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New-York.

SIDNEY'S LETTERS

TO

DR. CHANNING,

ON THE

ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

TO THE

UNITED STATES.

SIDNEY'S LETTERS

TO

WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D. D.

OCCASIONED BY HIS LETTER TO

HON. HENRY CLAY,

ON THE

ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

TO THE

UNITED STATES.

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To JAMES SHOOLBRED, Esq.

A devoted friend to the Union and the Constitutional rights of the Southern States, the following pages are inscribed, with great respect, by

THE AUTHOR.

LETTER I.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—I have just read your letter, addressed to the Hon. Henry Clay, of Kentucky, "on the annexation of Texas to the United States." You say that you prepared it, "not amidst the goadings, irritations and feverish tumults of a crowded city, but in the stillness of retirement, amid scenes of peace and beauty." You cannot be supposed, therefore, to have written from the impulse of a sudden freak of fancy. You weighed well the purport of all that you were about to utter. Your intentions are not palliated by the out-burstings of some ungovernable passion, but you have taken your positions coolly and boldly, on the ground of a settled conviction and a fixed purpose. You are ready to make good what you say about Texas, the South, and the peculiar institutions of the South,—if you can. Sir, you are understood. No one can doubt as to the object you have in view. It is as apparent as the light of day. You scarcely even affect disguise. You wish to destroy the peculiar institutions of the South. You have been attempting to effect this object by your writings, for the last two years. You wish to unsettle the Constitution of the Union, which recognizes and sanctions the existence of slavery, in fact, if not in words. You wish to interfere with the rights of the citizens of the South, and to wrest from them their property, in order to obtain currency for your own theoretical ideas of freedom. You wish,—I will not say you wish it, although your fiery

declamation is well calculated to effect such a purpose,—to sow the seeds of public discontent,—to make our people dissatisfied with the established order of things in this nation, and to produce a revolution in the Government. Indeed, you venture to say, openly, that you *do* desire to see the Union dissolved, unless your own views prevail against those of the citizens of the South. "To me," you say, "it seems not only the right, but the duty of the free States, in case of the annexation of Texas, to say to the slave-holding States, "we regard this act as the dissolution of the Union." In case the Representatives of the whole Union, in Congress assembled, decide upon the measure, you are ready to raise the standard of revolt against the decisions of the majority, and to overthrow the pillars of the Government, if your strength will enable you to do so. In such a contingency, you will not submit to the laws; and, if the Union is not dissolved, you threaten to expatriate yourself. You will not consent to live in a country whose policy you regard so iniquitous. You will escape from a companionship with men whom you will no longer be willing to regard as countrymen, and whose touch you will thenceforth esteem contamination. Much, Sir, as the country, on some accounts, esteems you, it is willing, under the circumstances, to part with you. "The Union must be preserved," if possible. The Constitution must be respected, and the laws passed in conformity to that instrument must be obeyed. If any citizen becomes discontented with a good Government, it is better for him to remove, than to disturb the peace and quiet of the country, and the orderly administration of the laws.

The world, Sir, gives you credit for the possession of talents of no mean order. You first distinguished yourself as a theologian, and your discourses on extraordinary occasions created considerable sensation among those of your own

peculiar sect. You may have made converts to your opinions. You are, it is certain, looked upon as a leader in a particular sphere. I am informed that you have enjoyed more leisure for literary pursuits, and the cultivation of your mind, than most of your professional brethren. As a man of letters, you have not been idle; you have sought retirement; you have read and written much, as you supposed, for the benefit of your race. You have published your productions, and they have been admired and extolled. Society owes you something for what you have done for her interests, and she has already paid the debt, as far as a just appreciation of your merits can evince her gratitude. But you have not been content with the honors due to scholarship, which your country has heaped upon you. Clergyman though you are, you have been anxious to distinguish yourself as a political writer. You have thrown yourself into the arena of party warfare. You have agitated, with intemperate zeal, questions upon which your country was divided. You have left the church, your proper province, and have intermeddled with the affairs of the nation. While you have disclaimed the alliance, you have actually held friendly intercourse with the abolitionists; you have co-operated with their plans; you have united with them in misrepresenting the real opinions of your fellow countrymen, and have, yourself, propagated doctrines of the most disorganizing and dangerous tendency. However you may justify yourself to the citizens of the North, you stand before the whole country as a wrong doer.

