unauthorized and mischievous in tendency.*

The same voluntary principle of organization which is harmless in benevolent societies, is dangerous in public opinion societies, because the latter have more attractions for dangerous men to come in, as will be seen in the sequel.

I remark in the first place, that these public opinion societies, composed of all sorts of men, are an anomaly in view of the gospel, and wholly unknown to the New Testament. The primitive reformers, the first publishers of the gospel, made no use of the principle of promiscuous combination, and in no way invited wicked men to aid them in their work of reform. They did not form out of a rabble of heterogeneous characters, as many societies as there are sins to put down, and then tell the sinner,—Repent, and escape the wrath to come from an anti-society. They had but one simple organized combination, and that was composed of men who at least professed to go against all sin. The apostle gives its character and constitution in these words: “unto the church of God—to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all them that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the gospel model of a reform society. The principle that we can be advantageously associated in the work of reform, with all who for any reason are opposed to a particular sin, which we wish to put down, though they may be in the practice of all other sins, was unknown to the first Christians. They were as careful to repel the bad, as to gather in the good. Simon Magus might have worked well for a while, in an anti-slavery society. But when his unsoundness in the main was detected, he was declared to have no part nor lot in the matter. Ananias and Sapphira, for aught that appears, would pass muster for a seventh commandment society, but the want of integrity in the root, endangered their action upon the branches of reform. And we shall look to the New Testament in vain, for a single example of a reform society, composed of professed Christians, and professed infidels, united and acting against one specific sin. The whole spirit and policy of the first Christians



went against such combinations : What communion hath light with darkness, what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel !

God himself, having given us the platform and constitution of a reform society, has precluded those of human invention. If we confide in his wisdom, as better than ours, we must believe that his machinery for reform is better than ours. I am so behind the spirit of the age, as to believe that the Builder of the skies, the Former of the mind, and the Finisher of our faith, and the great Destroyer of sin and Satan, is the most competent Contriver of the plan of warfare against sin. And when I find that He has organized a society, designed to do the very work proposed to be done by modern reform societies, I hesitate about exalting what is human, above what is divine in its origin. All the members of His society, are by the very constitution of it, sworn to a warfare against *all* sin ; bound to war the good warfare in whole armour, against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and to deal with every sin, as the natural enemy of their king and country. Then what need have we of other and independent organizations for the same purpose ? And is not our resort to them, a constructive slight upon the Founder of this. Or have the men that compose this, become so recreant to their principles, that their title to membership is vitiated. Be it so. Let their title be vacated, and let better men come in upon the original platform, which no conduct of men can vitiate, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. If you have a better class of reformers, very well, bring them in, and set them at work on the foundation of the prophets and apostles. Grant that the controlling influence, the church, is now in the hands of men, even worse than our fiercest Jehus represent them ; that shows not that the gospel mode of warfare against sin is defective, nor that the principles of Christ's reform society are unsound, but that these men have departed from their professed principles. And it is only a reason for bringing in a holier class of men, to work on the same principles. If you have better men, men thoroughly conformed to the spirit of the gospel, let them come in and work upon that corner-stone, on which God has chosen to build all reforms, instead of resorting to foundations of sand and to fabrics of wood, hay and stubble. If we have the will of God clearly taught in anything, it is that the gospel in its appointed forms of administration, and

through the individual and associated action, of those who imbibe its spirit, is to be the word of life, held forth in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. The gospel thus administered, is constituted the right arm of God, extended to rectify and restore a disjointed world. And the drawing out here and there of independent organizations, to do what God has appointed the way of doing, is not unlike to Jeroboam's mending the institutions of Jehovah, by setting up the calves at Bethel and Dan, and demanding for them the homage required to be paid at Jerusalem, to Jehovah.

If God appointed the gospel, through its appropriate channels of administration, to be the instrument of reform, and if we go and construct other machinery, on principles radically different, and invoke the gathering of Christians around our opposite standard, what do we less than set aside the christian ministry, the instrument of God's appointing? One portion of the Abolitionists are now contending, with just cause, against the forcing in of sectarian policies, disturbing the harmony of their operation, contrary to a foundation principle of their societies. And yet they overlook the fact, that these sectarian matters come in by permission of another foundation principle. The very basis of their organization is a virtual setting aside of the christian ministry, *so far as their cause is concerned*, and this setting aside of the ministry, is the most peculiar feature of Quakerism. So here Quakerism and Abolitionism join hands, and they twain become one flesh. And after having entered so far into a unity of principle, it is natural for Quakerism to seek to enjoy the advantages of the union. But the Abolitionist revolts, and says "Hands off! No sectarianism! no Quakerism here!" But the Quaker replies, "Ah, Friend! thou art mistaken. This is the Abolitionism which we subscribed to. And if this does not please thee, it is because thou art seeking still the interests of *thy* sect, which we understood thee to leave behind, when thou camest into our society." If our Abolitionists will thus virtually set aside the ministry, and substitute an organization, which is, for moral purposes, identical with that of the Quaker-meeting, they must not be too fastidious as to the sectarianism of the Quakers. If they have consented to change the pulpit for the elder's bench, they should reverently listen to the bonneted elders, that rightfully occupy that bench. They at any rate may fairly be called upon to extricate themselves from this dilemma, by either coming back to the gospel

ministry, or by becoming consistent Quaker reformers, and confessing that the Quaker-meeting is just the thing to convert the world.

If the gospel had been appointed to work in its sphere for reforming the world, as law is appointed to work in its sphere for restraining crime and upholding the order of civil society, then independent and promiscuously organized reforming societies, bear the same relations to the gospel, as mobs do to the law of the land. The law takes upon itself the protection of civil rights, and would be horrified at its being done by irresponsible volunteer societies. So the gospel claims to be in its ministry, and appointed channels of influence sufficient, to meet all occasions of the warfare against sin. And both mob-law and mob-gospel, are defended by the same apologies. For instance : there is a case which the law cannot efficiently reach, and so the mob must be summoned. And so here is said to be a case which the gospel cannot reach. Again, the law is too tardy in its action, for urgent cases, and the mob must be called in, for speedier justice. So the gospel is too slow in its action for reformers of Jehu's gait and driving, and hence a volunteer corps of flying artillery must be sent ahead of "the Sacramental hosts of God's elect," to effect the work with more immediateism. And the reasons against a mob-gospel are the same as those against a mob-law. We frown upon mob-law, because it thwarts the regular administration of the law of the land. And we object to mob-gospel, because in many ways it interferes with the regular administration of the gospel, as we have learnt by sad experience. We object to mobs, because they wield a blind and irresponsible power, that is tyrannical and subversive of order and peace. And the sequel of these remarks will show the mob-gospel, to be liable to the same objections. But you say, these societies pursue the *same ends* with the gospel. Grant it. So does the Knight of tar and feathers pursue the same ends with the magistrate, only in a more summary and improved way, and on "free discussion" and voluntary principles. As it is an infringement of law to take its work out of the hands of its authorized agents, so it is an impeachment of the Author of the gospel, to bring such other machinery to do its work. And query ; is not the Non-Resistance Society, which is out against all law, a mere inference from the Abolition Society, which has for like reasons set aside the gospel. Is there not an essential agreement between the two, not only in spirit, but in general principles of action ?

