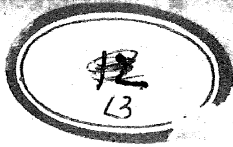


PASTORAL LETTER



OF THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE,

ASSISTANT BISHOP OF VIRGINIA,

TO THE

MINISTERS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

DIOCESS OF VIRGINIA.

ON THE

DUTY OF AFFORDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

To those in Bondage.

ALEXANDRIA, D. C.

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1834

PASTORAL LETTER.

DEAR BRETHREN AND FRIENDS:

When at the late Convention of our Church in the city of Richmond, I was led to discourse on the great efficacy of God's word as preached by his ministers, and a desire was manifested, that the remarks then made should be published and more generally diffused, it will be remembered, by many of you, that I discouraged the proposal; and I did it, as was then stated, from a conviction that there was nothing in the general tenor of the discourse, either new or striking, to render it worthy of publication.

There was, however, a subsequent resolution and request of the Convention, which I dared not then discourage, and must not now neglect.

I am thereby called upon to address a Pastoral Letter to the Churches, on one important and interesting topic, which was briefly, though earnestly, pressed in the discourse referred to: I mean the application of the blessed word of God, to a large and destitute portion of our fellow creatures—those who are in bondage to us. Surely it was the good spirit of him who has told us "to render that which is just and equal to our servants, remembering that we, also, have a master in Heaven," which put it into my heart to propose this subject; and which opened the hearts of those who heard it, to desire, that for their benefit, and the benefit of others, I should discourse further about it. It is the same spirit which is every where leading the humane and pious to consider what can be done for the real benefit of this class of our fellow beings. May it be with me while I write, and with you while you read these lines, and then constrain us all to go and do to others, as we would they should do unto us in like circumstances.

In making the spiritual necessities of a class of our fellow immortals, which is very peculiarly situated, the subject of a special appeal, I hope it is unnecessary for one who has been born amongst them, and who has, for more than twenty years, been giving no slight consideration to their case, to say that he is well aware of the caution and prudence with which every thing relating to the improvement of their condition, should be approached and handled.

In pleading for the religious rights and privileges of an unfortunate portion of our fellow creatures, let none of my readers, for a moment, suppose that I am laboring under any diseased sensibility,

or hurried away by any romantic or overrighteous feeling, which sometimes magnifies, and thereby injures the cause which it espouses. I desire on this and on every other subject, to think and speak soberly as God's word directs. It is quite easy on this, as on some other subjects, to inflame our minds even to madness, and almost to forget that there are any other upon earth who have wrongs to redress and sufferings to relieve. In this world, which is under the frowns of an offended God, there ever has been much poverty, ignorance, suffering and sin. What its millennial state may be, or how soon it may arrive, I undertake not to say, for I am not skilled to interpret prophecy which is not fulfilled. But I expect not in our day and generation to see all men free and equal, or every barren wilderness turned into a blooming Eden. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the duty which rests upon all to hope great things and attempt great things, and look with holy anxiety at the signs of the times.

We shall the better promote our object, by taking the word and providence of God for our guide, and seeking to turn existing evils into the means of future good, than by magnifying our calamities, and thinking that nothing is done unless all is done. Let us, in relation to the subject before us, form our opinion and regulate our conduct, not by the reasonings and theories of men, but by the will of God, as made known to us through the many intimations contained in his word. If we will only take heed to that word, we shall find it the most effectual remedy for all the unhappy disorders of our fallen race. By examining what is the will of God concerning the master and the servant, as set forth in those scriptures which so frequently recognise the relation, and enjoin the appropriate dispositions and duties, we shall best learn what our duty is toward these very dependent objects of our care. Let not the more ardent friends of this unhappy race imagine, from any thing we may say in behalf of ameliorating their condition in our own country, that we are indifferent to any judicious and practicable scheme for the gradual removal of them to some land more propitious to their improvement. We cordially sympathise with those who are endeavoring to convert one of the heaviest calamities into a means of great good, by cherishing the American Colonization Society; but we fear there are those, who, in their zeal for this philanthropic and magnificent scheme, forget that there are other and most important duties required by Almighty God, and which must be performed at once, or else the opportunity is lost forever. It is easy, indeed, to excuse ourselves from the performance of that which must be done at once, and which calls for the exercise of the best feelings of our nature, in patient and persevering effort, by the substitution of a mere verbal approbation of some generous proposal to do some mighty good. But will it avail before God that we highly approve some noble scheme, which, if successful, may transport, from time to time, many thousands to the land of their forefathers.

while we are permitting thousands to perish eternally through ignorance and vice, without an effort to prevent it.

I fear there are too many amongst us, who are prone to indulge in fruitless lamentations over the unhappy condition of these, our unfortunate fellowbeings; and in heavy condemnations of our forefathers folly in bringing this evil upon us; and in magnanimous wishes that all were free and happy in the land which heaven seems to have designed them, while they will not take the least trouble to prepare their never-dying souls for a better country than can be found on this earth. It is very easy to deceive ourselves into a belief that we are most generous in our feelings towards them, and ready to make the greatest sacrifices for their welfare, while, in reality, we are guilty of the most criminal neglect, by withholding that spiritual instruction and discipline, which would infinitely outweigh every temporal blessing that could be lavished upon them by the most indulgent of masters.

My object in the following address, is to urge upon all whom it may concern, whether masters or mistresses, ministers of religion, or private christians, the duty of attending to the religious instruction of those who are held in bondage amongst us.

This I shall endeavor to do.

In the first place,—By stating some of the considerations which urge to the duty.

In the second,—By noticing some of the objections which are raised up against it.

In the third,—I will enquire who are bound to do it.

In the fourth,—How it may best be done.

In the fifth and last,—Shall encourage to the performance of it, by referring to what has been done, and is doing elsewhere, and by some concluding exhortations.

No. 1. In the first place, I have to present some of the many considerations which urge to this duty.

The first consideration is addressed to you, as to those who believe there is a wise and gracious providence, without whose permission nothing can happen, and who is ever directing all events, however calamitous, to the promotion of his glory, and the welfare of our race. This same providence, certainly, permitted a large portion of our fellow creatures to be brought from a foreign land, to be sold into bondage to our fathers, and to increase and multiply among us, until they are now numbered by millions. This was accompanied, at the time, by cruelties the most horrible, and has ever since been attended by many evils to them, to us, to our country at large, and has the fearful prospect of greater yet to come. Christians, Philanthropists and Politicians, all look forward with painful forebodings, not knowing what the end may be. But is there no hope? Is not God, who permitted it, able to bring some good out of all this evil, and make even the crimes and misfortunes of men minister to his glory, and be the channels of his mercy?

Can faith find out no way of turning even this great calamity to good? Is it to be all evil, in the past, the present, the future, to themselves, to the land whence they came, and that unto which they have come? Were they only sent hither to labor and toil for us—to lay waste our lands—to provoke our passions—and yet to receive no good themselves, and send back no blessing to their injured country? Can we discover no token for good in this mysterious dispensation of Providence? When we remember how their captive fathers were brought from a land of Pagan darkness to one of Christian light, and compare the religious advantages which their descendants may have, with the horrible superstitions which yet prevail in Africa, there is a pleasing consolation in the thought, that notwithstanding much of evil in their present condition, great spiritual good may result to their unhappy race, through the knowledge of a Redeemer. But this must be done through the instrumentality of man; and it becomes us, as Christians to enquire how far we are concurring with the designs of Providence, and seeking to promote this most desirable object. We are either in a spirit of faith and holy love doing this, or we have inherited, and are acting upon, the sordid and covetous spirit of our forefathers, who sought only their own profit and pleasure in transporting their fellow-creatures to these shores. Except we are co-operating with Heaven's gracious design, by giving them those religious advantages which they could not have in the land of their forefathers; if we are merely using them for our convenience and profit, as we do the inferior animals who are subject to us, we may indeed, say, as did the Jews in the time of Christ, had we lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in their evil deeds; but by our conduct we shall be witnesses against ourselves, that we are the children of these fathers, and have the same sordid spirit which was in them, which seeks only its own, and not another's welfare. Surely I need not dwell on this point; the mere suggestion will lead the truly pious and benevolent into that train of thought which must bring them to the desired conclusion.