As a man and a citizen, you have your rights. Among these the Constitution secures to you freedom of speech, and of the press. You have a *right* to express your opinions freely, on all subjects that are proper to be placed before the public in any shape. The government of the country makes no

difference, in this respect, between one citizen and another, between a clergyman and a layman. It meddles not with the concerns of religion. It expects that religion and its instructers will not interfere with its own arrangements. The Church and the State are quite independent of each other. But if the laws impose no restraint upon the exercise of your rights, it is not so with public opinion; it is not so with the injunctions of Christianity itself. To you there are certain things interdicted. The pulpit is your sphere of action. The people are unwilling that you should have any thing to do with secular affairs. They look upon your profession as sacred. They wish you to confine yourself to the inculcation of moral and religious truths, and to leave politics and political affairs to statesmen, and men of the world, who have equal ability and more tact in managing them. Besides, Christianity has left you no choice in this matter. Christ says, "my kingdom is not of this world; if it were, my servants would fight." But you will have it that Christ's kingdom is of this world, and you are ready to fight and contend about every matter that does not chance to please you. Christ says again, "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." And an Apostle says, "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." But you will not be content with the civil government under which you live, if it passes a law that you disapprove. In such a case you will withdraw yourself from subjection to the higher powers, and refuse to render to the government the honor and obedience that are its due. Slavery existed unrebuked in the time of the Saviour. He never lifted his voice against it. Had it been the crime and curse you represent it to be, would he have been silent upon the subject? The Apostle, in so many words, expressly sanctioned it, and made obedience of the slave to the master, a

Christian duty. If the slave ran away from his master, Paul, the apostle, insisted that he should return to his service. In such a case, you detain the slave, and liberate him. But you pretend to a Christianity purer than that of Christ and his Apostles. You have more philanthropy,—a soul that sympathizes more generously and keenly with the sufferings of your fellow creatures, than St. Paul. You have a clearer insight into the nature of human rights,—more enlarged and correct views of civil liberty than Washington and Franklin, and the other framers of the Constitution. Concocting your fiat in the bosom of retirement, you consider yourself qualified to instruct such statesmen as Henry Clay, in the performance of their public duties. You persuade yourself that the affairs of the government will be brought to a stand till it hears the response of the oracle at Newport. There is less, Sir, of modesty, than of eccentricity in your claims. The world wonders not at your opinions, but at the unusual position which the minister of Christ occupies. Your explanation, however, soon unravels the mystery. You aspire to the honors of a reformer. Living in the nineteenth century, you have cast your eagle glance along the line of future ages, and are favored with visions of brighter and purer prospects, than the rest of your race. You are ready, accordingly, to set up new standards of truth and duty for the present generation. You have devoted yourself, you say, "to the study and exposition of *great principles and universal truths*." Washington was a wise man and a skilful legislator. But a purer and brighter light now appears in the heavens,—a wiser than Washington is here! Henry Clay is a great statesman. People come from the ends of the earth to listen to his eloquence. But a greater than Henry Clay is here! Your *great principles*, Sir, must be promulgated to the country, and to the world, or we shall relapse, soon, into the obscurity of the dark ages. It is well that a Solomon is left to instruct us

in our duty, and to bring back a degenerate age to *great principles and universal truths.* It is well that an apostle of liberty and equality still stands upon the watch-tower, and volunteers his able services to teach republicans the true principles of the Constitution.

I propose, Sir, in a few letters, to follow out the course of your teaching. I fear you will consider me a refractory pupil. It is some years since I burst loose from my leading strings, became my own master, and ventured to think for myself as becomes the citizen of a free country. I fear that I shall have to combat some of your "*great principles and universal truths.*" I have learned my logic in a different school from that in which you have been accustomed to syllogize and dictate. I consider that you are radically wrong in some of your fundamental positions, and that you are unnecessarily alarmed with evils, which your glowing imagination has pictured to your mind's eye in the stillness of your retirement. I shall be sorry to disturb your self-complacency on the subject of your "*great principles,*" but I owe a duty to myself and *my* principles, which my conscience calls upon me to discharge. If I do not quite concur with your views of right and liberty, do not therefore conclude that I am an enemy to freedom, or to the rights of my fellow citizens. I have always loved and venerated this Union, into which you have just thrown a firebrand of discord. You have applied a torch to the altar, where I have been accustomed to pay my homage. I cannot be indifferent to the acts of an incendiary, though he comes to me in the garb of a minister of peace. I cannot be silent when my rights are invaded, my opinions misrepresented, my feelings outraged, my character abused, and the purity, honor and justice of my fellow citizens are called in question. You will hear from me again.