Another ground of objection to bringing in all sorts of people into a society, to put down one sin at a time, is, that those who will control the society, are not likely to agree as to the use of that power, which Christians regard as the foremost instrument of reform. I know it is said in behalf of the Abolition society, for instance, that it relies purely on the gospel, to do its work, that it exists only for the better use of the gospel. And all I have to say in reply to this, is—Don't whisper it in the ears of your many infidel coadjutors. How often has it been said, that infidels have got ahead of Christians, in these works of reform! How often has it been held up, as a peculiar advantage of this system of action, that it saves and turns to a good account, the influence of many opposers of the gospel. And now forsooth, we have this same organization, worked by infidels as well as Christians, relying wholly on the gospel, as the instrument of reform. Surely they are a very accommodating sort of infidels, or else they are such ninnies, as not to know with what instruments they do work. If you have skrewd infidels in your ranks, it is quite as likely that they discern the anti-gospel tendencies of the work, as that they are working in good faith, to bring about this reform by the influence of the gospel.

But this consideration aside, my objection still remains. The most violent haters of the gospel, can easily qualify themselves to serve within the ranks, or become generals of an abolition society. But how can a Christian safely enlist under such generals, who he knows, must at least secretly desire to involve the gospel and slavery in one abolition. This very difficulty is now pressing with a mountain's weight upon the abolition cause. By the jarring of heterogeneous elements, it is found that men so different in views, and spirit, cannot harmoniously coöperate. And if we should soon see the different parties forget the subject of slavery, and take to reforming and abolishing each other, it would not be a stranger deviation than poor human nature has before made.

Again, these promiscuous reforming combinations are based on a false principle of morality. It assumes that a man may be relied on as a permanent helper in reforms, in relation to one sin, when he needs reforming himself in relation, it may be, to all other sins. That such a man may by casual impulses for a time, play into the hands of the reformers, that he may practice his other forms of wickedness, so as to hinder the one in question, that he may pro-

mote the interests of the devil, by some modes of warfare against the flesh, cannot be denied. But is a man who is confessedly under the full sway of depravity, and setting aside the foundations of gospel morality, a fit associate to divide with professing Christians, the influence and responsibilities of a reforming society? If he that habitually offends in one point, is guilty of all, so that the principle and root of his morality is shown to be spurious, and all his morality vitiated in its spring, it would seem to be safe to require, that a man should profess to go against all sin, before we should bind our influence together with his in warfare against any sin, and subject ourselves to a liability to be carried whither he, if men of his character should get the ascendancy, might wish to carry us. I grant, there is in every christian community, a great amount of conventional morality, sustained by selfishness, more or less refined, and which is the result of christian influences, only in a secondary sense. But to seek to avail ourselves of the influence of this morality, by building a reform society, on principles of sheer selfishness, and confessedly allowing and expecting our co-workers to be destitute of christian motives, is virtually unchristianizing the work of reform, and surrendering our influence to the control of another's selfishness or infidelity. Selfishness may pursue the right track for a while; but it is not safe to shut ourselves in to ride in cars which it propels. Nor can we safely bind Christianity and Infidelity together in one scheme of philanthropy.

I do not deny that there are many in the community whose moral characters are excellent, and whose influence might do much towards these reforms, who yet are not willing, and perhaps not properly qualified, to profess the religion of Christ. But these promiscuous combinations, involving a renunciation of the gospel, are not the best way to avail ourselves of their help. *They* are not the men to wish us to reject the help of Christ, for the sake of securing theirs. Men of the excellent characters supposed, would be far from wishing us to open the sluices for the coming in of everything, and anything, as the way to secure their aid. There are ways enough for such men to employ themselves, and their influence in upholding the orderly ministration of gospel influence, and following that influence out to its reforming results. And such men are usually better pleased with such a co-working with us, than with a reforming rabblement, when it is not their character, but the lax principles of the

society that give them a standing in the society. If men of character and seeming good morals, object to working for reform with the friends of the gospel, because they dislike the gospel, and would prefer to work on principles that carry them away from gospel influence, that would show them to be unsafe associates for the friends of religion. But the conceit that anything is gained with that class of community, by opening the doors of admission to all sorts of men, is groundless. More have been repelled and disgusted, than have been gained.

This principle of combination is further objectionable, inasmuch as it partakes of the nature of a profession of religion, a profession of a branch of it at a time, and naturally brings other men into opposition to those, who profess religion in the gospel way. The society comes out with a declaration of sentiments, in which all its members are supposed to agree. And by joining the society, each one records his profession of the principles involved in this declaration. These principles are claimed to be a part of religion; and each member stands before the community, as a part of a professor of religion. Not to insist on the contrariety of this practice to the gospel, it is objectionable on other grounds. With many whose notions of religion are limited and confused, the zealous and noisy profession of one branch of morality, serves as a substitute for the *practice* of the whole of religion. Being far from the spirit and temper of the gospel, yet in earnest coöperation with some professing Christians, in a society that is holding up one limb of christian morality, and being in a habit of denouncing as time-servers, all professing Christians that stand aloof from their society, they are in a way to fall into the notion, that their little twig of religion, is better than the whole that is professed by others; and to feel that membership of an anti-slavery or a moral reform society, is a good substitute for repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The injurious results of the abolition combination, which have of late been a matter of complaint, are not so much the results of a perversion of the enterprise, as of the combination of elements employed. The basis of the combination, welcomes the coöperation of all of every character, who can subscribe to the one principle of the association, and of course does not hinder the coming in of unprincipled men. And where the carcass is, there are the eagles gathered together. Some are infidels, some haters of the christian ministry,

and would move heaven and earth to overthrow it, some are political radicals and levellers, some are sighing for the overthrow of government, and the introduction of universal anarchy. Some are wishing to bring in the condition, which the prophet bewails: As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. Into such a combination good men bring their influence, and pledge it to go where majorities, or the leading minds shall carry it. The work goes forward, the combination swells, auxiliaries come in by thousands, the machinery becomes broad and complicate, its energies for moving the public mind to a desired position here and there are great. Through the press it commands the opinions of millions. Yet some one, two, or three minds must, from the necessity of the case, stand at the helm and give direction to the whole; their opinions must traverse the minds of the mass, and be echoed by obedient thousands. Suppose then this great corporation for the manufacture of public opinion, under the hand of its single director, or small board of directors, is in full tide of successful experiment. Its hundred agents are preaching, its publications are flying like the leaves of Autumn, its converts are coming in by squadrons. Now when all hearts are seemingly at work, towards their one principle, it leaks out, that the director has got another end to answer, by all this machinery, on which his heart is quite as much set, as on the society's principal end; and that he has only to put his finger on this and that spring, to turn his whole enginery against the christian ministry, and make even his clerical associates sustain him and his engine, in setting public opinion against them and their office, and make them patronize publications, in which themselves are lampooned and traduced. Does not such a case come within the range of possibility? To show it possible, suppose further that the man at the helm has acquired, as the skilful pilot of such a ship naturally would, such a reputation for zeal and wisdom in the great cause, that his word has become in a sense law, to the less reflecting and greater part of the society. Suppose the sentiment becomes general, "*that he cannot be separated from the cause;*" and suppose he issues a declaration, *ex cathedra*, that the cause requires the taking along of other designs. Suppose he gives out that the christian ministry stands in the way of the cause, and must go down, and that no man can be a true friend to the cause who will not help to put it down, and who will not say, amen, to every response of the

society's oracle. And suppose that matters are in such a train that no man can remonstrate against his abuse of influence, without being visited with denunciations, and treated as an outlaw from the community of abolitionists. In such a case I think the result supposed is fairly possible. Say, if you please, it can exist only as a perversion of the society's design. Yet it is such a perversion as might be predicted from the combination of its ingredients. It is such a perversion as you might expect of the products of your soil, if you were to mix the Canada thistle plentifully with your seed.

