

**A NORTHERN PRESBYTER'S
SECOND LETTER TO MINISTERS
OF THE GOSPEL OF ALL
DENOMINATIONS ON SLAVERY;
PP. 1-95**

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A Northern Presbyterian's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations on Slavery; pp. 1-95 by Nathan Lord

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NATHAN LORD

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NORTHERN PRESBYTER'S

SECOND LETTER

TO

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL

OF

ALL DENOMINATIONS

ON

SLAVERY.

BY

NATHAN LORD,
PRESIDENT OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE.

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LETTER.

A NORTHERN PRESBYTER addresses this second letter to his brethren, of all denominations, on slavery. His former letter appears not to have been generally acceptable. It has been sharply criticized in many religious and secular journals. A leading representative *Quarterly* — THE NEW ENGLANDER — calls down upon the writer the censure of the church, and, subsequently, undertakes to set forth, at large, his alleged errors, and raise the note of warning against their pernicious influence. Presbyter proposes in these pages to justify what he has before written. He presumes to question the wisdom of his reviewers; and hopes to substantiate, by additional reasonings, his original positions. Whether what he now writes will be more convincing or acceptable, he has no concern to inquire. It is in his mind to write it, and he leaves it to produce whatever results it may please an infinitely wise Providence to appoint.

Presbyter's former letter was written in a full knowl-

edge of what the NEW ENGLANDER and other journals have since published in reproof of it. It was undertaken for the purpose of suggesting the invalidity of those popular methods of reasoning on the subject in question, which those respectable periodicals represent, and of allaying the dangerous agitations which they have contributed to produce. It was designed to encourage a more legitimate method of discussion, by turning inquirers from the accidents and contingents of slavery, which occasion such irreconcilable diversities of opinion among wise and good men, and inflame the passions of the generality, to its elementary principles, its providential design, and its comprehensive bearings and relations in respect to the moral government of God. The question of slavery, especially as it concerns ministers of the Gospel, is simply ethical and theological. It must be tried, therefore, by a Divine standard, and not at the bar of an imaginative philosophy, or a sentimental philanthropy; not on the political arena, nor by vote of popular assemblies, or the conceits of fiction and romance. The letter proposed that authoritative test. "To the law and to the testimony."

It is no answer, then, merely to reproduce, in similar or different forms, the same arguments or methods whose unsoundness and fallaciousness had been condemned. Nothing is settled by merely evading the criterion which Presbyter propounds, and

ringing changes upon the exhausted topics of anti-slavery literature which that criterion reproves. Such finesse might suffice for a temporary popular effect, but could serve no abiding purpose of truth or charity. It is unworthy of the subject, and the occasion. Presbyter takes the question of slavery from its accidents to its principles, and discusses it accordingly. He must be met, therefore, on his own ground, or, whether right or wrong, his letter is not answered; and all avoidance of its issues, or stale repetitions of contrary theories and interpretations, are a virtual acknowledgment of its correctness. Wherefore, the criticisms of the *NEW ENGLANDER*, and others like them, because they are thus evasive, need no refutation, but a reference to the letter itself. Yet it may be of consequence to show, more particularly, and in detail, wherein they reach not their mark; and to lay open the sophistry which is intended to give them the appearance and effect of a reply.

In this pamphlet, Presbyter will confine himself especially to his reviewer in the *NEW ENGLANDER*. That ardent writer is a fit representative of his class. From one all may be known: for, though they exhibit different degrees of learning and ingenuity, they use the same materials, and after the same fashion. There could, indeed, be but little difference between them in these respects; for the fountain of their new philosophy is not deep, and a single channel

suffices to bear off its impetuous and noisy waters. The reviewer is one of the best specimens, and is accordingly so commended by his satisfied friends. He publishes by request. He is a writer of evident intelligence and Christian virtue, — well informed, earnest, sincere, resolved. He condemns his adversary, without stint, and agreeably to his honest convictions, for alleged intellectual blindness and moral delinquency. He pities him, as is kind, in his consequent state of degradation; and does what he can to abridge his pernicious influence. Yet he does not quite abandon him as a reprobate; and would give him over to public censure, and official destruction, only for the sake of his ultimate repentance and salvation. Presbyter would take no exception to him, in these respects; for every writer should be suffered to free himself agreeably to his own sensibilities and tastes. His ideas, and not his temperament, or his rhetoric, alone concern the question at issue. All that is now proposed is to show wherein his argument is nothing to his purpose; and to elucidate more fully the principles which he so imperfectly comprehends, and so ineffectually disputes. Indeed, but for this latter purpose, namely, the fuller development and exposition of the principles embodied in his first letter, Presbyter would not have thought it material to invite his brethren to the perusal of a second. — The logical order, both of the letter and the

review, will be followed, as far as it may seem of consequence to pursue the subject.

I. THE QUESTION.

The letter of Presbyter first calls the attention of its readers to the question of *the Divine right* of slavery. He uses the term according to its proper scientific import,— as the denominator of a state of bondage in which one man becomes, by law, the property of another man, and subject to the master's will. The definition is implied, expressed, and kept up throughout the letter, and is continually guarded as simply and alone descriptive of the stated relation subsisting between the parties. The one owns, the other is owned, according to law so made and provided. It presupposes an authority of the State, under God, to institute the relation, and to regulate it, agreeably to its natural intention and design. The master becomes, by law, sole proprietor, and the slave a chattel personal, in distinction from a chattel material, which implies, from necessity of the case, that their respective moral and spiritual relations are undisturbed, and that both master and slave are brought together in peculiar and distinctive relations, as well to God as to each other; and are held to answer for the performance of their respective duties to him as the sovereign proprietor and ruler of all. But the slave is the master's money. No man but the master has a right to his person, or his services; and he has