SIDNEY.

LETTER II.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—It is not usual for those who deal chiefly in abstractions, to be over anxious in their search for facts. You have your own views to establish, and with these the representations of Texans seriously interfere. You, therefore, impeach their motives, and draw in question their credibility. You accuse them of being interested witnesses, and prefer to take for your "guidance" your "knowledge of human nature." From your insight into the springs of action, you suppose that men, under certain circumstances, will act in a particular way, and you infer how they have acted, from your knowledge of the manner in which they ought to act. You will not listen to the account they give of themselves, because they seem to you to talk strangely,—because they have an interest at stake, and a character to maintain. The evidence that satisfies you, is of a metaphysical kind, such as you have learned in the schools of philosophy. Books have taught you what men are and how they act, and you have a firm confidence in the infallibility of your instructers. A "knowledge of human nature," Sir, whether obtained from books or men, is a valuable acquisition, but you have too sudden a way of leaping to your conclusions. The history of a nation is made up of particular facts and transactions, which must be ascertained and understood, and for which no man's "knowledge of human nature," however wise he may be, can safely be substituted. You do not speak wholly without authority, but your sources of information are scanty,—by far too much so, to warrant the positions you assume in respect to the history of Texas and the progress of

her revolution. You seem to have forgotten that differences of opinion now exist on important points,—that the South is arrayed against the North in reference to the rights and claims of Texas,—that abstract theories in a certain quarter clash with existing and vital interests in another, and you have taken too one-sided a view of your entire subject. You overlook one half of its bearings, and confine yourself to considerations that harmonize most with your own sectional prejudices.

You quote books sparingly. Your chief authority is an article published in the North American Review on the subject, which, you inform us, is from the pen of an "enlightened and respectable citizen of the South." It is so. I have the honor of some acquaintance with the author of that article. He is a native of New-England. He emigrated from your State to the extreme South, where he fills an office of considerable responsibility, and with reputation. He was born and bred upon your own soil. He is thoroughly imbued with New-England feelings, and cherishes New-England predilections. He wrote the article for the meridian of the North. He published it there. It is essentially Northern authority. It answers your own views, but it is mere opinion. It has not the weight of its author's decisions in a court of justice. He never engaged in the fierce struggle of Texans for their liberties. He does not speak from the experience of those trials which are the best instructers. He was at considerable distance from the scene of action, not even a looker-on, but simply a reader of the trashy publications of the day, or an auditor of the thousand conflicting reports to which the progress of a revolution gives rise. He came to the investigation of facts with certain preconceived notions, of which you have availed yourself. He wrote about them more than a year ago, when the public mind was yet in a

state of violent agitation, and popular opinion was not made up as to the "great principles" involved in the controversy. He wrote, like yourself, in the stillness of retirement, amid the soft breathings of a quiet hour, and under the inspirations of a fancy that sometimes mistook visions for realities. His opinion,—an honest one, no doubt,—is that of a mere private citizen, exercising his privilege of expressing his own thoughts on important matters. It is not a decision issued from the woolsack.

You quote, also, the authority of Col. Austin, a good and gallant man, and one of the earliest and most tried friends of Texas and her cause. It is no discredit to that gentleman, that he, too, was a native of New-England. Your soil has ever been fruitful in great and brave men. The United States are not ashamed of them, although, with a singular want of discrimination and common justice, you undervalue your own statesmen in order to evince your sensibility to the higher claims of those of the South. The South, Sir, owes you no thanks for praising her citizens at the expense of truth. She is able to maintain her position, both at home and in the councils of the nation. But from the origin of the government to the present hour, the representation in the halls of Congress from the Eastern States has been distinguished by its ability. You cannot be unaware of the fact. You have sent your choicest and best men there,—your men of rank and influence,—your strong minds, your brilliant geniuses, your accomplished scholars,—men every way qualified to maintain your peculiar interests, (for you have such) and to uphold the power of New-England. I could name them, but it is unnecessary. You know them already. It is too late in the day for you to attempt to depreciate their merits. They will neither be raised nor prostrated, by the mere opinion of any man. Why run a parallel between them and