What renders the heterogeneous combination still more unsafe, is the scope which it gives for the most undesirable characters to gain the ascendancy. This is in a sense true of all combinations where christian principle does not prevail. In such voluntary societies, those who most love to have the preëminence, are most sure, other things being equal, to get it. And yet ambitious minds are not usually the most safe, to be trusted with interests so vital. Every community has a plentiful sprinkling of restless spirits, who are watching every movement of the waters, for some current to bring them into notice. And these promiscuous societies furnish a fine scope for their peculiar talent and tempers. So, by natural causes, the worst man will be likely to come uppermost, as the froth finds the surface. Do not understand me now, as asserting that this is actually the case, in regard to the leaders of these societies. I speak of what we might have had reason to expect, saying nothing as to what is, and leaving to those better acquainted, to judge of that. I know many excellent men who have coöperated with these societies. But who and what manner of persons are leaders, is not for me to say.

Again, this principle of promiscuous combination, in reforming works, is itself an absurdity and the parent of absurdities. Such an infidel as Thomas Paine, and such a Christian as David Brainerd, compare notes and find they agree, as to the way of abolishing slavery. So they draw up a declaration of sentiments, and collect their brethren into a society on its basis. So, when we have this christiano-infidel society in operation, we have Brainerd confiding in Paine's Christianity, so far as to believe that Paine will do one christian work in a christian way. And we have Paine confiding in Brainerd's infidelity, so far as to promote this branch of Christianity, in a way to bring no detriment to infidelity. While the expectations



of both, are the essence of absurdity. And this absurdity, inherent in the nature of the enterprise, has had some edifying exemplifications. The abolition society, has presented the spectacle of absurdities enough in one man, one would think, to cure an age. But let me not be understood to speak disparagingly of that individual. His absurdities I charge to the account of the absurd principle on which he is working, and so allow all that his admirers claim on the score of his personal and private character. I have not the happiness of being either one of his personal friends or admirers. But I will argue *ex concessis*, and guided by report of those who ought to know him best, I will say, he is an excellent, clear-sighted, upright, amiable, liberty-loving, unambitious man, endeavoring to do all things in simplicity and godly sincerity. And then I have a grievous charge to urge against a set of principles that can turn so much personal excellence, into such a wreck and maze of absurdities, and so much natural sweetness into the gall of asps. Nor can I speak freely of these absurdities as they are, without coming under suspicion of severity. But truth is often severe, and yet she will have an utterance without respect of persons. I will then say, that having started on these absurd principles, he has come (we will suppose unwittingly,) into these absurd positions;—speaking from his eminence, he proclaims the christian ministry a usurpation, whose “overthrow is registered on the scroll of destiny.” Then with the next breath, he virtually claims to himself the authority of universal bishop, the real Pontifex Maximus. He issues his bulls as from St. Peter’s chair. And no bishop’s charge to his clergy, is so specific in its details, nor so magisterial in its tone. He gives out particular subjects for preaching and prayers, and puts into the hands of ministers all sorts of notices, and proclamations, and enforces his holiness’s commands, if not by the thunders of the Vatican, yet by the threats of a tremendous volley of public opinion. Next, he will have it that public prayer is not to be allowed, except when the spirit specially moves to it, and yet he must have his stated concerts of prayer, for a specific object, whether the spirit moves to it or not. Next, all human governments are a usurpation, and to be put down, if seditious preaching and writing can do it; and then the government is to be taken under his special guidance, and all true abolitionists, whose consciences are elastic enough to allow them to go to the polls, must do what they can to bring legislatures into subserviency

to his views. Next, no sectarianism is allowed to cross over the threshold of his society, yet discussions in favor of his own sectarian views, must have a prominent place in his paper, which is the textbook of Abolitionists. This paper must by its free-discussion prerogatives, be free for discussion of questions touching *his sect*, and yet turn an ear of adamant to all sectarianism. These are specimens of the absurdities, begot by the principle in question. Call them abuses of the principle, if you please. They are such abuses, as the principle is the natural father of. Like has begotten like. Absurdity begets a child in its own image.

This principle is further objectionable in that it seeks to stop one issue from the fountain of public depravity, without healing or diminishing the fountain. It weakens the force of the gospel argument against sin, by separating it from its connections, and reducing it to the authority of mere human advisement. The gospel must come as a whole, and in its connections, if we will have it come as the power of God unto salvation. It must strike at the fountain and root of sin, and carry a warfare against all sin, if it will do its utmost for a reform. Division of labor is good in manufactures, but it cannot be carried far in the matter of preaching. If Paul had gone forth as an anti-slavery agent, and John as the corresponding secretary of a seventh commandment society, and Peter had presided in an anti-idolatry society, and James had undertaken the abolition of despotisms, our modern principles of reform would have had a gospel warrant. But the gospel itself never would have gone beyond the walls of Jerusalem. And if that principle should now be universally acted on, we might expect to outlive Christianity. If that is the best way to put down one sin, why not the way to put down all sin? Why not multiply the list of antis till you have lopped off all the branches, and then attack the trunk, and bring all your forces into an anti-selfishness society.

Thus I think, I have shown, that this principle of promiscuous combination, is sufficiently objectionable. And now I would refer it to the test of experience. And I would put it to my abolition friends, whether they have not found it a very difficult combination, to work to their satisfaction, and whether these difficulties are not chargeable to the way of organization, and to the mixed multitude with which they have been associated?

And now for my second position, which is, *that public opinion,*

*when formed to our wish, is not the best instrument of reform.* The main and more immediate object of these societies, is by discussions and the circulation of publications, to form among the *non-slaveholding community*, a strong sentiment against slavery. And then to point the slaveholder to this sentiment, and show him that he must abandon his sin, or be the object of public indignation. To show this to be wrong, recur again to the example of apostles. I see them making no dependence on motives drawn from a public sentiment of their forming. Their enemies accused them of having "filled Jerusalem with their doctrine." But the apostles never reasoned as if the motives to conversion increased in proportion to the numbers converted. They did not say,—Here are 3,000 converted on the day of pentecost, and 5,000 more in a few days after, and multitudes both men and women in a few days more, and you will have the world against you soon, if you do not repent. They did not say anything like this: We have added so many auxiliaries, and so many members this year, and mean to have so many next year, and therefore slavery must give way before long. Nothing of that spirit and design appears in their whole history.

This making public opinion, the motive for conversion, is an appeal to one of the meanest of passions. It seeks to reform a man by touching his love of popularity, and his wish to be of the stronger party. We despise the man who seeks the stronger party in preference to principle. And yet, by the working of that very meanness, do we hope to elevate the world from its sins! The apostles could always say "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." I grant that respect for public opinion like many other selfish motives, does in fact keep many from some unlawful and disreputable indulgences,—but not that the reformer is authorized to build on a basis of sheer selfishness, not that selfishness is better for reforms than gospel motives.

Again, public opinion reformers, do not deal with the sinner's conscience. Their principle of action degrades the argument, by taking it from the conscience, and levelling it at the selfish passions. It sets the sinner to calculating, which is the least of evils, the giving up of his sin, or the incurring of the disgrace which it will bring. It says nothing of the sanctions of God's law, nothing of the principles of eternal right. It lays the thunders of eternal justice to sleep, while it is assailing the leviathan by such missiles as human opinions. The apostles pursued their work by commending themselves

to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and not by attempting to expose their shame to the sight of men. They evidently despised the policy, making the work of conversion easy, by creating a tide, on the bosom of which the multitude might drift in. They reversed the process, and sought to bring in a force of principle, that could withstand the current and course of this world.