In the second place, let me add to the foregoing plain indication of Providence, that God hath expressed his will on the subject in his word, at sundry times, and in divers manners, so particularly and emphatically, that there can be no misunderstanding of it. That word is addressed to all men, but most emphatically to the poor. To the poor the Gospel is preached. It would have been strange, indeed, if he who foresees all things, and of course knows how large a portion of the human race would live in bondage, should not have said many things to them, applying his holy precepts and promises to their peculiar circumstances. Such a class there had been before the law which came by Moses was delivered from Mount Sinai, and it was twice recognised in that divine code. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was surrounded by hundreds, and God made manifest his will as to the duty of masters, by commanding him to

initiate his servants into the Church by the consecrated rite. As Abraham was the Priest and Patriarch in his family, he doubtless accompanied this ceremony with due instruction, and followed it with that holy discipline which belongs to the household of faith. If we turn to the laws delivered by Moses, we find frequent references to this relation; and very many directions as to the right performance of the duties resulting therefrom. It is worthy of remark, how, in the fourth article of that moral code which is the sum and substance of all God's commandments, parents and children, masters and servants, are identified together, and required to keep holy the Sabbath, in such a way as to show that God expects his faithful ones to command their households after them. If we open the New Testament, we shall find, that, as there were throughout all the churches, those in bondage who had been called to the glorious liberty of the sons of God, so did the Holy Spirit address many special directions and exhortations to them, and to their masters in their behalf. The chief of the Apostles, who directs that we mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate, sets us the example, by the frequent appeals which he makes to them and their masters, by writing one whole epistle concerning a servant who had fled from his master, and by the particular charge which he gives to Titus, his own son in the faith, not to neglect this part of his duty. Though a mere reference to these high authorities ought to be, and I trust will be, amply sufficient to place this duty beyond all question in your minds, I cannot forbear to direct your attention to a few passages in God's word, in order the more deeply to impress upon you a conviction of the claims which this portion of our fellowbeings has upon our active benevolence. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says—"master render unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye, also, have a master in heaven." The plain meaning of which is, that in our behavior towards those who serve us, we are to imitate the conduct of our Heavenly Master towards ourselves. Now when we remember how that Master not only feeds and clothes our dying bodies, and provides for our comfort in this life, but nourishes and instructs our immortal souls, and makes rich provision for their future and eternal happiness, how can we suppose that we have done that which is just and equal and kind and generous, when we have done nothing for their never dying souls. Can any indulgencies, kindnesses, and generous provisions for their present comfort, compensate for a neglect which may prove fatal to their everlasting peace.

There is, also, a direction of our blessed Lord, which should have the weight of ten thousand arguments: "Be ye merciful, even as your Father in Heaven is merciful." God has been merciful to us in ten thousand ways; but in none so effectually, as in enlightening us to know his will, and urging us to embrace the offered mercy of the Gospel. So should we be merciful to those who look up

to us, under God, for the instruction of their souls in heavenly wisdom. Be it ever remembered by us, that our Saviour most emphatically declared, that his Gospel was designed for the poor. We have the poor ever in our houses, on our farms, and in our service. Are we not bound to see that the Gospel is preached unto them. And this leads me to a third consideration. I mean that entire dependence upon us which forms the ground of our fearful accountability, and their just and pathetic appeal to our compassion. Just in proportion as any of our fellow-creatures are dependent upon us, are we responsible for them. It is a most solemn consideration, that we are so connected in this world, as to exert a moral influence over each other which extends into eternity. We may promote or hinder the salvation of each other's immortal souls. How fearfully true is this, in relation to our slaves? How entirely are they at our disposal? What is there which they can call their own? Their time, that precious talent which is to purchase eternity, is all ours: ours the tender period of infancy: ours the interesting season of youth, either to improve or neglect: manhood, and all its strength, is ours: their days of labor, and days of rest, are ours: it is ours to say when and where, or whether they shall meet at all, for the worship of God: it is ours to legislate for their souls and bodies, and say whether they shall read the word of God for themselves, or hear it from others. How fearful the trust reposed in us? Who does not tremble at thought of the responsibility which must belong to it? If we must render an account for the right use of the silver and gold committed to us; if the rust thereof shall witness against us; if the hire of those who have reaped our fields, which has been unjustly withheld, shall cry out against us; oh! what will become of us, when we shall stand charged with the guilt of neglecting the immortal souls of those who have been devoting their time and strength to our service? What must be our condition, when we see them perishing through that ignorance which we sought not to remove? Does not every generous feeling of our nature call upon us to have compassion on those whose time is spent in toiling for us, while we, in the enjoyment of ample leisure, can read the holy volume, and every religious publication of the day, and frequent every meeting of God's people, and abound in all religious privileges? When we sometimes hear those who are thus highly favored, speak as though they could never have enough of such religious opportunities, and complain if they are not almost daily or nightly in the midst of the assemblies of God's people, as if their souls could not live out of such a spiritual atmosphere, we have wished that they would but think, for a moment, of thousands amongst us, who cannot read the word of God, and but seldom hear it; and whose instruction in the truth, is so little the object of concern to their owners, to God's ministers, or any other persons whatsoever. It is deeply affecting to think, how few of our servants attend any re-

ligious meetings whatever; but either spend their Sabbaths in idleness at home, or go abroad in pursuit of any thing, rather than the salvation of their souls. It is mortifying to think how many of those who attend, have no suitable place provided for them, and no wholesome instruction adapted to their capacity; and are, therefore, either asleep in some small gallery, or wandering around the house, as if uninterested in all that was passing within. It is dreadful to think how, while the little ones of a more favored color, are the objects of such deep anxiety and laborious zeal throughout our country, while Sunday schools are multiplying in every direction, and books and tracts are thickly scattered over the land for their benefit, scarcely any thing is yet doing for the moral benefit of hundreds of thousands of these poor little ignorant creatures, who are growing up under every possible disadvantage, and exposed to the strongest temptations to every vice. Until more attention is paid to this duty, we cannot expect any material improvement in the moral and religious condition of our servants.

I come now to the last consideration by which I shall urge to this duty, which may be summed up in one word—"Consistency." The zeal of christians in behalf of distant objects is frequently assailed and rebuked by those of a different spirit, with the oft quoted saying that "charity begins at home." Neither these words, nor the sentiment intended to be conveyed by them, are to be found, as some suppose, among the inspired precepts of our religion; but we could wish, indeed, that, in their plain meaning, they were applied to the duty we are now recommending. If he who, through indolence or vice, provideth not for his own family, as to the needful comforts of this life, acts worse than many infidels who profess not to be governed by such high and holy motives, how deeply guilty and strangely inconsistent must they be who under pretence of other engagements, neglect to make provision for the immortal souls of their household. I need not say to those unto whom these pages are addressed, that he who writes them is no enemy to the most enlarged schemes of benevolence. This is an age of mighty effort, generous zeal and expansive beneficence. We rejoice that it is so. It is pleasing to witness the efforts which are making to impart the Gospel to the poor Indians, whose goodly heritage we now possess; but is there no other unhappy race to which our countrymen are deeply indebted for wrongs in times past, and for present services? It is the will of God, and the duty of christians, to see that the Gospel be restored in its purity to ancient Greece, and be sent at any expense to Asia, Africa, and the isles of the sea; but can it be right to pass by the cabin of the poor negro slave, who lives at our door in ignorance and sin. By such neglect how do we expose ourselves and religion to the most injurious suspicions, and disgraceful insinuations? Can we wonder that an enemy should say—Is this fair, lovely and of good report, to take the proceeds of the toil of the slave, to send the light of

truth to the Hindoo, the Hottentot, or the South Sea Islander, and leave him in darkness? Or is it to provide for our own household, to go, as many pious Sunday school teachers have done, many miles on a Sabbath morning, to teach a few children, chiefly perhaps, of wealthy and pious parents, leaving behind a far greater number of poor ignorant slaves, of every age, who might be taught, if not to read, still to understand the blessed bible, as read and explained to them by one who is competent to the task. Would to God that these charges were not but too true.

No. 2. Having presented some of the considerations which ought to stimulate our zeal and diligence in this cause of humanity and religion, I would, in the second place, notice the two principal objections which are usually brought forward in excuse for the neglect of which we complain.

The first of these objections is usually expressed thus. There is something in the condition of a slave, which makes it unsafe to show him much kindness, lest he be lifted up and rendered dissatisfied with his state; and, especially, that any attempt at enlightening his mind, serves only to show him more of his unhappiness, to excite his desires after higher things, and unfit him for the station in which Providence has placed him.

Now that this might be true of much which some misguided and generous persons would wish to have done for them; that it would be the result of any attempt, through false tenderness, at relaxing wholesome discipline, or of indulging them in idleness and improper liberties, or seeking to refine their taste by a literary education, or to enlarge their minds with political science, we undertake not to deny; but that it is true, or can possibly be true, of any judicious attempt to instruct them in the word of God, and to train them, from their infancy up, as we do our own children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we can never believe, until all our views of the christian religion are changed, or our faith in it utterly taken away.