the statesmen of the South, and give the palm of superiority to the latter? *Cŭi bono?* Are you disposed, Sir, to come over to Southern principles, and to maintain Southern institutions? Were it not that your high reputation places you above the reproach of a mean motive or a discreditable action, it might be supposed that this fondling of Southern statesmen, admitted some other interpretation than a mere kiss of peace. This measuring of Americans with Americans,—this weighing of Southern and Northern talent in the scales, in order to ascertain which is lightest and which is heaviest, savors more of worldly consideration than of religious duty. "Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all." Mark! sir, the South lays no claim to such honor. She will not accept her laurels from the North, at the expense of such a ministry. She spurns the reputation which would impose such shackles on her liberty. She is inclined to suspect the sincerity of one who professes to be her especial friend, and who yet plies zealously all the resources of a powerful mind to effect her destruction by the overthrow of her institutions.

To return, however, to Col. Austin. He was the founder of the Anglo-American Colonies in Texas. While imprisoned in Mexico, he wrote a letter home, informing the Texans, that no course remained for them, but to rely on their own prowess and to work out their own independence. At the same time, he cautioned them against the adoption of any "violent and disrespectful measures" towards Mexico. You quote the opinion of this gentleman, and why? You think you detect, perhaps, in his language the want of an abiding sym-

pathy in the great plans of his countrymen. By what sort of ingenuity,—by what new-fangled mode of construction, you should arrive at such a conclusion, it is difficult to say. How you have converted such expressions into an argument in favor of your views, is equally an enigma. That a friend of liberty should recommend to an oppressed people any course of action that would signally defeat their own aims, would be indeed a strange procedure. Our own American Colonies in their contest with Great Britain, never resorted to measures of violence till those of conciliation failed. They avoided disrespectful language. They employed remonstrance and entreaty, and the indignant terms of the Declaration of Independence were appropriately employed in setting forth grievances extensively felt, and loudly demanding redress. If there is any one quality more than another, calculated to attach a people to a commander in times of danger and difficulty, it is a high degree of gallantry tempered with prudence. The mass follows with a generous confidence, when such men lead the way.

Adding Mr. Lundy's pamphlet entitled "War in Texas," and Mr. Edwards' "History of Texas," which you acknowledge furnished you with no information of importance, we have all the authorities upon which you rely for the strange statements contained in your letter. It is on such slender grounds, that you attempt to implicate Texans and Americans in the perpetration of offences of the blackest die,—offences, at which humanity, patriotism and justice shudders; and even of those authorities you speak yourself disparagingly, admitting that your "chief reliance is not on books, but on the notoriety of facts here given." The "notoriety of facts," asserted by one party and denied by the other,—facts notoriously true in Boston, and notoriously false in Texas! notoriously true where they did not occur, and notoriously false where they are said to have happened! Now, Sir, it is one

thing to call facts notorious, and another to prove their existence. To substantiate your assertions, authorities are indispensable, and nothing, not even the notoriety of your facts, can supply the place of credible, unwavering testimony,—the testimony of eye and ear witnesses. But you have an easy way of settling all doubtful points, by your "knowledge of human nature." That is the key which enables you to unlock the doors of the labyrinth. That is the magician which gives you a clue to the numerous windings which puzzle common eyes. It is this "knowledge of human nature," Sir, which enables you to convert one of the most glorious revolutions of modern times, into a "revolt," and an "insurrection," and to identify the motives of a gallant people, struggling for liberty, with fraud and corruption! If the Texans were criminal in their efforts to relieve themselves, to vindicate their rights and achieve their independence, let not the United States, you say, by allying themselves to the fortunes of these desperadoes, become participators in their guilt. I concur in this sentiment, but I am not satisfied that you have made out your charge of criminality In my next, I shall consider, and examine particularly, the manner in which you attempt to sustain it.

SIDNEY.