And when sinners are converted by such motives, they are not morally changed. You have stopped the flow of depravity from one of its vents, but you have not diminished its quantity. You have touched the convictions of self-interest, so as to persuade them that there is a better way of wickedness, but you have not left them in the sight of God less wicked. It would take many such conversions to make a millennium. Such reforms deserve not the name of *moral* reforms. They have little of the moral about them.

Again, public opinion when used as the instrument of reform, is not always a right opinion. It is often tyrannical and absurd in its requisitions. It was a reforming public opinion, which enacted the laws against witchcraft, and frowned upon the juror or magistrate, who hesitated in their execution. This reformer is too well known, and has been guilty of too many acts of tyranny, to have his mandates cheerfully obeyed. Public sentiment, at best, is but the united and embodied opinion of a mass of men, whose individual character comprehends an enormous amount of error and wickedness. And shall their opinion be the reason and inducement for me to practice righteousness? Call upon the sinner to forsake his sins, *because public sentiment requires it*, and his natural reply is,—“Who is this public sentiment, that I should obey his voice? He has required a thousand wrongs to be done, and I renounce his jurisdiction.” There is then a more excellent way; and that is to reason of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, and pour upon the guilty conscience, the concentrated light of the gospel of the Son of God. It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to renew the world. And thus far the gospel has been the instrument of all the genuine reformations and all the true holiness. And it is not for us to set it aside, and attempt by other means, those reformations which the prophet's eye foresaw, under the symbol of the angel having the *everlasting gospel* to preach to the world. The promise of God in the gospel, contains all the hope we have, of righting the wrongs of a wretched world. Philosophy

gives no promise of a millennium, and philanthropy has no resources to produce it. But the gospel's millennium must come in by the gospel's means. And we do the gospel great dishonor, as well as our cause a great injury, when we substitute other instruments of reform. We use carnal weapons, and those not mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. If reformers begin by a rejection of the gospel, let them for consistency's sake, cease their denunciations of gospel ministers, who are slow to join them. The christian ministry has its platform in the idea that the gospel is to be the instrument of all needed reformations. But our reformers having abandoned that instrument, for an artificial public sentiment, a sentiment not derived from the gospel, but one which infidels can entertain and use as well as Christians, have of course taken an attitude of hostility against it. And now shall the enemies of the ministry be heard in their clamors against it, because it will not join their enmity, and help them to put down the ministry and gospel together? It is a mistake to suppose that the present war against the ministry, is a departure from the principles of the abolition combination. It is a departure from the understanding of those principles, entertained by the better part of the combination, and an outrage upon their rights and interests. And yet it is only the carrying out of the principles of the association—acting on the assumption that sinners are to be coerced into righteousness, by force of other men's opinions, and not brought to it by force of gospel truth. This principle sets aside the ministry. And the next step naturally is to let loose the dogs of war upon it. Do you still contend that the gospel is not set aside, but expressly recognized as an instrument of the reform in the society's declaration of sentiments? The question is, what part have you assigned to it to perform, after having filled its place with another agent. If you have decreed the annihilation of slavery by force of public indignation, and rely on the pulpit to manufacture your thunderbolts, you do not help the matter. That is a reliance on a pulpit for a warfare against its own design. We will suppose you come into the solemn assembly, on the Sabbath, and propose to draw out upon the organ, with the assistance of the choir, the tune of Yankee Doodle. Your suggestion is repelled, in that it is a profanation of the place, and an insult to the ministry. But you reply, "No, it is a very sacred business, and it honors the ministry, inasmuch as I rely upon your minister, to take the bellows

and officiate as organ blower, and I can't raise a note without his services to inflate the pipes. And I will denounce him as a time-server, and an enemy to free discussion, if he does not take hold and blow at my bidding." This is a fair illustration of the manner in which abolitionism relies on the ministry and the gospel.

Again, public opinion societies tend to the cultivation of an unchristian spirit. I do not charge individuals with actually falling into such a spirit. To how great an extent they have resisted the natural tendencies of their mode of action, is not for me to say. But if they have put forth their zeal through such channels, and have always, or generally, preserved the meekness of wisdom, and the kindness and benevolence which becomes reformers, if they have been gentle unto all men, free from all bitter denunciations, they deserve great credit for self-control. Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned! The ultimate reach of their principle, touches a bad passion of the human heart. It seeks to coerce men to do right, by discharging upon them the vials of public indignation. And in all the agitation and friction of public feeling, needful to accumulate the charge, the operator is thinking of the result, and how his antagonist will feel, when the battery comes to explode. This puts him under strong temptations to contract a bitter and vindictive spirit. And then such attacks upon the wicked passions of men, are more likely to awake provoking resentments, than those which touch the conscience at the same time, with the passions. And he who uses gospel motives as the means of persuasion, can more easily keep himself from reciprocating a bad spirit, and returning railing for railing. Here if I mistake not is the true explanation of what has been a mystery to some. After sympathizing with the anti-slavery reformers, they have confessed that they have found themselves, much under the mastery of a bitter and malignant temper, tending to a general misanthropy, and have thus been compelled for their own peace of mind, to break away from the exciting connection. Such examples may have been few. But I see not how any one can enter into the enterprise, conducted on such principles, with an all-absorbing interest, without being revolutionized and spoiled, in the spirit of his mind. And I look upon those who have been through unhurt and unsinged, with something of the wonder attached to the case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

And whatever of the denunciatory spirit is chargeable upon this

class of philanthropists, is owing more to their absorption in a mistaken scheme, of producing a millennium by the force of a wicked world's opinions, than to any natural asperity of mind. Take the design of their society for your premises, and denunciation of all out of the society is the logical conclusion. This public opinion, being the all in all, the renovator of the world, and the remedy for all its moral diseases, every word uttered against it, strikes the ear like blasphemy. A sort of pious horror is the mind's natural response, to every attack upon that opinion, on which hangs the salvation of millions. "Free discussion" is a charming phrase, and potent to conjure with. But when the favorite public opinion is touched with a rude hand, it changes itself to *ruat coelum!* in a twinkling. An attack upon the world's last hope is too much to be endured! He who touches this, touches some sacred thing, and makes the whole body of bleeding humanity jar and tremble. Here lies the secret of much of that impatience of contradiction, which has been complained of in our assertors of the right of free discussion. They have identified the whole interests of God and man with their scheme, and opposition to it becomes constructive treason against heaven and earth. And if it be true that some of the most amiable dispositions, have become spoiled and waspish, by their sympathy with such a cause of benevolence, we need not wonder.

These public opinion societies are further objectionable, from their tendency to destroy the balance of religious minds, so as to make the whole of religion to consist in attention to one branch of duty. The principle being admitted, that public indignation against sin, is the instrument of reform, there is need of great care in concentrating the forces, so as to bring the utmost of the reforming power upon one point. One sin must be made the object of attack, and the rest for a time must be in a measure forgotten. There is need of that economical mode of warfare, proposed by a redoubtable captain, who with a handful men, was intending to destroy a whole army, by first challenging twenty men and killing them, then twenty more and killing them, and so on till he had despatched the whole. So our reformers challenging first one sin, and killing that, go in a degree upon the assumption, that the rest of the army of sins will remain quiet, while they are doing the work upon the one which they have called out. And they act on the principle, that the heart of the community must be withdrawn from other concerns

in order to put forth its more intense indignation against this sin. So the solitudes of each mind enlisted, sympathize in the seeming wants of the cause, and marshal themselves into a settled habit of feeling, that this cause for the time being, is everything, and that all other interests of time and eternity are nothing in comparison of it. Thus it comes to be felt, that other christian obligations cannot be answered till slavery is abolished, or till the seventh commandment is better obeyed. Now it is superfluous to say, that christian character in such instances is crippled and maimed. And sad would be the condition of the church, when her various works of mercy should be found so at war with each other, that one would not advance unless the other stopped, and when she must spend her strength in contending about which shall go first.