This religion is from the common father of the whole human race, and designed for the common benefit of all. Of one blood did he make all nations upon earth. He sent his Son to taste death for every man. So far from the poor being in the slightest degree neglected in the revelation of his grace to fallen man, it was adduced by the divine author of our religion, as a proof that it was the truth from heaven; that, unlike other systems preached among men, this Gospel was preached to the poor. How exactly was it suited to all their needs. To recommend it the more, and secure their mild reception of it, our glorious Emmanuel chose the form of a servant, became the servant of servants, illustrating its blessed doctrines by his own meek, patient, suffering life. How he adapted all his precepts and promises and doctrines to the poor, and those who were in bondage! Where will you find a word that proceeded from his lips, which could excite pride, discontent or

rebellion? On the contrary, does not the whole spirit of the Gospel lead us to feel that the poorest and most oppressed condition upon earth is too good for such sinful beings as we all are. If there be any disposed to seek high things for themselves in this world, it is not the Gospel of Christ which encourages their ambitious desires. Let us only suppose a servant who is inclined to pride, discontent and rebellion, to be under the teaching of the word of God. He opens the sacred book or it is opened to him; he reads or he listens to another. He wishes to read, or hear something which is written to him. He hears his name mentioned, he hearkens to the words which are spoken. What are they? Let us see if they are words exhorting to a spirit of proud rebellion.

Let us read the directions given by the great Apostle to his two sons in the faith, whom he commissioned to preach the Gospel, particularly instructing them how and to whom they should preach it. To Timothy he says "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, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing." Thus does the word of God, and thus must the ministers of God speak to servants. And how admirably calculated to soothe a wounded spirit and reconcile to any hardships of their lot, are the words which soon follow: "But godliness, with contentment, is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Who can, for a moment, suppose that such instructions, coming from God himself, can be otherwise than salutary to those who receive them?

Let us turn to St. Paul's direction to Titus, and we shall find him delivering the same charge: "Speak thou the things that become sound doctrine." "Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour in all things."

Let us also see a specimen of St. Paul's own preaching to servants, taken from his epistle to the Ephesians: "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to man; knowing that whatsoever good thing any

man doeth, the same shall he receive from the Lord whether he be bond or free." Can any doubt the salutary tendency of these precepts to render servants more honest, faithful and obedient? Once more let us read the exhortation of St. Peter to the same class of persons. "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but, also, to the froward; for this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffer wrongfully; for what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered, being an example, that we should follow his steps."

Who, after reading the above holy and comforting admonitions, can, for a moment, hesitate to acknowledge, that this is the portion of spiritual food which God has designed for those who are in bondage, and that to withhold it, or not seek by all suitable means to supply it to them, is robbing them of their dearest right. Can any thing but good result from offering it to them, and pressing it upon them continually? Can any thing but harm come from refusing it?

The other objection which is urged against the duty for which I am pleading, is the difficulty, and, as some contend, the impossibility, of performing it successfully. We have tried it, say they, and tried it in vain. Though we invite them and urge them, they will not come to our houses or our churches, except we constrain them, and this we fear to do. We are impressed with the importance of doing something for their immortal souls, but know not how to proceed. If this, indeed, be so, if all our efforts prove unavailing, if the christian religion cannot, by any means, be brought to bear upon their minds, then, indeed, does it seem most strange that so much should have been said to them and about them, that the Apostles should have preached so much to them, and directed their successors to do the same, that it should be declared that God made of one blood all men on earth, and that the Gospel was so emphatically designed for the poor. If they cannot be, by the use of proper means, induced to take their part and lot in this glorious inheritance, then should we be tempted to embrace the infidel hypothesis which stigmatises them as a distinct and inferior race, incapable of being operated upon by the same moral principles which influence our own. But before we adopt such a supposition, or attempt to excuse ourselves from further effort by the alleged difficulties of the task, it would be well, in reference to the great day of account, to propose to ourselves a few solemn questions, such as the following.

Have we been truly and earnestly engaged in this duty, as its importance merited? Have we felt anxious for the salvation of their souls? Have we given time, attention, love and labor to the duty? Have we been willing to make all reasonable sacrifices of their time and services, in order that they might have the needed

instruction? Have we persevered in our efforts to instruct them with any of that long suffering patience which God exercises towards us, and which we exercise towards our children? Have we not merely given them permission to attend some of our family devotions, but have we taken care that they, as well as our children, should be present at the same? Have we adapted our instructions to their condition, and sought to interest them by suitable explanations? Have we begun with them betimes, and endeavored, as with our children, to train them up for heaven. Have we, from time to time, conversed affectionately with them about their souls, and convinced them that we are deeply interested for the same, far more than for the value of their services to us? Have we done all these things in such a manner as shall give us quiet consciences in the hour of death, and enable us to meet our servants, without fear before the bar of God? Have we done all this, and yet have we utterly failed? Have none been benefitted by our instructions? Have none been thankful for our kind efforts in behalf of their souls? And have we after due trial, given up in despair? Let us beware while thus excusing ourselves, that we do not incur the condemnation of our own hearts, and the still heavier condemnation of him who is greater than our hearts. Until we can be convinced that God gives a grievous command, or enjoins an unprofitable exercise, we must believe that much of the fault lies in ourselves, and that we are sadly wanting in the faithful and affectionate discharge of our duty towards the immortal souls of our servants. We might, and doubtless should, as is too often the case with our children, on whom we bestow much anxious care, be frequently and grievously disappointed, seeing the loss of all our labor on some, whose salvation we greatly desire; but if we be faithful and persevering, it will be with us, as with pious parents and true ministers of God, we shall have some souls to present as our joy and rejoicing before the throne of God.

No. 3. We come now to the third enquiry. On whom does this duty of christian charity devolve? Concerning the answer to this question, there can be no hesitation. The word of God and every principle of justice and humanity, point to those divinely commissioned men, who are sent to preach the Gospel to every creature; and in conjunction with them, those fearfully responsible persons who are commanded to render that which is just and equal to their servants, remembering that they also, have a master in heaven.

Ministers of religion who have to give an account for the souls of men, must be ever ready unto every good work, and gladly seize upon all opportunities of laboring for the salvation of souls. All souls should be equally precious in their view. They especially, should condescend to men of low estate, and delight to instruct the ignorant. If their Divine Master took special pains to preach the Gospel to the poor; if the chief of his Apostles was careful, in his inspired epistles, to write so many wholesome admonitions unto

servants, and did so authoritatively and earnestly enjoin it upon Timothy and Titus to exhort servants to their appropriate duties, what minister of Christ can feel himself excused from taking part in the same, especially in a country like ours, where such multitudes present their daily and pressing claims to our charity, and when so few are found to have compassion upon them. When I think upon the extraordinary zeal of the present day, upon the mighty efforts made to carry the Gospel, by the voice of the preacher, by tracts and books, to every human being, when I hear of the solemn protestations of many, that the salvation of souls, and not the promotion of a sect, is their only object, when I see, indeed, that much is done for the poor white man as well as the rich, and then turn to the two millions of a neglected race in our land, and think how little is done for them, I am utterly amazed, and ask, can the pure love of God and of the lost souls of men animate the christian ministers in our land? Must not judgment begin at the house of God, even with his ministers, for this neglect? When I know what honor and influence God hath given them with their people, what power to do good by their personal exertions, and by their persuasions; what influence they might exert over masters and mistresses in behalf of their servants, I tremble for them and for myself. More especially, my beloved brethren, and fellow laborers in the Diocese of Virginia, to whom I address this official letter, when I consider what a multitude of these precious immortal souls belong to the families under your spiritual care, live and labor and die around the Churches in which you minister the word of life, swarm about the houses which you visit, and where you offer up prayer to the God of all the families of earth, I cannot but feel a deep solicitude on your account as well as theirs. I feel truly anxious that you should discharge your part and duty faithfully, and show that your desire is for the salvation of souls, by making a full trial of your ministry in their behalf. It is in your power to contribute greatly to this good cause, and deep must be the guilt of neglecting it. It will not be a sufficient excuse for any of us to say that they belong not to our communion, and that all their partialities are to some other. If they are destitute, if their condition is deplorable, if we can gain access to them, if they belong to the households under our care, we are debtors to them, and bound to seek their spiritual welfare, and until we have faithfully tried it, are inexcusable. Could we take this view of our pastoral relation, some of us who now seem to have small congregations, would perceive our field of duty greatly enlarged, and our responsibility fearfully increased. Did we reckon all the servants connected with the families of our charge, as proper objects of ministerial regard, what a great increase would at once take place. And are we sure that God will not thus reckon them, and hold us responsible on the great day of account? This is a point we should most conscientiously examine for our own sakes as well as theirs.