LETTER III.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir—Texas having wrought out her freedom, has taken her place among the nations of the earth as an independent Republic. She is no longer tributary to Mexico. She has

her own government and her own public functionaries, and the most valuable portion of her citizens being emigrants from the United States, have carried thither their love of liberty, and their enlightened views of jurisprudence. They have adopted a civil polity similar to our own, and in the earliest measures pursued by that young and rising people, we see the triumph of free institutions. They have had the sympathy of a large majority of our citizens, from the very commencement of their struggle. We have looked upon the progress of their conflict whith a painful interest, as being, emphatically, a controversy between civilization and freedom on one side, and misrule and oppression on the other.

Fear and hope have alternated in our breasts, as success or defeat have crowned their efforts. When the last blow was struck, and the independence of Texas was achieved,—when we saw that our countrymen, men who were born upon our soil, some of whom we knew and loved,—men who spoke our language and thought on all great questions of national policy as we did,—when we saw that after braving hardships and trials, they had finally conquered their enemies, and had given to a new and not uninteresting country, the blessings of those institutions for which our ancestors fought, and bled, and died,—what American spirit did not glow with a sudden joy and gladness? Who was not ready to join these new born republicans in their national peans of exultation and triumph? If there were any who did not cherish this enthusiasm in the cause of liberty,—this sympathy in the success of brave men, they were not, I am sure, to be found among the citizens of the South. I regret, that in any part of our country, feelings like these did not find an immediate and spontaneous utterance,—feelings as honorable to human nature as they are consistent with the principles of our Constitution, and the pure spirit of Christianity. I rejoice, Sir,

that the United States, as a body, were not unaffected by these generous sentiments, but that the account of the Texan victories and triumphs had no sooner reached their ears, than rising superior to any selfish views of policy, they promptly set the first and noble example of recognizing the independence and sovereignty of this new community. It was enough for them that liberty had found another lodgment, where she might grow and flourish, and shed a hallowing influence, even though amid strife and trial.

You do not acquiesce, Sir, in the recognition of the independence of this people, by our Govenment. You look upon her, and speak of her, as a revolted Colony, still struggling for existence, and entitled to no consideration whatever, in the scale of nations. In this you do Texas wrong. She has achieved much, and deserves commendation for what she has done. But you give her no praise. Nay, more,—you will not allow that she has taken a single step towards her present position, unmarked by crime. You arraign her before the world for sentence, and, in the bitterness of your denunciations, declare that she is utterly unworthy of the sympathy and co-operation of a virtuous and high-minded nation. What, Texas free! Texas independent! a territory where slaves till the soil, boasting of her rights! The idea pains and disgusts you, and the whole of your argument seems predicated on the assumption, that such is not the case. But Texas is free, in spite of vituperation and injustice. If you wish for further evidence of the fact, you will find it in the records of the last Session of Congress. But you deny that she is worthy of freedom. You reprobate her whole course of proceding. You speak disparagingly of the principals and agents engaged in this great labor of liberty, and of the intruments they have employed in prosecuting it. You call them speculators and adventurers,—men destitute of prin-

ciple, and animated only by an unholy and reckless passion for spoil and plunder. You denounce them as utterly regardless of the rights of property, and from citizens, becoming finally the robbers of those who had thrown around them the shield of protection. You accuse them of insinuating themselves into a confidence which they afterwards abused,—of trampling upon the most sacred rights, of violating solemn pledges, and of desecrating the allegiance into which they had entered in the face of high heaven, and before the whole world. This is your version of the matter, but there remains something to be said on the other side.

There is no doubt that Texas resorted to violence, but it was in order to maintain right, and not to trample upon it. There is no question that she rose against the government, but it was because the government was corrupt,—because the government was powerless to protect her, or unwilling to do so,—because, instead of keeping her own engagements with her, she tyrannized over her. She abused her power to oppress her citizens, and her citizens rose against the oppression, in order to vindicate and maintain the rights of human nature. Texas imitated our own bright example. Her position was, in many respects, similar to that of the American Colonies, when under a sense of intolerable aggression and outrage, our citizens flew to arms, as a last resource. There is much in the features of her Revolution upon which the patriot, and especially the American patriot, may gaze with admiration,—much that causes his heart to thrill with pride and pleasure. What were the grievances of which Texas complained? To answer this question properly, it will be necessary to glance at some of the circumstances connected with the early settlement of that country. To whom did Texas originally belong? Spain laid claim to her,—a claim however, never enforced, because the enforce-