These public opinion societies have done not a little, to unsettle the peace and order of society. That thirst for novelty and profitless innovations, that reckless agitation, that gaping after wonders, that encouragement of spiritual quackery which has thrown the community into a rambling state, is perhaps as much the result of this, as any other single cause. These societies have begot the notion of making millenniums by steam, and leaving in the background, all the agencies which God has appointed for the purpose, and thus have given a new impetus to restless minds. And he who wishes to raise a storm for the sake of riding astride its whirlwind, has only to proclaim himself the herald of some new body of reformers, that are just about to put forth their plenipotence and fetch in a new era. He takes the cars, and forth he goes, scattering his proclamations, and taxing the wonder and gullibility of the people. Then close upon his heels another trends, and another, and another still; and all have something equally new, and equally wonderful. And thus the public ear is dinned with the jargon of crudities, and false promises of reform; and humanity blushes at the disgrace of being thus driven about, by every gust of wind and chaff. I shall not deny that there are minds so constituted as to look upon all this, as glorious times, and to feel that agitation is a good in itself, irrespective of any good to come from it. But those who love to fish in troubled waters, are not the best judges of what tends to the public good. Such a state of things vacates for a time the action of God's appointed means for the salvation of the world.

And what is the remedy for all this? Remedy! There can be



no remedy, while the disturbing forces are kept in action. The remedy when it comes, (and may the Lord hasten it in his time,) will be an abandonment of a pernicious principle of action, and a return to the use of the gospel. The gospel cannot be heard with effect, while the doors of its access are thronged and jammed with officious, foreign and impertinent helpers. If we *must* do all our work through public opinion societies, let us have one more, A GRAND ANTI-ASSOCIATION SOCIETY, to save the cause of reform from its friends, and replace us under the steady action of reforming influence. If so much froth and foam shall eventually disgust the public mind, and create a revulsion in favor of the steady and symmetrical development of divine truth, and a universal conviction that the world's salvation must come out of Zion, through channels which God has opened, the event will justify God's wisdom in suffering the disorder for a time.

Let it become again a settled principle, that the word of life held forth by the ministry, and the holy example and beneficent action of the friends of truth and righteousness is the instrument of reform; let it be seen that the quickened energies and aspirations of the public mind after a world's deliverance, must go out through these channels, and that those reforming enterprises that draw away the public heart from these, will fail, then we may talk indeed of the opening of a new era. Let this plan on which apostles acted, be adopted, and we shall see again the coöperation of heaven and earth. We shall be found workers together with God. The skies will drop down righteousness. The Spirit of God, whose action gives to means all their efficiency, but who has retracted his influence, as a frown upon the severance of the work of benevolence from his appointed means of benevolence, will renew the showers of his gracious influence. The sighing of the prisoner, and the groans of the oppressed, and the wants of the world, will please and rouse to action all the energy of philanthropists, in working the enginery of the established institutions of religion. Necessity will draw philanthropists around the gospel, the Sabbath and the ministry, to use them with ten-fold power, as that which is mighty through God, to break every yoke. O that the people of God would now come back to this simple, yet grand idea! and no longer be guilty of the inconsistency of proclaiming Christ to be the anointed of God, to preach deliverance to captives, and the opening of prison to them

that are bound,—and then silencing his preaching, and seeking deliverance by demonstration of human opinions! Then should we no longer see the heart of the community diverted from christian institutions, and wasted upon evanescent schemes.

Having stated my objection to public opinion societies, I will now meet the strong argument in their favor; and that is, that the temperance cause advanced well under their auspices. But there is more of fallacy in this argument than my limits will allow me to expose. I will present some of the main points. In the first place, even allowing that all the success of that enterprise is attributable to the public opinion principle, it would not prove the principle sound and safe to be used again. Mobs sometimes do a thing good in itself, yet we dare not trust them as our usual executioners of justice. To encourage them, is to do evil that good may come. So if the principle of reforming by the regulated opinion of the mass of the community, is bad in itself, one instance of its success would not show it to be good.

Now I am free to admit, that there was in the temperance enterprise some use of this public opinion principle. But its use was far less than is now represented, and the benefit reaped from its use is very questionable. The first impulse was given to the cause, not by a public opinion society, but by the pulpit and the press, acting independent of any society. Discussions were had in ecclesiastical meetings, the preaching of Hewit, Beecher and others upon the subject, and the publication of their productions, roused the general attention of ministers to the subject. And by a concert, almost universal, the ministry lifted up its voice. With such a vigor did the ministry act, that many parishes were shaken by the recoil. Nothing was more common, than to hear that such and such a minister was about to be dismissed, for his strong preaching upon intemperance. Now this was not the result of a public opinion society. And when the temperance societies were formed and the pledges taken, what was the precise intent? Was it to muster a force of public opinion against rum-drinking, or was it to prevent the sin, by more direct means? I grant that a change in public opinion was the result of the efforts. I grant that the desirableness of such a change as a means of preventing men from drinking by shaming them out of it, was used as one of the arguments for effort. I have the instances now in my eye. But from my own recollections of what

took place in the sphere of my observation, I am convinced that that argument had proportionally little employment and influence. I will give my own experience had in the early stages of the work, and refer it to other ministers, and early friends of the temperance cause, to judge whether it is not a fair sample of the way in which the work was generally done. As soon as I became convinced, that entire abstinence from ardent spirits was a duty and the way of reform, I prepared a series of sermons on the subject, and preached them, while almost the whole of the congregation were in the practice of drinking more or less. Great agitation was the result, but the opinions of many were changed. Not knowing that I could depend on more than half a dozen individuals to go with me, I invited a meeting to form a society, which was done with encouraging prospects, but amid much opposition. Then the pledge contained in the constitution was vigorously circulated for signatures, and with great success. Now for what end did I circulate that pledge. My purpose was this; I wished to bind those of us who had adopted abstinence, to the practice forever. Then I wished to bring in and fasten upon it, as many others as possible, in order to keep them from that moderate drinking, which is the foster parent of drunkenness. This was my main object, and this was the most desirable result. And I lodge the appeal with all competent judges, whether this was not essentially the way, in which the work was usually begun and conducted.

But if this was the object of temperance societies, to be chiefly repositories for a pledge, which should bring in individuals and bind them to *practice* temperance, their public opinion character disappears. It was a society more to regulate their own practice, than to influence the practice of others by a show of their opinions. It is very true, that when they had put their own practice right, their *example*, rather than their opinions, would naturally tend to embody an opinion against dram-drinking. The working of such an opinion would be a collateral result of their action. But the first and main thing sought, was to get the names of A, B and C to the pledge, in order to be sure that their own practice should be right. And now who does not see that this intent was far different from that of public opinion societies? Say if you please, that a signature to the constitution of an anti-slavery society, "partakes of the nature of a pledge not to be concerned in slaveholding." No one will pretend that it is

the main and most immediate end for which such a society is formed, to induce the people at the north, (not one in a hundred of whom are ever likely to become slaveholders,) to sign such a pledge to keep themselves from the practice. 'The purpose without which abolition societies would not exist, all must allow, is not to restrain themselves from yielding to the temptation to become slaveholders, but to embody their collected influence, to create such a public sentiment here at the north, as shall in some way compel the south to give up their system. 'This being the fact, the parallel between the temperance society and the abolition society, fails in the most material point. Its friends and agents, entered into the design common to public opinion societies, to a very limited extent.