If, according to scripture, we may partake of a brother's guilt by not rebuking him; if there be any truth in the Jewish proverb, that "when the neighbor of a godly man sinneth, the godly man himself also sinneth," because, perchance, he did not do his utmost to prevent it; what then must be our guilt, if we permit these poor creatures to perish without an effort to prevent it. If we could but take this view of the pastoral relation, and if our parishioners would heartily concur in it, how much more interesting and extensive would our field of labor become. I cannot but hope that the time is not far distant, when our ministers will be so multiplied, and the hearts of all so turned to this duty, that our smallest parishes will be thus increased manifold, when high and low, rich and poor, shall meet together before the Lord the Maker of them all, and be equally the object of ministerial solicitude. If I mistake not, there are many masters now ready and anxious to make liberal compensation to some faithful minister who will aid them in the discharge of this important task. I will only add, while on this important point, that the duty of supplying to this part of our population the best religious instruction becomes more imperative, from the consideration that recent events have induced our Legislative Assembly to place additional restrictions on those social meetings among themselves, in which they endeavor, in their poor way, to encourage and instruct each other. May they not indeed regard it as a cruel hardship to be thus deprived of what they consider a help to their souls, when we will not furnish them with something better as a substitute.

Equally clear is it to my mind, that a most solemn obligation rests on the owners of slaves to instruct them, or cause them to be instructed. Many of those affecting reasons which influence parents to train up their children for the Lord, bind us to exercise a holy discipline over our servants. Are they not equally dependent upon us? Do they not grow up around us, and look up to us with reverence? Do they not go and come at our bidding? Are they not ours by night and by day, on days of labor and days of rest? Do we not command them to their daily task, at any time, at any place, and do they not obey? And shall we not, after the example of the holy men of old, command our household after us, in things of the deepest importance to their eternal welfare? Must we use our authority only for our own temporal emolument, and for the promotion of our ease and enjoyment, and not for the glory of God and the good of their souls? If the Apostle's reasoning was just, that because the ministers of religion devoted themselves to the supply of spiritual things to the private members of the Church, therefore they ought to supply carnal things, that is a temporal support in return; then surely if our servants, by the employment of their time and strength, furnish us with all temporal comforts and enjoyments, it is but just and proper that we, who are able to do it, should afford them that instruction which they cannot otherwise

obtain, and which is so important to their immortal souls. Surely God could not have tolerated even for a moment this relation, except it might be thus made subservient to good. Could we think otherwise, and adopt the belief that to render them the service for which we plead, is impracticable, then must we also of necessity embrace the doctrine of the most extravagant abolitionist, and conclude that the relation of master and slave was, under all circumstances, and even for a moment, absolutely unlawful, and ought at all hazards to be immediately annihilated, because incompatible with God's first and dearest wish towards mankind, their instruction in heavenly wisdom.

No. 4. The fourth enquiry to be answered is, how shall this duty be performed? As God hath made of one blood all men on earth, as face answereth to face in water and the heart of man to man, so there is one religion for all, for rich and poor, bond and free, and one way of its operation on the heart. By the foolishness of preaching (as some deem it) God is pleased to save such as believe. It is therefore the duty of all the friends of the colored people to adopt the most effectual method of bringing the word of God to bear upon their minds.

1st. Ministers of religion should be ever ready to preach the word of God to them in season and out of season, in private and in public. They should endeavor to draw them to the house of God, and see that suitable seats be provided for their reception. They should try and arrest their attention while there, by special applications of the word of God to them, during the lessons, and in the sermon, showing how evidently the scriptures were intended for them, and how admirably calculated to promote their happiness. When the churches are not convenient to them, or they cannot be induced to come, then let the Gospel be carried to their very doors, into the cabins and from house to house. Let the afternoons and evenings of the Sabbath be devoted to them, either in the churches or on the plantations: whenever a minister visits any family, whether on the evening of the Sabbath, or of any other day, let it be regarded as the signal for collecting the servants either in the mansion or in some of their own houses. Let this be regarded as the chief courtesy due to him, who should ever be ready to preach the Gospel to the poor. The writer is acquainted with some families where he is always sure to have the parlor filled with the servants of the household; but he is also acquainted with too many, where not even those who wait on the persons and the tables of their owner, are even invited to attend the devotions of the family. A few words from the minister would, however, generally ensure this act of hospitality to a servant of God. Ministers should also remember this destitute class in all their associations, and set apart at least one occasion for a special and united address to them. And ought not the Bishops of the Church, in their visitation, to set a proper example by appropriating a portion of their time to this duty. Con-

scious of failing in this respect, during the short period since I have been called to my present station, I desire to amend without delay, and now beg my brethren of the clergy and friends of the laity, to consider me, in all future visitations, as a debtor to the servant as well as to the master, and to make such an arrangement of my time and services when I come amongst them, as shall best accomplish the important object for which I plead.

But in order to render effectual our preaching, which, after all, cannot, to any particular household, be very frequent, we must call to our aid other means which experience has proved to be highly beneficial. We must see that our families be supplied with catechisms, tracts, explanations of select scriptures, and sermons adapted to the condition and character of servants. These, with but few exceptions, are yet to be prepared, for it is lamentable to think how few out of the thousands of tracts and books which are published are suited to their need. We doubt not when these shall be furnished in sufficient abundance, that there are thousands of pious persons who will take pleasure in reading them to their servants, who now, for want of such helps, neglect this duty, though with uneasy consciences.

And now let me propose a few questions to the masters and mistresses of our State, with the view of suggesting to them the most effectual method of co-operation with God's ministers.

Cannot you, at whose command servants rise up early in the morning and repair to their several tasks, and during the day go and come at your bidding, and perform any duty, however laborious, without thinking of a refusal; cannot you bid them repair to your parlors once each day, and there listen to the word of God, which they cannot read, but by the hearing of which they may believe and be saved?

If this be too much, cannot you, once in each week, assemble them, and read something to them about the things of eternity? If you cannot do it yourself, then will you not encourage some one else to do it?

Can you not employ some pious person (if a minister cannot be procured) to come among them and read to them, and talk to them, and pray with them, and especially to endeavor to teach the children the first principles of religion?

Are there not some of your own children able and willing to read to them out of God's word and good books? Can you not sanctify the Sabbath on your plantations (especially if there be no religious meeting near) by collecting your servants and officiating as priest among them? Can you not form a Sunday School on your premises, where, if you do not think proper to teach them to read, you may, as is done in many places, deliver oral instruction to the young, and thus make them acquainted with the first principles of religion?

Can you not encourage your children to show their benevolence

and requite the labors of the servants by instructing them in the word of God?

Can you not facilitate their access to religious meetings, and encourage ministers to come among them?

Can you not converse with them affectionately, and represent to them their duty and the evil of sin, out of God's word; and when you punish them, let them see that it is more for their sakes than yours—that you punish them, chiefly on account of sin, and not because your worldly profit suffers by their misconduct?

Surely in these and other ways which the providence of God will point out to us, if our hearts were properly affected, we should be able to do something for the spiritual benefit of those whose time is spent, and strength worn out in our service. I do most earnestly beseech my brethren of the clergy, and friends of the laity, to ponder well what I have written, and think of it with reference to the great day, before they shall determine that nothing can be done.

Having thus examined the different questions which seem to belong to the general subject of this address, it only remains that I draw to a close by a few considerations which should encourage us all to enter zealously on this labor of love.

And first let us be animated by the assurance that such an effort must be acceptable to the God and Father of us all, and must bring down his blessing. He has told us not to be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. The light, and gracious smile of his countenance, is upon us, while thus we are seeking to do justly and love mercy. To the merciful, God will show himself merciful. He that thus watereth others, shall be watered also himself. To teach others is the most effectual method of being confirmed ourselves in all knowledge, especially the knowledge of holiness. While endeavoring to exhort them to the practice of piety, how strong a necessity will rest upon us to be examples of piety. While laboring to explain to them the truth of God's word, what light will break in upon our own minds. And will not every effort to do them good in this way, increase our affection for them, cause us to feel more deeply that they are our brethren, and thus render more easy and delightful the performance of every other duty. Surely none could thus affectionately seek the salvation of their souls, and at the same time be unjust, cruel, or severe in other respects. And must not such love on our part, produce a corresponding feeling in their hearts towards us? Will they not regard, with respectful affection, those who are so evidently interested for their eternal welfare? Will not such a course of conduct greatly change and improve the whole relation of master and servant, and extract much of the bitterness of that evil which all deeply lament? Shall we not thus, in some good degree, substitute religious principles for that slavish fear which now is the chief motive of their conduct? Shall we not have among them some sincere friends, who truly love us and desire our welfare? May there not