ment of it was impracticable, or not regarded as worth the effort. Texas was not peopled from the old country, nor even by Mexico. Texas was a wild frontier territory, inhabited by savage tribes of Indians. The first traces of civilization in her soil, are to be found in the records of her settlement by our countrymen. And what induced the citizens of the United States to leave their pleasant abodes and penetrate into the recesses of that uncultivated and dangerous region? Some powerful cause must have influenced even the most hardy men to undertake so ungracious an enterprize. It could scarcely have been the mere glory of encountering a savage foe. No, Sir, Mexico had thrown off the yoke of Spain, and declared her independence of the parent country, in the achievement of which, American citizens, at the instance of Mexico herself, took an active part and proved most efficient allies. Some of her most brilliant victories over the Spanish arms during her war of independence, were owing solely to American valor. It was a war waged for liberty, and Americans gladly espoused such a cause. But Mexico found it difficult to maintain the position she had so boldly taken and so gallantly maintained. Her greatest danger arose from hostile incursions of the numerous and powerful tribes of Indians on her borders. In this emergency, pursuing a policy suggested by the circumstances, she held out splendid rewards to induce settlers to come to Texas, and keep the Indians in order. The lands of that country, though in a state of nature, were fertile, and presented a tempting prize to enterprizing and industrious adventurers. Thousands of our fellow-countrymen were persuaded to flock thither, and to expose themselves to all the contingencies of a life of peculiar hardship and peril. In addition to the large grants of land, they found a further motive for emigration in the fact that Mexico, when she

severed herself from Spain, had followed the example of the United States, and adopted a federal representative form of government, to the principles of which they were already attached. It is true, the Catholic Religion was the established religion of the country, but toleration was extended to dissenting sects, and Mexico pledged the "faith of a written Constitution, that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America." Under these circumstances, and trusting to the fulfilment of these engagements, American citizens wedded themselves to their new country, subdued the soil, vanquished the Indians, maintained their rights, civil and religious, and though necessarily contending with many difficulties, continued to improve their condition, and to advance in wealth and prosperity. United to Coahuila, they formed a distinct Republic, like one of our own States, and had their own Constitution, securing to them the most valuable rights of free citizens, particularly the right of trial by jury. Mexico soon became the theatre of factions and revolutions. Of those placed at the head of affairs, one after another was deposed, and the whole country thrown into confusion by the contests of parties sustaining the claims of rival candidates for the supreme power. Texas, remote from the scene of violence, took little or no part in these disturbances, but quietly pursued her own course.

I see no evidence on record that she created any excitement, except what arose out of the refusal of her application to be erected into a government independent of Coahuila, with whom she had become dissatisfied, and in which application she did nothing more than did the Province of Maine, when she petitioned to be set off from the State of Massachusetts,—a request readily acceded to by our Government.

This application was not only promptly refused, but Colonel Austin, the individual charged with the mission, was imprisoned by Mexico, on the false charge of plotting a revolution in the government. Of this treatment Texas bitterly and justly complained, as a most outrageous and high-handed proceeding. You say, however, that Mexico was justifiable, because there was no provision in the instrument soliciting the separation, "to secure the country against slavery," and that too, when you acknowledge that the Constitution of 1824, expressly prohibited the introduction of any slave into the Mexican States. With as much propriety might our General Government have refused to admit Indiana into the Union, because she had made no provision in her Constitution against the slave trade. If Mexico was unable to sustain the principles of her own Constitution in any one of her Provinces, it was high time for that Province to take the laws into its own hands. There is no government that can long maintain its hold on the affections or respect of its citizens, that is unable to maintain, in all its vigor, its own constitutional enactments. In respect to their religious privileges, which the colonists enjoyed to the fullest extent,—if they held them only by sufferance,—if the Mexican Colonization Laws expressly prohibited their exercise, as is asserted by one of your authorities, it is only another proof of the weakness of the federal head and the utter inefficiency of the administration. Besides, if these laws denied them the enjoyment of their religious liberty and Protestant worship in one part of the code, it distinctly extended it to them in another part of it, which secured to them that "constitutional liberty and republican government, to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth;" and I need not inform you, Sir, that an important item of this same "constitutional liberty" is the undoubted civil, as well