And so far as they did go into it, I think they injured rather than benefitted their work. We are not to suppose that every argument used in all the temperance lectures, was just what it should be, and fit to be quoted as a precedent in other enterprises. And my recollections now embrace instances, where this use of the public opinion argument was resorted to, and was productive of results which are now matters of regret.

And to show that this cause did not take its success from public opinion societies, I suppose it will now be conceded, that barely the name, and in some instances the form of temperance societies now exist. The pledge is in use as formerly. But societies having their vigorous police, and controlled by central powers, and capable like the abolition society, of being swayed hither and thither by acknowledged leaders, do not exist. We have also occasional conventions of the friends of temperance; but we have not a drilled and organized corps, and yet the temperance cause is now advancing as rapidly as at any former period. If the cause was ever promoted by the association principle, it is not now, for the energy of that principle has gone from it. Yet it goes on at least with unabated force. Nor is its present progress owing to a momentum acquired in its earlier progress. For other and powerful causes are now at work for its promotion. A mass of the fog which has been wrapped about this parallel between the temperance and abolition cause, would clear away, if this simple fact were borne in mind, that temperance societies always contemplated reforming *men's practice*, and converting the sinner: at our doors, while abolition societies have been seeking chiefly to *change men's opinions* here and send those opinions on a

warfare abroad. Then, if we attribute none of the result to the public opinion principle, we have causes enough to account for the fact. We have the pulpit acting with vigor, and the press putting forth an agency of mighty power, but no more powerful than it might otherwise have been, if it had had no connection with societies. Then we have had the action and discipline of the churches, and then we have had the coöperation of the learned professions, and of enlightened and christian legislators. And after these have had their share of credit, there will be little left for the mob-gospel principle.

The wrecks of other enterprises, based on this public opinion principle, furnish as strong reasons against the principle, as the success of the temperance reform would in its favor, even if we should allow all that is pretended. Every few years of late, have thrown up a wreck of some promising scheme, built on this principle. Some twenty years ago, "moral societies" came up, as if it were forgotten that the church is a *moral society*, capable of doing all the duties proposed by such societies, and that if she were what she should be, she would need no other, and could devise no better. Then came up the temperance societies of the old school, to reform drunkards by giving them an example to show how to drink moderately, that which was not fit to drink. Then came in the society for promoting the observance of the Sabbath; and a better work, and one more needed, and better men to do it, are not to be found. But these and many more that came up on the same principle, have had their brief day, and expired. And from their experience we may gather new assurance, that Providence will frown upon our virtual though undesigned attempts, to draw away interest from the established means of religion, and that every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. It is not a little ominous that few of the public opinion societies, have attained an age even of one score years. That while benevolent societies have come up, spreading and growing every year, widening the sphere of their beneficent action, those formed on the other principle, many of them by the *same men*, and for the same general design of good will to men, have in a short time crumbled away. Whoso is wise let him observe this.

If this abolition scheme is to be given up, you will naturally ask me, by what means I would propose to answer its end. My answer is a plain inference from the positions which I have labored to

establish. If we would find the gospel method of reforming slaveholders, we must take it from the apostles. They went forth among nations, where slavery existed in its worst forms. In Rome and most of its tributaries, the slaves as a mass, were more degraded than the cattle. Being taken as captives in wars, they were made to bear a load of reproach and vengeance, naturally visited upon those of a hostile nation. They were unknown as to civil rights and privileges, subject to every caprice of their master, and liable to be crucified on a slight exasperation. Now how did the first messengers of the gospel assail the monstrous system? Let us look at some of the texts. If the requirement to "remember them that are in bonds as bound with them," relates to slaves, and not to persons in prison for the sake of their religion, the apostles enjoined that prayer should be made for them especially, as a class of sufferers. They required also of masters, that they should give to their slaves that which is just and equal, in view of their responsibility to their master in heaven. Of slaves, they required obedience to their masters, with frequency and emphasis: Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. [See Col. 3: 22. Tit. 2: 9. 1 Pet. 2: 13. 1 Tim. 6: 1.] "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved and partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. And if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strifes and evil surmising." Thus we see that in their abolition preaching, the apostles held it of the first importance, that the slaves should be taught to exercise a christian spirit, and especially toward christian masters, and they frowned on any teaching that was of a contrary spirit and tendency. And they recognized the principle that in some circumstances, and with limited knowledge of duty in the case, a man might be a christian and a slaveholder. We here see the preachers of the gospel working against slavery with great caution, yet with great effect. Not interfering so far as to tell slaveholders directly that slaveholding did not consist with christian principles, while they set before them the means of coming at that knowledge.

Paul's Epistle to Philomon shows us, how he treated this great question. Onesimus, a slave, had absconded from a christian master, and had come to Paul and had been converted, and Paul sent him back to his master. He did not expect that Onesimus would be reduced again to slavery, or to any form of bondage that would be a calamity to him. Paul says, "that thou shouldst receive him not now as a servant, but above a servant, as a brother beloved." Yet he would not that the slave should claim the right of freedom, without the consent of his master. And he took this ground probably, to avoid any reproach which would come upon Christianity, by any seeming countenance given to the idea, that the apostles proposed to unsettle the established relations and institutions of civil society. The measure I understand to be one of christian policy and prudence, intended for the time being, to evade rather than settle the question of the master's right of property in his slave. Nor was there any departure from integrity and christian simplicity in this evasion of a direct attack upon political abuses. It was just what is now done by our missionaries in the Sandwich Islands, and just what God has so signally smiled upon. Though some of those missionaries have thought fit to send over to us advice to a different course, yet the course which they have pursued with so much success, has been just that pursued by the apostles. The king and chiefs of those islands have held the whole people in a vassalage, as complete as that of the slaves in our Southern States. Almost every man was a slave, having no acknowledged rights, and no property secured to him in anything. Yet the first effort of the missionary was not to strike the arm of the despot and rescue the captive. But they put into operation a system of means, which by a process slow, but sure as the ordinances of heaven, will emancipate the whole. So the apostles, while they kept back nothing that was profitable, and while in general statements they brought out *all* the great principles of Christianity, even those which when they came to their full bearing, would cut up slavery by the roots, they exercised discretion as to the manner and time of following particular principles out to their details. They used first those parts of christian truth, which with an eye on eternity as well as time, they saw to be most needed, and most suited on the whole to be useful. If they had been so situated, that a direct attack on slavery, a sin like idolatry, not directly hindering the effect of the gospel, would bring

upon all christian effort the odium of seeming to preach the gospel *for the purpose* of exciting the slaves to blood and carnage, they would have been wanting in wisdom if, leaving more important and less offensive branches of the truth, they had risked their whole success in attacking political power. They failed not of rightly dividing the word of truth, and of declaring the whole counsel of God. But they used wisdom in choosing the points of attack, in warfare against public wickedness. Here did they blend the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove, because they stood as sheep in the midst of wolves.

If this be not the motive of their conduct, let any one suggest a more probable one. Paul either sent the slave back to his master, saying "without thy mind would I do nothing," for the sake of avoiding reproach to his cause, or did it and many other like things, for some reason which to me is wholly inexplicable.

If we go through the writings of the apostles we find no place in which the duty of emancipation is specifically inculcated. We find the religious rights and equal christian privileges of the slaves insisted on. But in all their treatment of the subject, we never find the apostles come in *express collision* with the interest of the masters; never exciting the discontent of the slave. But are we to infer from this, that they had no eye to see the wrongs endured by the slave? By no means. In no instance does a word escape them, which can fairly be construed into an approval of slavery; or to countenance the *practices* of slaveholders. They put forth in general the principles, which were sure to annihilate slavery, and then cautiously abstain from everything which can for the time prop it up.