be many Onesimuses, who from being unprofitable become profitable from mere servants, rise above servants, and become brothers beloved both in the flesh and in the Lord? May not the blessing of the Lord be poured upon our families and all we have in answer to the prayers and as a reward to the fidelity of righteous servants, who thus prove as Josephs to the households where they dwell? If such a christian feeling influenced the hearts of masters and mistresses, if such pains were taken to do them the greatest good of which they are capable, and which of course would lead to all lesser acts of justice and kindness, need we stand in such fearful apprehension of certain awful calamities suffered to overhang our own heads or those of our posterity? While seeking to render their situation as comfortable and beneficial as possible, might we not confidently look up to heaven, and pray that those calamities may be averted? But above all, what high and holy encouragement to effort have we in the thought that our sincere and prayerful endeavors may be the means of saving some of their immortal souls from everlasting perdition. Soon shall we and our servants, stand together before the bar of our Almighty Judge, and oh! what rapture in the thought that some of them may rise up and call us blessed, because we are the instruments of their conversion and salvation. How can we otherwise than resolve to make an effort at least for such an honor and unspeakable felicity? There are those in the church of God who would gladly labor in this field of duty, if it were permitted, and there are others who delight to cast reproaches upon us, and represent us as even more guilty than we really are. The former we cannot employ, because of their utter ignorance of our real condition, and because of certain prejudices of birth and education which unfit them for the task; the latter we can only silence by engaging heartily in the cause ourselves. When we undertake the work in good earnest ourselves, then can we with clean consciences bid those whom we call intruders from a distance, not to intermeddle with a duty delicate and difficult in the extreme, and which none but ourselves are competent to perform. The truth of this consideration is beginning to be more and more deeply felt throughout all our Southern country, and in some parts of it the reformation has commenced. And this leads me to mention the last and most powerful encouragement which calls us to this labor of love. I mean the successful example which has been set us in certain portions of our southern country. In all things man is more influenced by example, than by any other consideration. I trust it may be so in the present instance. The example to which I refer is to be found, where some perhaps would least have expected it: I mean in the farthest South. For the particulars of this, I refer my readers to the Appendix, which I beseech them attentively to examine, and hope they will then go and do likewise. The beginning of this good work (so far at least as it has been carried on in our own church) is to be traced to the venerable society

for propagating christianity in foreign parts, which was formed in our mother country and mother church, more than a century ago. Some of its teachers and missionaries were sent over to South Carolina and other colonies, to instruct the slaves in the christian religion. Most faithfully indeed did they perform their duty, and the effects of it are still visible in some of the families whose ancestors were the favored objects of their religious care. The author of this Pastoral Letter was called by a kindred duty, to visit the city of Charleston about fifteen years since, and then was struck with the venerable appearance of some very aged servants, who with their children around them occupied certain seats in the aisles of the churches, and were humbly, yet audibly, uniting with their masters and mistresses in the responses of the liturgy. On inquiry he was told that these were the remaining parts of the labors of that society before the separation of this from the mother country. On further inquiry he found, that as in no part of our southern or even northern country, ministers of the gospel were more attentive to the religious instruction of the Negroes, so, in no place, was there so much intelligence and apparent piety among them. It was gratifying to learn that this too was done with the willing concurrence of their owners, who interposed no obstacles to the benevolent efforts in their behalf. It is yet more gratifying to know that this zeal on the part of the clergy increases, and this silent permission of the owners has, in many instances, become a warm and active principle, and that a goodly number of the best and wealthiest citizens of Carolina and Georgia are taking vigorous measures for the instruction of their servants. I again refer you my brethren and friends, to the documents in the appendix, which I consider far the most valuable part of this pamphlet, and on whose account chiefly, I have so long delayed this letter. I will only add, that the journals of the Convention of our Church in that State, furnish evidence of what I have already stated, viz. of a much greater attention to this duty on the part of our Southern brethren, than among ourselves. It is pleasing to perceive that, in the parochial reports, the number of baptisms, burials, confirmations, and additional communicants among the colored people, is as regularly returned as among the whites. In the last journal, the Rev. Dr. Gadsden reports, among the colored people, forty-four baptisms, twelve marriages, twenty-five funerals, one hundred and eighty communicants, seventeen confirmed, one hundred and seventy-four Sunday scholars. The Rev. Mr. Tschudy reports, from a country parish twenty-two colored adults baptized, and thirty-five colored communicants. The Rev. Mr. Walker, of Beaufort, reports twenty-eight colored adults baptized, nineteen confirmed, and fifty-two communicants. I adduce these as the most encouraging instances of ministerial zeal, and success, in order to stimulate myself, and you my brethren, to greater diligence in this cause. I know not how it may be with you, but as to myself, though I have been for twenty-

four years laboring a little in behalf of these our neglected fellow-beings, yet there is nothing which causes such a painful apprehension in my mind, when I think of rendering in the account of my stewardship to the Great Master of us all as the thought of them. May we all have grace to labor in the future, as not to have such great cause for painful apprehension. Let us lay this matter continually before God, and beseech him to teach us our duty, and enable us to perform it. The example of others calls us to energetic action. If we do not follow, we shall, in the future, be more guilty. This subject is now brought by the spirit and providence of God more clearly and impressively before our minds than at any former period, and it must be attended to. To use the language of an eloquent defender of the cause in the South—

“A *public sentiment* on this subject has now begun its existence. It must become as universal as that on Temperance, or any other work of philanthropy and christian benevolence. It must live. It must be cherished. We hope that the attention of our countrymen will be turned to the moral and religious condition of Negroes; and that after a lapse of time, it will be unusual to find a plantation deprived of the means of grace. The work itself is great. It is difficult. There is much in it to damp our ardor, and induce discouragement. To preach the Gospel to any people, however improved, and however favorably situated is discouraging; but to preach it to the most ignorant and degraded, labouring under every disadvantage, is discouraging in the extreme. But it is the work of God. He can cause mountains to become plains and rough places to become smooth. In Him must be our trust. For Him there is a sufficiency of power and wisdom and grace. And there is a glory in the work which the Apostle to the Gentiles, were he alive, would covet. In imitation of his Master, he was forward to remember the poor. He strove to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest he should build upon another man's foundation. We tread an untrodden field of enterprise, and the subjects of our regard are the poorest of the poor. Finally, men and brethren, the cry of our perishing servants comes up to us from the sultry plains, as they bend at their toils. It comes up to us from the midst of their ignorance, and superstition, and adultery, and lewdness. Shall we disregard it? The cry is passing up to God, and *He* will hear it. In a little while our opportunity of doing good to our servants will be gone for ever. In a little while we shall have done with the artificial distinctions of this world. We shall sleep in the ground, side by side with them, and return to dust as soon as they. In a little while we shall meet them before Christ the Judge, the Great Master of all, with whom there is no respect of persons. He will say to us, “These were your servants on earth. They labored for you ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty years. They wore out their lives to supply you with food, and raiment, and conveniences, and luxuries of your mortal life. You had them

wholly at your disposal. You had my gospel in your hands. I made you the almoners of my grace to them. Did you remember their never-dying souls. While they communicated to you of temporal things, did you communicate to them of spiritual things? Did you urge and entreat them to come to me, who alone could give the weary and heavy laden rest? Did you allow them time to seek my face? Or did you neglect their eternal interests? Did you treat them like the beasts that perish? Were they merely the instruments of your profit or of your pleasures? Did you forget that they were your fellow creatures? Did you forget the price that I paid for their redemption? Did you leave them to perish eternally?"

Every owner of slaves has an account to render to God for his treatment of them. O! how fearful will be his account, who, knowingly and wilfully, will permit them to go down from his fields, and from his very dwelling into the bottomless pit, without making a solitary effort to save them? "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

I earnestly beg all who may have read the foregoing Letter, to proceed and carefully consider the following documents which I have obtained, in order to strengthen the arguments used in the discourse.

The first is taken from the life of the lamented Dr. Dehon, Bishop of South Carolina, and shows the zeal of that excellent man in the cause for which we are pleading. His mantle fell on more than one of the clergy of that diocese at his death; but on none more abundantly than on his worthy Biographer, Dr. Gadsden,—whom I have seen, after the duties of the Sabbath, in one of the large churches of Charleston, repairing to a large Sunday School of colored persons of all ages, and diligently uniting with the teachers in delivering oral instruction to them.

This duty, as we have already said, has engaged the attention of the pious in South Carolina for some years, much more than in States north of it.

Extract from the Life of Bishop Dehon, by Dr. Gadsden.

But in looking over his Diocese with the eye of a patriot, philanthropist and christian, there was an object which could not have escaped his attention, and which excited all his good feelings. Unhappy African! To all thy sufferings is there to be added the misery of being in the world without the knowledge of God, and without the hope of a blessed eternity? In thy own land, and in other lands, is it thy doom never to share in the comforts of the Gospel; and is this greatest of blessings here brought within thy reach only to afflict thee more by the knowledge that thou art not permitted to taste it? It cannot be. The Gospel is not the property of one man rather than another. It is intended to travel from East to West, and in God's good time, no man will be hid from the heat thereof. In his own congregation as I have before remarked, he was the laborious and patient minister of the African. And he encouraged, among the masters and mistresses in his flock, that best kindness towards their servants, a concern for their eternal salvation.

"He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."