as natural right, which every citizen enjoys and exercises, of worshipping God as he pleases. The colonists made no complaint of the violation of their chartered privileges, until the military revolution which took place under that blood thirsty tyrant, Santa Anna, who seized the reins of power, abolished the free Constitution of 1824,—undid the work which the patriots had cemented with their blood, and converted Mexico from a representative, republican, into a military, central, consolidated government. This revolution changed the whole state of affairs throughout Mexico, and Texas was placed in an entirely new position. She soon became the devoted object of the tyrant's vengeance, for no other reason, probably, than because she was inhabited by a brave and free people, whose designs are always viewed with suspicion and jealousy by those who wield despotic and irresponsible power. One of the first efforts of this military monster, was to put down Texas, and effectually to crush her rising and growing importance. To this end, a hostile force was sent to penetrate the heart of the country—the ferocious savages were employed, as they once were by Great Britian against us, to murder the defenceless inhabitants,—the legislature of the State was forcibly dispersed and its Governor imprisoned,—the citizens were no longer permitted to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences,—the right of trial by jury, secured by their own Constitution, was withheld from them,—their arms of defence were demanded, and all those liberties and peculiar blessings for which they had toiled and suffered, and which were guaranteed to them, in the most solemn manner, by the Government to which they had sworn their allegiance, were forcibly trampled in the dust! Were these things, Sir, to be borne? Was it to be expected that any people who respected themselves, and who were deserv-

ing of the respect of mankind, should tamely submit to such oppression and injustice? Was not the cause which induced them to retain their arms, and to employ them against these invaders of their country,—these enemies of liberty,—worthy of the espousal of all good men? I confess, Sir, I see no criminality in the attitude of defiance which they assumed, but every thing to approve,—every thing to awaken a generous enthusiasm on the side of men engaged in so glorious a struggle. We may condemn the course which many of our countrymen pursued in moving to the rescue of those gallant men, in the face of the published prohibition of our own Government, but it cannot be matter of wonder. Freemen will sympathize with freemen in their manly efforts to maintain right and resist aggression, and there are few considerations so strong as to prevent their co-operating with them. It may be wrong. It *was* wrong; but it is human nature. It is the spirit of liberty, leaping over proper restraints, in order to make liberty herself more secure and more triumphant. Instead of condemning this movement, because it was made by a small community,—a mere "handful" of people, as you term them, it seems to me that the glory of this achievement was immeasurably increased by that very circumstance. It proves one thing, if nothing more,—that the spirit of freedom and justice is so powerful in the breasts of brave men, that a small number of them is sufficient to vanquish and put to flight a whole army of tyrants.

SIDNEY.

LETTER IV.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—Your principal argument against the annexation of Texas to the United States, is, that "the measure will extend and perpetuate slavery." You call slavery "an evil,"—indeed, you pronounce it "the greatest of wrongs." To annex Texas, then, would, in your opinion, be equivalent to extending and perpetuating an enormous evil,—a task from which every patriot and Christian would recoil. Is slavery, or is it not, the evil you represent it to be? You have considered the whole subject in your work "on slavery," to which you refer us, and you come to the conclusion, that slavery is monstrous, and not to be tolerated by a free people. In that work you say, that "slavery ought to be discussed;" and in your letter to the abolitionist, Birnie, a personage who suffered some annoyances on account of the publication of obnoxious opinions, you complain that attempts have been made to stifle freedom of discussion on this subject.

It is necessary to understand this matter, and to inquire, if any wrong has been done, who should bear the burthen of it. The press is free, but are there no limitations to this freedom? May all sorts of opinions be published with impunity? Is no supervision to be exercised over the press? If it abuses its freedom by the propagation of wicked and mischievous doctrines,—dangerous to the public peace and safety, is there no redress? When the citizens of the United States made the press free, did they create a power wholly irresponsible? Why is the press free at all? Not from any inherent virtue or ability in the press itself, but simply be-

cause the individual is free who uses it. It is the instrument which a free, accountable being employs for the accomplishment of his own purposes. If it have limitations, they are the limitations assigned to a free moral agent, or a free citizen. If a man abuses the liberty of the press, he may doubtless be punished for it, as well as for the abuse of any other kind of liberty, and it will not exculpate him, or relieve him from the consequences of his offence, to say, that the press is free. He is clearly responsible for converting the press into an instrument of mischief and wrong doing. He must answer for the wrong at the tribunal of public opinion. The popular voice will condemn one so regardless of the general interests. He will be covered with odium and reproach, for having converted what should be a blessing into a curse, and in addition to the indignant rebuke of his fellow citizens, the most fearful of all punishments to a sensitive mind, the laws of the land attach penalties to certain abuses of the press, which may be enforced. He who controls a free press, holds, therefore, in his hands a power, for the right use of which he is responsible, and the press, free as it is, has its limitations.