But why, you will ask, should these apostles going forth to war against all sin, avoid a direct encounter with one sin of such monstrous dimension, as that of slavery, meeting them as it did at every turn? I conceive they acted on the same principles that Christ did, when pressed with the question whether it were lawful to give tribute to Caesar, and when if he answered either way, he must offend either the Jews or the Romans, without benefitting either. He therefore returns the question unanswered, by telling them to "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." So the apostles acted. They had their hands full, without a battle with the government on the subject of slavery, and civil despotism. They left the



limiting of political evils, to the gradual working of the spirit and principles of the gospel. They exhorted Christians to obey magistrates, though they bore a commission from Nero; and of course they did it, without an approval of Nero's despotism. They exhorted slaves to obey their masters, without an approval of the master's claim. They knew that that claim conflicted with the spirit and elements of the gospel, and that when the gospel should come to have sway, slavery would crumble before it. So, all things considered, they chose to commit this reform to the more indirect action of the gospel. Slavery did not, like idolatry, stand so in the way of their work, that a man could not be a slaveholder and a Christian, in the same sense that a man could not be an idolater and a Christian. And as their object was to gain ascendancy for the gospel, without becoming casuists for every enemy of the gospel, they courted no conflict with this, and many other branches of public wickedness.

But after all, did they do nothing to forward the work of emancipation? Did they put in motion no influences, and publish no sentiments that were effectual against it? Look again at what they did publish. They required masters to render to their slaves that which is just and equal. And to show what was just and equal, they gave them the golden rule. These two rules put before an honest, enlightened and christian conscience, would do the work. Would do it? Nay, have done it. Just in proportion as their religion with their spirit progressed in the Roman empire, the reign and rigors of slavery receded. When again slavery came in, in a new form under the feudal system, by means of Europe's changing its proprietors, by the influx of the barbarians, Christianity, weak and shorn of its pristine energies as it was, operated in many ways for the relief of the vassals; till in connection with other causes, it wrought their deliverance. Look now over those European kingdoms, and where is that colossal system of slavery? Twice since the days of the apostles has Christianity virtually cleared those kingdoms of the curse, and that by a process so silent, that history can scarcely tell us how and when. Since the day of the anointing of the Herald of our Salvation, to preach deliverance to captives, the work of dissolving the bands of the slave has been in progress. And though the monster has been laying his grasp on new territories, Christianity has followed him up. Strange as it may seem, while over the whole

northern half of the states of this confederacy, the right to hold men in bondage was acknowledged by the laws, and while New England capitalists were growing rich by the infernal slave-trade, while abolition societies did not exist, the power of the system was melting away, and has now retired from the most powerful states of the Union.

These statements will lead to my views of the fit mode of action, for expelling slavery from our country. I regard slave-holding as a sin, and I hope to see it washed away by that fountain which is open for sin and uncleanness. I rely on the gospel to do the work, so far as any moral means can do it, and I know not by what other means Providence will work. I would not say that preachers of the gospel should carry their message among slaveholders in this country, with all that studied caution and indirection which characterized the anti-slavery preaching of apostles. Because the circumstances are changed, I should be in favor of all the direct and specific action which in view of the circumstances would be wise. Yet I would insist on the same principles of action, regulating the conduct by circumstances. But be the circumstances what they may, I should have no hope of effecting at all by moral means, what cannot be effected by the legitimate powers of the christian ministry, and the distribution of christian influences. I would base my system of reform, upon Christ and him crucified. And with gospel in hand, I would go forth among slaveholders just as did Paul, seeking to make Christians of all, masters and slaves. I would not close up the avenues to conviction, by declaring that I came for a specific purpose, and by writing "*abolitionist*" on my forehead. Indeed, I *would go for no such specific purpose.* The separation of this purpose from the other and greater ends of Christianity, is the radical error of the system, to which I object. It is this which disqualifies abolitionists from preaching the gospel to a community of slaveholders. With the whole gospel open, and seeking to bring every one away from all sin, I would have my abolition agents go in no other character than that of the ministers of Jesus Christ, knowing "nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified;" yet setting forth principles, and putting into action a spirit, before which slavery will flee away as if chased by the breath of heaven.

You will perceive then that I plead for a system of anti-slavery action, that sends its agents right in among slaveholders, and one

that does not begin by closing all access to them, by assuming a hostile attitude. And those abolitionists who tell us that they cannot tread on the slaveholder's territory without a sacrifice of life, tell us that they have begun at the wrong end, and disqualified themselves from using the grand engine which God has constructed for the work. Those who insist upon reforming slaveholders by a system of bombardment, and throwing explosive missiles from a distance, may see the contrast between their system and that of the apostles, who threw themselves into the bosom of the most cruel system of slavery that ever cursed the earth, or blanched the cheek of heaven. And they must either say that the apostles were not true abolitionists, and that the gospel sanctions slavery; or that desiring abolition, they did not know the way to attain it.

A community of slaveholders are by the necessity of the case, but imperfectly evangelized. When they become thoroughly evangelized they cease to be slaveholders. Then we have nothing to do, but go and evangelize them. This is the best way to emancipate their slaves, as well as to save their souls. Let then ministers of the gospel be sent thither by thousands, carrying the spirit of Christ, and not the badges of a party, seeking the conversion of slaves and masters, not to a time-serving religion, but to those great principles which work deliverance to captives. Let all the noble aspirations of the community after the consummation of universal freedom, be turned into this channel, and soon our country will be purged of her foulest blot, and present the spectacle of her enslaved millions, walking forth, not only with all the immunities of citizens, but with all the dignities of sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

This exclusive reliance on the gospel, to do what moral means can do for emancipation, does not exclude the action of philanthropists, in the *colonization* scheme. That is a cause of benevolence, whose claims are supported by grounds, independent of its influence on emancipation. And that many emancipations are to proceed from it indirectly, I cannot doubt. Yet were I called upon to act, exclusively as a reformer and attack slavery as a sin, I must come at it from other positions and with gospel rebukes. Yet I have always been in a habit of indulging strong hopes of good to come to the colored race, both here and in Africa, from this benevolent work. I know that grievous things have been laid to its charge. But I know of no evil that it has produced, except that without in-

tending it, it gave birth to the abolition movements. The father of abolitionists served his apprenticeship under this society, and began his career as colonization lecturer. But we have the best assurances that colonizationism intended no such thing, and that this is one of those unfortunate incidents to which every good cause is liable. And if, as is alleged by some, this scheme is guilty of being patronized by some, who hope by its means to make slave property more valuable and permanent, it is capable of the best proof that it was originated for no such purpose, that most of its friends now patronize it for no such purpose, and that it effects no such purpose. And if it be true, that it is favored at the South by the friends of perpetual slavery, and at the North by the enemies of slavery, this fact is balanced by a similar one. It is opposed at the South by the most uncompromizing slaveholders, and opposed at the North by the great body of abolitionists. So in two ways it makes friends of Herod and Pilate, and brings the antipodes together. And I am no more bound to believe it favors slavery because some slaveholders think so, than the abolitionist is bound to believe it favors emancipation, because some slaveholders think so. It has certainly been the occasion of emancipating thousands; and that is more than can be said of all our abolition societies. And in that I will rejoice as a good result, in spite of the theories of those, who think it not a *good way* of emancipating. For myself, I would prefer a migration to Africa, before a state of slavery in this country, and before the happiest condition possible for the free negro in this country; and I would do by others as I would by myself.

