

**CHRISTIANITY AND  
EMANCIPATION, OR, THE  
TEACHINGS AND  
THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE  
AGAINST SLAVERY, PP. 3-81**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649344239

Christianity and Emancipation, Or, The Teachings and the Influence of the Bible Against Slavery, pp. 3-81 by Joseph P. Thompson

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Cover @ 2017

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**JOSEPH P. THOMPSON**

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CHRISTIANITY AND EMANCIPATION;

OR,

THE TEACHINGS AND THE INFLUENCE

OF THE

BIBLE AGAINST SLAVERY.

BY

JOSEPH P. THOMPSON,

PASTOR OF THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE CHURCH.

NEW YORK:  
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,  
No. 688 BROADWAY.  
1863.

55  
449  
7478

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868,  
BY ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of  
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New York, May 1st, 1863.

REV. JOS. P. THOMPSON, D. D.,

DEAR SIR,—Having listened with much interest to your sermon on the influence of the Christian religion on the abolition of slavery, and regarding the views you then presented as of vital importance to the church and nation at the present time, we request a copy of the discourse for publication, and remain

Your friends,

SETH B. HUNT,

WM. HENRY SMITH,

WM. G. LAMBERT,

ADON SMITH,

CHARLES ABERNETHY,

L. M. BATES,

SAMUEL HOLMES,

CHAS. S. SMITH.

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New York, May 4th, 1863.

GENTLEMEN,—I thank you for your friendly expressions concerning my Fast-Day Sermon. If its argument, the result of years of patient study, will at all contribute to elucidate the teaching, and vindicate the honor, of the sacred Scriptures in respect to the system of slavery, it is quite at your disposal.

With high regard,

Yours truly,

JOS. P. THOMPSON.

MESSRS. SETH B. HUNT,

WM. H. SMITH, and others.





# CHRISTIANITY AND EMANCIPATION.

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## I.

### A SLANDER UPON THE GOSPEL.

A MONSTROUS libel upon Christianity has lately appeared from the pen of the Professor of History in the University of Ghent. It is the most shocking scandal that the Deism of this age, or of any age, has invented against the Bible. There is nothing more malignant in Voltaire; and, though it is couched in decent phrase, there is scarce anything more blasphemous in Thomas Paine. It is contained in half-a-dozen lines, imbedded in a work of several octavo volumes, entitled, "Studies upon the History of Humanity;" and may be found in the chapter on the enfranchisement of serfs, in the volume upon "Feudalism and the Church."\* Shall I then reproduce it in the English tongue, and give it currency in a nation that its author could not reach? Alas, it is already current wherever modern Deism assails the divine origin of the Bible; it has found utterance in lyceums and conventions, in newspapers and magazines, as the favorite, because the most effective, weapon of modern infidelity. And yet I shudder to write these impious

\* *La Féodalité et L'Eglise*, par F. Laurent. *Etudes sur L'Histoire de L'Humanité* Tome VII., pp. 596 and 618. Paris, E. Jung-Trenttel.

words:—"To have done anything," says Laurent, "toward the enfranchisement of the servile classes, the Church had need of a living sentiment of liberty. But Christianity never had that sentiment: it accepted slavery by consecrating it with its authority. Yes, Christianity did more than accept slavery; it saw in it a Divine institution. It is not enough to say that Christianity does not condemn slavery; it would be more true to say that it sanctifies it."\*

This horrible calumny against Christianity is used by its author to glorify the French Revolution of 1789, as an intervention of God in behalf of humanity, to inaugurate liberty and equality in spite of the church. Theodore Parker charged upon the Bible the same infamous complicity with slavery, and sneered at the idea of a supernatural revelation in the Scriptures.† Such a Bible was to him a Fetish. "The divine statutes in the

\* The same sentiment is expressed by Patrice Larroque, in his treatise "*de l'Esclavage chez les Nations Chrétiennes*," p. 13. "Not only have the books of the New Testament not one solitary text against slavery, but all that they say about slavery is favorable to its principle. And it must not be forgotten, that Christianity, starting from the books of the Old Testament, declares those to have been revealed and inspired by the Holy Spirit, as well as the books of the New Testament. But slavery finds its justification in express utterances of the Old Testament."

† Theodore Parker's "Experience as a Minister," pp. 64 and 143. Mr. Parker takes these sentiments to represent the current views of "Bible-worshippers," as he designates believers in the inspiration of the Scriptures. He does not, however, deny or disprove the interpretation of the Bible which he imputes to such persons; but assuming that the Old Testament does sanction slavery, he makes this a reason for rejecting its divine inspiration. Bishop Colenso reasons in the same way against the inspiration of the Pentateuch. He first misinterprets the Hebrew text, and having charged upon it the most extravagant errors and immoralities, he then refuses to believe that his *imaginary* Bible comes from God—a conclusion in which we quite agree.

Old Testament admitted the principle that man might own a man as well as a garden or an ox. Moses and the prophets were on the side of slavery; and neither Paul of Tarsus nor Jesus of Nazareth uttered a direct word against it, . . . the slaveholder finds the chief argument for his ownership of men, in texts from the authentic Word of God." Mr. Parker had the popular reputation of knowing many languages: he ought to have known Hebrew better than to have conceded that the Old Testament sanctions or in any sense admits the ownership of man in man. But the Deist who charges the Bible with sanctioning slavery, knows well that this is the most odious and damaging accusation that he could bring against a book claiming to have come from God; that in an enlightened age,—an age when moral convictions and philanthropic sympathies have combined to exterminate slavery as a sin and a curse—nothing could more effectually destroy all respect for the Bible, or disprove its divine origin, than the representation that it sanctions the owning of human beings. This imputation is "a blow aimed at all that good men hold most sacred. It seeks to undermine the very foundations of national morality and break the spring of all public and private virtue. It attacks Christianity in its central principle and vital essence. It daringly assaults the morality of the Bible, and seeks to destroy forever its authority by making it an accomplice in the perpetuation of the most gigantic crimes."<sup>\*</sup>

\* London Daily News.