He was of opinion, that to the domestics in a family, religious in-

struction might be imparted without much inconvenience; for it might be committed in part to the elder children, and in large families the different members might divide the interesting duty among them; each one undertaking to instruct two or more.—When one had been well instructed, he might become the instructor of his fellow servants, and the head of the household would only have to exercise a general superintendance over the good work. At least, a pious youth might instruct his man servant, and a young lady her maid. His example, enforced his precept in this, as in other respects. Every one of his servants was required to attend family worship, and opportunity was afforded them to be at public worship on the Lord's day. In reproving them he made use of religious considerations, and he took care that they were duly instructed in the principles of religion. On one of these occasions, a servant, who had robbed him, was so much affected by his searching remarks on the danger of sin, as to be led to make a full confession of his guilt.

But when advanced to the Episcopate, he felt, that, on this subject, a more arduous task now devolved upon him. In the scale of civilization, the slaves in the City were much advanced above those in the country. Many of the former were already christianized, and the opportunities of religious instruction were increasing. But in the country, the disproportion between the whites and blacks is so great, that with the best dispositions, the former could do little in the work of christianizing the latter. Many of them were almost as ignorant of the Gospel, as if they had remained in Africa. The Bishops of London, who had under their care the American provinces, before the revolution, and since that period, the West Indies, have ever felt a solicitude on this subject. Some of them have written on the obligation and method of instructing slaves in the christian religion, but none of them so fully as the zealous and amiable Porteus. The "Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," having become possessed, by bequest, of a number of slaves, Bishop Porteus recommended that they should be instructed in the Gospel, according to a method which might serve as a model for every plantation. A catechist was to be appointed, whose duty it should be to teach them, and more particularly the young, the principles of christianity, and, for this purpose, to collect them always on the Lord's day in the intervals of public worship, and as often as might be found convenient. This catechist, at first, might be a white man, but he thought that it would be least expensive, and, perhaps, more useful, to select one or more of the most intelligent, humble and pious blacks, who might be prepared for this office. Every plantation has its nurse, and why should it not be provided with a person whose official care it should be to train his fellow servants in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? The slaves, also, according to Bishop Porteus' plans were to be required to attend the public service, and such of them as were duly prepared, admitted to the sacrament. He thought the little children ought to be baptized, and gradually educated in the best of schools, the Church of God. He did not anticipate much immediate benefit from this plan, but he thought that the patient prosecution of it would produce an effect, which would be sensibly perceived in another generation.

Bishop Dehon warmly approved of this plan, and it is not easy to conceive one more judicious. As far as the experiment of Bishop Porteus' plan has been made among us, it has succeeded beyond expectation. It has been adopted only for a few years by a few individuals. The influence of christianity is always gradual. Let the work be carried on for one generation, so that all the cultivators of a plantation shall be such only as, from infancy, have been religiously educated, and we cannot doubt that, by the blessing of God on his institutions, they would exhibit a new character. It is not supposed that they would all be sincere christians, but there would be seen among them that moral influence of the Gospel which renders a Christian so superior to a Pagan community, whatever degree of civilization the latter may have attained.—The stated ministrations of the Church in our parishes, appeared to Bishop Dehon a preliminary and most important measure. A minister would be the proper director of pious masters. His visits would supply incitement both to the owners and the slaves. And that grace of God, without which there can be no spiritual improvement, is not to be expected, but in the faithful and diligent use of the divine ordinances—the worship of the sanctuary, the public reading and preaching of God's word, and the administration of the holy sacrament. In many of the low country parishes, the white population had decreased to a very small number, but the black population was very large and increasing; and for their sake, principally, the rebuilding and reorganizing of the Churches seemed very desirable. Although his judgment and feelings were strongly enlisted in this good cause, he proceeded in it with his accustomed prudence. He knew that prejudices existed against his view of this subject, and that they would be increased by opposition. He endeavored to enlighten the community on this subject, in a private quiet way. He would gladly embrace opportunities to converse with men of influence relating to it; but he forbore to speak of it in public, believing that the time had not yet come. He dissuaded one of his clergy from preaching on this matter before the Convention. He was cautious to circulate only such works as were perfectly unexceptionable.

No. 2.

The enclosed letter was forwarded to me by Bishop Bowen, of South Carolina, to whom I wrote requesting information concerning the efforts making in his Diocese in this good cause. I am much indebted to him for this and many other interesting documents on the same subject. The letter is from the zealous minister of the church in Beaufort, who is well known throughout the Churches.

BEAUFORT, S.C., July 3d, 1833.

Right Rev. and Dear Sir,—Your letter, making inquiry as to what is doing for the religious instruction of the negroes in this place and neighborhood, or the encouragement received, I should

have immediately replied to, but hoped to get some of our influential and intelligent planters to do it for me,—thinking, that if they should, and their statement be given to the public, it might have, in various ways, a happy effect. It might not merely give desirable information, but, from the character and standing of the writers, might add much to the impulse which the Southern mind has received upon this important matter. It is still my hope and expectation to prevail upon some of the gentlemen to give such statement: in the meantime you will allow me to refer you to my report to the Convention, and to our Sunday School Report of the present year. I would merely mention that when I began in the summer of 1830, to preach specially to the negroes, there was but a single negro communicant, and but two or three came to the Church at all. There are now fifty-seven communicants, upon the whole well doing and consistent; and in the Sunday School for the colored people, conducted by the first and best of society in the Church, about 234 who regularly attend. What all the results may be, God only knows; but, certainly, going forward upon the admonition and assurance “Be not weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,” we have reason to “thank God and take courage.” You are aware that a preacher of the Methodist denomination acts as a missionary in this neighborhood: he visits the plantations by invitation of the owners on Sunday and during the week: as wide a field as he can possibly occupy is opened to him by planters—planters of the greatest influence, and of all denominations. He has given great satisfaction; and I think the effect decidedly happy. My labors have been confined almost entirely to the town negroes: Mr. Moore’s (the minister referred to) to the country chiefly. I merely add—and I think can say it in truth—there is a *strong and increasing anxiety* in the minds of the planters, to have their slaves informed of the things which belong to their eternal peace; and as to our Church, the objection sometimes made that the service is not suited to them, is, I am perfectly assured, without the slightest foundation: let the Vestries provide seats, and the minister “preach Jesus” in simplicity and earnestness—let an anxiety for the *spiritual interests* of the negroes be shown by the church and ministers—let the negroes be made to *feel* that *their souls are cared for*, and our houses of worship might be filled up with negroes.

I regret that my communication is so little interesting or satisfactory; but I can do no more.

Believe me, Right Rev. and Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully and reverentially,

JOS. R. WALKER.

Right Rev. Dr. BOWEN.

No. 3.

The following communication is from Bishop Ives, of North Carolina, and is the substance of an address made to his last Convention. At my particular request he has furnished it, and I trust it

will be read with the attention which its importance so justly merits.

CARLISLE, (Pa.) August 9th, 1833.

Right Rev. and Dear Sir, Agreeably to promise, I transmit to you the following, as the result of my observations communicated to my last Convention, on the interesting subject of providing for our slave population a more adequate knowledge of the doctrines of *Christ crucified*. I give you a mere abstract of my remarks, as more suitable to your purpose:

“In proportion as individuals are dependant upon us for a knowledge of the Gospel, must be the urgency of our duty as christians, to make ample provision for them. In reference to our children and the poor among us, this principle is clearly recognized; and nothing can excuse our disregard of it in respect to our *colored population*. They are *entirely dependant* upon us. We acknowledge them to be so in our legislative acts, by prohibiting or regulating their religious assemblies at our pleasure. This is as it should be; but while we thus exercise a salutary control, it becomes us to observe, that in doing it, we declare our own obligations to leave them not in this state of religious dependence, destitute of the means of grace and salvation. Now the question that comes home to the heart of every minister, and every disciple of Christ is, *are this people destitute?* We are inquiring anxiously for the spiritually needy in our new settlements, and in foreign lands; but what account can we give of those who cultivate our soil and move at our will? Are they enjoying their full share of the bread of eternal life; or are they, as a people, *miserably destitute?* You say, perhaps, that they are sluggish and heedless and perverse.—Be it so: what then? Are these evils a sufficient reason for partial and feeble efforts? or do they render their souls less valuable, their danger less eminent? If the obstacles be great, let our exertions be proportionately great, vigorous, and persevering. The truth is, however, that these obstacles have been very much magnified; owing either to faint hearted, or misdirected efforts. I speak from actual observation. During my last year’s visitation, I made this subject a matter of serious and constant attention. And the proofs to my mind were sufficiently numerous and clear to produce the conviction, that there is nothing in the character or condition of our colored population to place them beyond the proper influence of the services of our church, or the instructions of our ministers. Let any one inclined to question this view, visit the parish of St. John’s, Fayetteville. In the colored congregation connected with that parish, and under the immediate direction of its faithful rector, might be seen from three to four hundred worshippers, regular in their attendance, devout and orderly in their devotions and deeply attentive to the instructions of their pastor; and that, too, while all is conducted strictly according to the order of the church, excepting, merely, the omission of the Psalms—as the responses here could not well be made: in other parts, such as the confession, the creed, Lord’s prayer and so on, the responses might be listened to with an interest and solemnity not always produced by the worship of our sanctuaries. There,

also, might be seen more than forty communicants, conducting themselves with great christian propriety; although the previous lives of some of them had been distinguished only for their riotous and disorderly character. I single this congregation out from the five or six of the same kind conducted by our clergy, as being the oldest, and hence as furnishing the best tried example. In short I have uniformly witnessed, during my visitation, such a desire to be instructed, and such gratitude for our instruction given, on the part of our colored population, as to fix my determination to respond, as soon as possible, to the very general request of our planters, to provide for that population some more efficient and extended means of christian knowledge. The duty appears to me clear and imperative, and by God's help, I will discharge it; precisely in what way I do not yet fully see. Our clergy are as yet too few, to devote themselves exclusively to this service. It seems to me however, that much can be done by our missionaries and parish clergymen, without any serious diversion of their present labors. Let the love of Christ, the value of souls constrain you, my brethren, and our coloured population will not be neglected."