I am aware that the colonization society is charged with making expatriation the condition of emancipation. But that charge is framed on the assumption that the colonization society and the whole body of slaveholders are so in partnership, that each is responsible for the acts of the other. After the *laws of the slaveholding states* had made emancipation impossible without emigration, the colonization society comes in, and offers them the means of emigration. Further than this it does not go. It furnishes neither a temptation, nor a pretext for masters to compel their slaves to emigrate.

This sophism is a parallel for that which forbids us to purchase the freedom of a slave, because we therein acknowledge the master's right of property;—and so makes it out that the Redeemer who purchased our redemption for us, in that act gave his sanction to our bondage.

But you tell me every instance of emancipation by colonizing, serves to enhance the price of slaves and confirm the institution. Well then, cease to lay your hands on every fugitive slave that comes to the North, to prevent his return. It is rumored that regular lines of abolitionists are formed from the slave states to Canada, for the safe transmission of fugitive slaves. And we do not depend on rumor for the fact, that abolitionists are forward to secure the rescue of slaves travelling at the North. I mention this not to their reproach, but to show a piece of inconsistency. Pray tell us, why does making one slave less *by sending him to Africa*, enhance the price of slaves and confirm the system, when the emancipating of one to send to Canada or Boston, does not affect the price of slaves? If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? If you must insist on such an argument, abide its consequences, and say that another slave must not leave his bondage for Africa or any other place, till all are prepared to go, and say that is what immediate emancipation means.

Another of the colonization sins, is the sending away of the blacks *out of a prejudice of color*. That such a prejudice of color exists, and is productive of much wrong and more sorrow, few will deny. But how is the colonization cause responsible for it? What are its tangible acts? This is none of your public opinion societies. The whole design of its existence, is not embodied in a declaration of sentiments, so that it is to be approved or condemned according to the supposed soundness of sentiments put forth by its agents. Abolitionists have judged it according to their own standard and mode of action, forgetting that they act by opinions, and the colonization society by deeds. This mistake has engendered a world of vituperation. It has been assumed, that the colonization society has a creed for which all its members stand responsible, and cart-loads of pamphlets and papers have been ransacked, to cull some monstrosities of the colonization creed. But as this society does not exist for the professed purpose of rectifying the world's opinions, by bringing them to the standard of its own, and is not the receiver and dispenser of aggregated opinion, it matters not as to its purpose, what the opinions of the members may be. Henry Clay's opinions may have influence for good or bad, but that influence is not the property nor the reproach of the colonization society. Judge Wilkeson's opinions may be right or wrong, but the society do not

stand approved or condemned by them. And so of the opinions of the executive board of the society. A public opinion society is responsible for *opinions*, but a society that proposes only acts of beneficence, must be judged by the deeds done by its body. The question is, What is the society doing? Is it doing a good work? yea? or no? If a good work, is it doing it on bad principles, so that the result must be bad in the end? The badness of the principle and tendency, I have not been able to perceive. I see no harm, that is to come from taking two thousand people out of the house of bondage, and giving them freedom and a home in one of the fairest portions of the world. And I will not say, that if I cannot have the emancipation of the whole two millions at once, I will not have any. My views of slavery are such, that I go for emancipation in any peaceable way. Give us immediate emancipation of all, if you can get it. Give us emancipation immediate or gradual, without colonization, if you can get it; or if not, get it by colonization as fast as you can. Liberty is worth all it costs to the colonized, and while abolitionists insist on having no emancipation but what is immediate, if it do not come these hundred years, I would prefer to gather what crumbs of emancipation we can by the way.

Recur again to what the colonization scheme is doing. It has occasioned discussion in the slaveholding states which, if it had not been arrested by the abolition movement, would before this, have resulted in effectual emancipation measures, in the legislatures of the border slave states. It now is the only cause in connection with which, emancipation measures can be freely discussed at the south. It is now scattering silent influences, here and there, for conviction of the sin of slaveholding. Instances constantly occurring, of the slave being offered and snatching his freedom, as a precious boon, though encumbered, if you please, with the condition of going to Africa, is demonstration to the conscience of the slaveholder, that slavery is an evil. It is a sort of practical proof, that must work with more power, than eternal volleys of angry declamation discharged from the North. And then while the good achieved by Abolitionism, is invested in fancy stocks of public sentiment, the fruits of the colonization scheme can be shown to the eye, in thriving christian colonies, on just that spot of ground in all the earth where they are most needed, and where they give the most promise of good. Nor is this work of colonizing without honorable precedents. The He-

brews' deliverance from Egyptian slavery was by colonizing. So also was the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity. Carthage, the rival of Rome, sprang from a colony. Rome had a like origin. Europe changed the masters of all its nations by colonies from the North. Mahomet spread his dominion mainly by colonizing the conquered countries. New England, and all these states grew from the most slender colonies. Look upon that shattered fragment, that forlorn hope of a colony, laying the foundations of empire amid December's frosts on the Plymouth rock, and then sneer again at the more hopeful colony of Liberia. The American continent took its whole population from colonies. And indeed, what nation on earth did not? How did the race go from Noah's ark, and plant themselves where they are, without colonizing? Colonizing then is not such a strange and horrible affair; and we trust will ere long do for Africa, what it has done for America. In its beginning, it has been more auspicious there. It has effected the settlement of 5,000 emigrants, one half of them having been slaves emancipated for the purpose, the banishment of slave ships from 200 miles of coast, the rescue of hundreds of the slavers' victims, the establishment of schools and churches and presses and all the enginery of a christian commonwealth. It has won its way to confidence, in spite of abuse trained and persevering, so that the offers of emancipation are far in advance of its means of transporting. And after detraction has done its worst, it is now coming up to a stronger hold on the affections and patronage of the people. While predictions of its failure have seasoned abolition speeches, it has been growing, and now presents a constellation of little infant states, under a regular political constitution; and its commerce even now has a place on our marine lists, and it employs about twenty coasting vessels. And soon at this rate of advance, the ease of transportation will be as great as that between this country and Ireland. And if now without benevolent aid, 100,000 emigrants can find a passage here from Europe every year, it is not visionary to expect, that with benevolent aid, and perhaps with the aid of the national and state governments, African colonization may go forward, even faster than that, and thus make some impression on the destinies of both this country and Africa.

And now let the tables be turned a moment. We have heard the question as to colonization: What do these feeble Jews? If

even a fox should go upon their stone wall, he would break it down. And now, what do these abolitionists? What have their mighty scheme, and their spasmodic efforts effected? So many years they have been at work, and what have they done? On what scale shall we measure their results? Shall we estimate them by the number of members collected within their societies? the amount of funds raised? the reams of paper printed and scattered? the number of agents employed and speeches made? But this is only the machinery and apparatus employed; where are the results? where are the emancipations? In the West Indies? True, but not by means of our abolitionists, and their principles of action. Those emancipations were effected by principles which come in the very teeth of our abolitionists. They were gradual emancipations, purchased by the government; and no influence from this country had the weight of a feather in effecting them. I ask then again, where are the fruits of so much abolition labor? Do you answer, in changes of people's opinions respecting slavery? If any changes on the whole, favorable to emancipation, have come about by the means, I cannot see them. And has all this noise and effort been made, and has it resulted in mere doubtful changes of opinion, an opinion which has not effected one emancipation? George Thompson, when in this country, told us that in five years that system of means would do the work! How long is it since that prophecy was made? and is it done? or nearly so? *Parturiunt montes nascitur ridiculus mus.* We ask where are the fruits of so much labor, expense, and derangement of the peace of society, and echo answers, **WHERE!**

E N D.