

**BIBLE VINDICATED: A  
SERIES OF ESSAYS ON  
AMERICAN SLAVERY**

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Bible Vindicated: A Series of Essays on American Slavery by Elder Jonas Hartzel

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**ELDER JONAS HARTZEL**

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AMERICAN SLAVERY**



# BIBLE VINDICATED.

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SERIES OF ESSAYS

OR

## AMERICAN SLAVERY.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following Essays comprise a thorough examination of the whole subject of American Slavery, as far as the Bible is supposed to give it any countenance. That holy book is (we think) fully "vindicated" from the foul charge of being *pro-slavery*.

The Essays were originally written for the *North Western Christian Magazine*, but owing to their universal popularity among the friends of liberty and the Bible, and the strong solicitation of many of those who have read them, they are now presented in their present form. It has, with the assistance of the author, been carefully revised and corrected.

We commend the work to the favorable consideration of an enlightened public, believing it will be found an important auxiliary to the cause of humanity and religion.

J. B.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I HAVE, for some time past, thought of reviewing the Bible on the subject of Slavery. Many brethren of intelligence dissenting, led me to suspect that there might be some error in my position. I have recently been called to the task; not, however, with a view to enlighten the Church on this subject, (a most humiliating necessity,) but to defend the Bible against the charge of being "pro-slavery in its tendency." This calumny was thrown upon the Book that contains the christian's faith and hope by an open-mouthed, long-tongued infidel, in the course of a series of lectures recently delivered in our place. When this missionary of infidelity referred to great names, great men, and great expounders of the Scriptures—preachers standing at the head of literary and theological institutions, etc., as concurring with him in this view of Bible teaching and tendency—the heart of the christian bled. Why? Because the christian could not say to the calumniator, you falsify, you have the concurrence of no such men. This feeling was the more pungent, from a conviction that the unbeliever was right; so far, at least, that the interpretation of the Bible, by such men, is the very bulwark of slavery, in so far as the church participates in the mischief. How painful to the christian, that this enemy of God's own Book, in which are contained all the elements of piety and morality, and hope for the future, has the concurrence of such renowned names, in what the Bible "admits and sustains;" differing *only* with them in the conclusions. They, indeed, affirming that as the Bible approves the "relation of master and slave for life,"—and as it is the christian's directory in all ques-



tions of right, therefore, we should acquiesce and offer no violence to the institution. But the unbeliever draws a widely different conclusion from the same premises, viz : that the Bible is not from God, but the production of wicked men, for God would not justify such a system of oppression as robs man of his humanity, and degrades him to the condition of a brute. Each, turning that in which they mutually agree to his own account, in his own way. The one to sustain slavery (American slavery, for we have no other) in the church and in the State, and the other to destroy confidence in the Bible, holding it up to public scorn and contempt, as being decidedly unjust and immoral in its tendency.

That slavery always has been demoralizing in its tendency will not be denied by its warmest adherents. If, then, the Bible, "both Moses and Paul sustain it," and the "tree is to be known by its fruit," we must ask pro-slavery christians to meet infidel abolitionists on the Bible controversy. A discussion between these parties could be readily agreed upon, as they now agree in the predicate. All that remains to be settled is simply, shall the Bible be employed to support American slavery, or shall the guarantee the Bible gives to slavery be employed for its own destruction?

We hold nothing in common with unbelievers in regard to the Bible. We have nothing to defend *but the book* on its own intrinsic merits. We are now engaged in answering the advocate of infidelity by a course of lectures, and shall give you the result of our review of the Bible upon the subject.

I am happy in the conviction that the Bible can be defended against pro-slavery christians and infidel abolitionists, many of which are making a great outcry against the evils of society, but are doing nothing towards correcting them, unless it is true, as these self-styled reformers affirm, that the minds of men must be emancipated from their reverence of the Bible before any thing can be affected in the way of reforming society : a position most false and self-destructive.

## BIBLE VINDICATED.

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### ESSAY I.

I WILL now give the result of my review of what the Bible teaches on the subject of slavery. I was called upon by some of my fellow-citizens to answer the gross assaults of the infidel B. against the Bible. Among other charges of injustice and immorality was that of slaveholding, viz: that the Old and New Testaments justified the system of involuntary and perpetual slavery. Had we been slaveholders, or even entertained their sentiments, we should have regarded this portion of the infidel's sermons as a commendation to the Bible. We would have been edified. We would have taken no exceptions. No defense would have been called for, and no reply would have been made. Or, if the unbeliever had proven his position, we should have let the matter rest, as converts to slavery, or opponents to the Bible. But, as his argument consisted in unsustained assertions, and a few *nibbling criticisms*, we were of the same opinion still, that there was not a sanction for slavery—slavery proper, in the law of Moses.

To approach the subject in logical order, we inquire, first, how the Hebrews were to obtain their servants, and who were the specified subjects of servitude?

1st, then, "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant, but as a hired servant.

"But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee :

"And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him."—Lev. xxv: 39-42.

This looks more like paying debts than it looks like slavery. God taught the Jews to be honest. He gave them no bankrupt law, or exemption law. No legalized swindling was permitted under Moses. There is *no slavery in this statute*, but equity to the creditor and mercy to the debtor. By six years labor, not as a slave, but as a hired servant, he paid, in all his indebtedness, and was taught a good lesson for the future.

When the six years' service had expired, the master was required to give his servant, at the time of his departure, an outfit. "And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty ; Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press : of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him." To withhold was "sin." There is, then, no such thing as a Jew being a slave to a Jew in the law of Moses ; but a law *to favor* the insolvent debtor. Infidelity has an "evil eye."