No. 4.

To the foregoing testimonies, furnished by some of my respected brethren in the Episcopal and Ministerial office, it gives me great pleasure to add the following from a distinguished layman of South Carolina. It is taken from an Address of the Hon. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Lieutenant Governor of the State, delivered before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina. It is encouraging to know that his example corresponds with his precept on this subject.

"Nothing is better calculated to render man satisfied with his destiny in this world, than a conviction that its hardships and trials are as transitory as its honors and enjoyments; and that good conduct, founded on christian principles, will ensure superior rewards in that which is future and eternal. A firm persuasion, that it is both our duty and interest to afford religious instruction to the blacks, induces me to dwell on this subject. From obvious considerations persons of color must be our only domestics. Without education or instruction of any kind, they are placed in frequent, perhaps constant intercourse with the susceptible minds of our white children; and the pernicious effects of their early lessons are often incalculable and irremediable.— There needs no stronger illustration of the doctrine of human depravity, than the state of morals on plantations in general. Besides the mischievous tendency of bad example in parents and elders, the little negro is often taught by these his natural instructors, that he may commit any vice he can conceal from his superiors; and thus falsehood and deception are amongst the earliest lessons they imbibe. Their advance in years is but a progression

to the higher grades of iniquity. While these defects in their character conduce to the injury of master and servant, another consideration presents itself of no trifling moment. If judicial punishment, or merited execration, pursue the owner who fails to provide for their temporal wants, will no obloquy attend the neglect of their more important interests? Is there no room for apprehension of future responsibility before a tribunal whose judge has expressly directed the dissemination of his doctrines? It may be questioned whether the consequences of guilt are as severe to an uninstructed sinner, to whom the path of duty has never been revealed, as when its arrows are barbed with consciousness of crime. Is it not prudent to enquire, whether part of the blame may not attach to the owner, who withholds or neglects their instruction, in the only way our policy can permit, viz: by unfolding to their comprehension the simple doctrines of religion? Let it only be admitted that the scriptures are true, and our conclusions appear undeniable. The Saviour's injunction, that the Gospel should be "preached to every creature," and the conversion and baptism of an Ethiopian by Philip, both prove that christianity was designed for all complexions. The poverty which is inseparable from their condition, forms no bar to their obtaining the rich blessings of futurity. All the varieties of the human race have some notions of religion; dark, irrational and confused when they spring from our own apprehension; but pure and clear as light when drawn from the infallible sources of revelation. Between these widely differing systems, an election must be made by every human being; for man is a religious animal; if the doctrines of truth are withheld, he will imbibe those of error; the prevalence of idolatry and Islamism in Africa and Asia sanctions this position."

No. 5.

In an appendix to the discourse, he gives an account of the measures pursued by some of the planters, in furtherance of the religious instruction of their slaves; from which we extract the following notice.

"As usual, the Methodists were the pioneers of this enterprise.— It was not without hesitation that they were employed by some planters, who had heard their black congregations accused of being deeply implicated in the affair of 1822. On investigation it appeared that all concerned in that transaction, except one, had seceded from the regular Methodist Church in 1817, and formed a separate establishment, in connexion with the African Methodist Society in Philadelphia; whose Bishop, a colored man, named Allen, had assumed that office, being himself a seceder from the Methodist Church of Pennsylvania. At this period, Mr. S. Bryan, the local minister of the regular Methodist Church in Charleston, was so apprehensive of sinister designs, that he addressed a letter to the City Council, on file in the Council Chamber, dated

8th November, 1817, stating at length the reasons for his suspicion.

The General Methodist Conference in January last, appointed two Missionaries for the Northern and Southern plantations within the State. Their religious and political principles are guaranteed by the Conference, and the Rev. Wm. Capers, the Presiding Elder of this Circuit. They are not authorised to preach on any plantations without permission of the owners, and always request the attendance of the white residents. These missions have been in operation several months; and their visits are continued throughout the year. The mode of instruction used is catechising and preaching to the elder negroes on Sundays and in the evenings; and teaching the children the first rudiments of religion, while their parents are occupied in the field. The Missionary who attends North and South Santee Rivers is so fully occupied, that he was compelled to decline the last application for his services."

No. 6.

The following interesting statement is drawn from the same source.

"On a plantation in Georgia, where in addition to superior management, the religious instruction of the blacks is systematically pursued, the crops are invariably the best in the neighborhood. The neatness and order which the whole establishment exhibits, prove that the prosperity of the Master, and the best interests of the negro are not incompatible.

The same State furnishes another instance of this position. The people of an absentee's plantation, were proverbially bad, from the abuse and mismanagement of an Overseer; (the proprietors residing in England, and the attorneys in Carolina.) The latter dismissed the overseer as soon as his misconduct was discovered, and employed another who was a pious man: he not only instructed the negroes himself to the best of his abilities, but accompanied them every Sunday to a Methodist Church in the neighborhood. At the end of five years their character was entirely changed, and has so continued ever since. After nearly fifteen years more, the surviving attorney is now in treaty for the purchase of these very negroes, whom he formerly considered a band of outlaws. Other examples in favor of this plan have occurred in Carolina. In one instance a gentleman invited a Missionary to attend his plantation. After some time, two black preachers, who had previously acquired popularity, fell into disrepute, and were neglected by their former congregation. These statements are derived from unquestionable sources. The last case presents a view of the subject, which may have weight with those, who think other motives insufficient. We look upon the habit of black preaching as a wide spreading evil; not because a black man cannot be a good one; but because, in the first place, they are not sufficiently instructed for the sacerdotal office; secondly, not being regularly appointed by any ecclesiastical author-

ity, there is no security for their qualifications or principles of any kind; thirdly, because they acquire an influence independent of the owner, and not subject to his control: and fourthly, because when they have possessed this power, they have been made to make an improper use of it. Great efforts have been made to abolish this practice; but they have been attended with the usual effects of religious persecution, secrecy, and nocturnal meetings in old fields, and plantations where no white persons reside. We cannot but think it advisable, to afford them an opportunity of contrasting the sense and doctrine they hear in such places from men, whom they know to be only their equals, with the religious information to be derived from teachers whose superiority in knowledge of every kind they cannot question."

No. 7.

The following historical sketch is copied from the *Gospel Messenger*, a religious periodical, edited by Ministers of the Episcopal Church in the City of Charleston, chiefly, it is believed, by Dr. Gadsden, an old and zealous friend to the African race. The paper abounds with valuable communications on the subject treated of in the foregoing letter.

Facts concerning the Christianizing of Slaves.

Louis 13th acquiesced in the Slave Trade, because it would lead the subjects of it to a knowledge of the true religion. The Roman Catholic slave holders have been specially interested in this subject. The Code Noir of the French Islands, first published 1685, republished 1767, contains many admirable regulations respecting the morals and the religion of the negroes. It obliges every planter to have them baptized, and properly instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity. It allows the slaves not only every Sunday, but every festival usually observed by the Romish Church. It does not permit any market to be held on Sunday and holydays, and absolutely forbids trafficking by the negroes on the Lord's day. Before the Revolution it was the practice on the plantations for the slaves to join in a short prayer in the field before they began work, and in the evening when they finished it.

In Grenada, when the English took possession they found the slaves baptized and instructed in the principles of the Roman Catholic faith. The Priests were so indefatigable, that imported Africans generally obtained within twelve months, a tolerable idea of their religious duties. Lafayette made a "reasonable education, a part of his plan for meliorating the condition of his slaves on his Cayenne estate."

In Antigua, the slaves had so far profited under the religious instruction of the Moravians and Methodists, that the planters confessed their value, as property, had been raised one third by their increased habits of regularity and industry. In 1787, the Mora-

vians reported as under their care in the British and Danish Islands, St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Antigua, 16,045 real negro converts; and so much do they exceed all the unconverted slaves, in sobriety, honesty, fidelity and obedience to their masters, that all the planters in that Island, (Antigua) are anxious to have their negroes placed under their care. It is stated, (in a sermon by the Rev. C. C. Jones) that on the occasion of an extensive insurrection in one of the West India Islands, all the negroes attached to the Moravian Missionary Churches, to a man, supported the authority of their masters against the insurgents.

The Church of England Society for propagating the Gospel as appears from their charter, their anniversary sermons, and proceedings, have always considered the negroes an important object of care. They have for many years maintained a catechist in orders on their plantation, (bequeathed them in trust for particular uses by Gen Codrington) whose sole business it is to train up the negroes in the principles of religion, and to perform divine service for their benefit on the Lord's day. And that the slaves may have leisure to attend to this and other religious duties, the Society has given them the afternoon of Saturday for cultivating their own land, and attending to their own affairs. They gave earnest injunctions to their catechist to exert his utmost zeal in impressing a right sense of religion on the minds of their slaves, a point which they declare in their letters, that it is impossible for them ever to give up. They were desirous that their plantation should be a model for all the West Indies to imitate, and exhibit the spectacle of a little society of truly christian negroes, living in the habitual practice of the moral duties they owe to God, to their fellow laborers, and to themselves, looking up to their masters as their friends, protectors and benefactors.

They established a school about the year 1745, in Charleston, S. C. under the direction of Commissary Garden. It flourished greatly, and seemed to answer their utmost wishes. It had at one time 60 scholars, and sent forth annually about 20 young negroes, well instructed in the English language and the christian faith.

Some of the enemies of abolition were friends to religious instruction. In parliament 1791, Mr. Vaughan in his speech said, "he allowed there was room for improvement, and particularly for instilling into the slaves the principles of religion. Where this should be realized there would be less punishment, more work, more marriages, more issues, and more attachment to masters."

Edmundson, a Quaker preacher in Barbadoes, told the people "it was a good thing to bring the slaves to the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, and to believe in him who died for them and all men, and that this would keep them from revolting."

Burke, in his "European Settlements," recommends that the slaves should be instructed in the christian religion. Baxter, in his Christian Directory, gives advice about the sinful treatment of slaves. The Rev. James Ramsey, who had resided nineteen years in St. Christopher's, in 1784 published an essay on the treatment and conversion of negro slaves.

Mr. Charles Ellis in 1797, in a speech in the House of Commons, strongly recommended a general plan for the instruction of the negro slaves in the principles of morality and religion, and in

consequence of his motion being adopted, instructions were sent to the Governors of the West India Islands, to promote, in the most effectual manner, the object.

The Bishop of London (Porteus) in 1783, preached before the 'Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts,' a sermon, recommending the conversion of the West India slaves. He says, "It is no visionary or romantic project, but perfectly practicable, and that it would be in the highest degree beneficial, both to the negroes and their proprietors, by improving their morals and promoting their increase, by rendering them more content with their situations, more diligent in their labors, more attached to their masters, is evident from the report made on the subject by the Governors and Legislators of almost all our West India Islands, to the Committee of Privy Council at which I constantly assisted." He says, "The Planters in General are no longer alarmed with an imagination that in proportion as they are more religious, they grow less faithful, active and industrious."

In 1784 this eminent Bishop published an essay towards a plan for the more effectual civilization and conversion of the negro slaves on the trust estate in Barbadoes, belonging to the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,' &c. He also published a selection from the Old and New Testaments for the use of the negro slaves.

Extract from Grimke's Public Laws of South Carolina.

"Since charity and the christian religion which we profess, obliges us to wish well to the souls of all men, and that no person may neglect to baptize their negroes or slaves, &c. be it therefore enacted, that it shall be, and is hereby declared lawful for any negro or Indian slave to receive and profess the christian faith, and be therein baptized." Page 18.

If any person in this province shall, on the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday, employ any slave, in any work or labor, (works of absolute necessity, and the necessary occasions of the family only excepted) every person in such case offending, shall forfeit the sum of £5, current money," &c. Page 168.

No. 8.

The following is also taken from the same paper, and is worthy of the serious consideration of all masters and mistresses.

Considerations on the Religious Instruction of Slaves.

But let us view the servile class in another relation, as a part of the social body. What measure would you propose, to make them safe and good members of society? Do you say keep them in utter ignorance? Let me ask, are the ignorant less liable to the government of their passions, and to be deluded by the crafty, than the enlightened? I think not. Again: Is your remedy practicable? Can you exclude the rays of knowledge from their ca-

bins? And, how will you prevent the knowledge, which inevitably they will acquire, from being misused, from becoming a dangerous power? The strong arm of the law cannot suppress the inward emotion, ready to manifest itself in action, so soon as a favorable opportunity occurs. Religious principle will go to the root of discontent, and destroy the evil promptly and effectually. Inspire the slave from infancy with a horror of crime. Teach him that murder, and all proceedings tending thereto, will bring upon his head certain punishment from God, inquietude in life, and misery in eternity. In this way only can you restrain his evil passions, and fortify him against the temptations of wicked men.

It is a remarkable fact, that there should exist apprehensions as to sound religious instruction, when it is, in fact, our best security. It is absurd in theory, that the principles of christianity will be unfavorable to subordination. All the facts are against this supposition. If we were to admit, which we do not, that it would be the best policy to prevent any enlightening of the mind, in the class referred to, we say that such a course is utterly impracticable. The question is not between knowledge and ignorance, but between the former and erroneous, wild extravagant, dangerous notions on religion, with which they will be imbued, unless they are provided with that which is sound, sober, rational and wholesome.

The voice of humanity on this subject ought to be no longer unheeded. Every good man must desire, and will co-operate to alleviate the situations of the servile class. Freedom would not merely be unsafe for the community, but it would not be good for them as they are. It would only lead (as it has led the untaught Indians) to their degradation and extinction. But let us make slavery as tolerable as it can be. Let us cheer them by the sun of righteousness, and refresh them by the dews of divine grace. The Gospel, the good tidings of great joy intended for all people, at what expense and hazard of health and life, and sacrifice of ease and comfort, is it sent to heathen lands. Missionary Societies abound: ships are daily embarking on voyages of humanity: and shall two millions of heathen, at our very door, be left to perish? Is nothing, in a religious point of view, to be done for them? Is no man to care for their souls? Are the Africans in Africa alone entitled to our pity and our charitable efforts? How glaring would be the inconsistency to found a society for the spiritual relief of the Ethiopian afar off, if the Ethiopian near by, is entirely neglected?

The obligation of imparting religious instruction, as a man has the opportunity and ability, will be denied by no christian. "Do good unto all men:" "Preach the gospel to every creature." Is there any exception in the case of the slave? So far from it, his case is specially attended to by prophecy: "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God."

The sons of Ethiopia are to be brought under the banner of the Redeemer, and of course by the instrumentality of christians. This prophecy plainly implies the obligation resting on every believer to do all he can to bring Africans every where under the influence of the Gospel. Perhaps there was never uttered a more

severe sarcasm than that of Montesquieu. "It is impossible to allow that negroes are men, because if we allow them to be men, it will begin to be believed that we ourselves are not christians." The force of it can be disarmed only by recognizing them as our brethren by redemption, and doing all we can to bring them to the knowledge and obedience of Christ. It is confessedly a work of difficulty: and so it is to persuade any man to search for truth and follow after holiness. But in the work of righteousness, God, by his providence and grace, will assist both the teacher and the enquirer. You say your African scholar is no better for your pains. But is there no favored white, no beloved child to whom the same remark will apply? You must be patient and persevering, and be thankful if you succeed in a few out of many instances; and if you have no success, which would you prefer, the consciousness of negligence, or that of having done what you could?

The christian religion represents man as immeasurably exalted above other living creatures on the earth, as the brother of angels, and the companion of his Maker. This bold truth has produced great effects. It has increased mutual respect among men, and bound hearts together, as with a link of adamant, as no other consideration could have done. It has raised woman to her proper rank in society, and is the foundation of the self-sacrifices and toils of the missionary.

But there are men who know nothing, comparatively, of their dignity, of their superiority to the brutes that perish, of their relation to the Supreme Being, and whom false policy, or carelessness would doom to a perpetual ignorance of their duty and destiny, as immortal beings.

They are in the bosom of a philanthropic, christian community. But the charity, the piety beam not for them. Ought this thing so to be? This is the question. I think not. True religion can injure no man. It is the basis of public safety and prosperity. "Righteousness exalteth a Nation."

Alonzo Swinburn
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