It is certainly a high offence against liberty, to attempt to shackle freedom of speech and of the press, by any unjust restrictions. It is nothing more nor less than an attempt to violate the laws of nature which make men free,—to quench the light of science,—to check the progress of art and discovery, and of human improvement. He who does this, is not innocent. He is a criminal,—a traitor to his race,—to the cause of civilization,—to whatever can beautify, elevate and ennoble humanity. Does any person suppose that the citizens of the United States are disposed to give up or trample upon these great constitutional privileges? Even our English ancestors contended for them manfully, until they wrested from the British Parliament a full recognition of

them, in the teeth of its own enactments. No people can pretend to be free without these appendages, or rather bulwarks, and indispensable defences of its liberty. It is nearly two centuries since the discovery of the Art of Printing. Since that period, the press has not always and every where been as free as it should be; but in our country it has been free enough,—free as the great interests of the community required it to be, ever since the origin of our Government. This form of freedom is engrafted upon our Constitution, and is one among many evidences of the wisdom of our ancestors. We have always known how to prize it. Only a single instance has occurred among us of an attempt to put it down improperly, but the arm of power was nerveless to effect a purpose at which liberty scoffed and pointed the finger of scorn. I am not aware that the freedom of the press has been appreciated more highly by one section of the country than by another,—by the North more than by the South,—by the East more than by the West. It is a common benefit which belongs to the whole American people. The qualifications of candidates for office are every where freely discussed. So are all constitutional questions, and questions of public policy. Improvements in science, art and education, are placed before the public in every form calculated to draw attention to their merits. Doctrines of morality and religion are inculcated, not only from the pulpit, but from the press, and enforced with every variety of argument. Books of every description are issued from the press in great numbers, and much faster than the people can possibly read them. The present is emphatically an age of light, and a free press has made it so. Who among us gropes in the dark now, because the free and powerful movements of the press are encumbered? Where, when, how, and by whom was this mischief done, of which you complain? Mr. Birnie's printing press, it is true, was

destroyed, and I do not know but his office pulled down about his ears,—and why? Were the citizens of Cincinnati offended at the liberty of the press? No, Sir, but at its abuse. Mr. Birnie had propagated opinions caculated to disturb the peace of the country, and the people rose in their might to put down,—not the liberty of the press, but Mr. Birnie, the abolitionist, who had made the press an instrument of mischief.

The citizens of the South have been opposed to the discussion of slavery, not because they esteem slavery wrong, and are afraid, if the subject is canvassed, that it will appear so; but because it has been discussed already, and the merits of the controversy, as far as they could be legally adjusted, have been settled by the American people. The question is no longer a vexed one. It has been quieted by the Constitution. When the Southern States became members of the Union, they entered it as slave-holding States; they were received as such; the right which their citizens claimed to this species of property, was distinctly recognized; the principle of representation was based upon it, and guards were cautiously introduced into that instrument to protect it from the very abuses which, in this age of peculiar sensibility to the rights of the slave, are now practised with impunity. After this, what more had the country to do with the matter? Why revive the trial of a case already decided? Why moot the question of slavery,—a question about which differences existed, and always will continue to exist, in the different sections of the country. The North was opposed to slavery from the very beginning. She thought it wrong. The South entertained different notions, and made the recogniiton of slavery the indispensable condition of entering into the Union. Have the views of the two sections of the country been changed since? Not an iota, except that the North,

perhaps, is now more opposed to slavery than it has been, and the South more attached to it. Slavery was necessary to the existence of the Union at the first, and it is because it was indispensable to its continuance, that a delicacy has been felt until latterly in approaching the subject. The discussion was useless, because the question was already decided; and dangerous, because it would place the Union in jeopardy. The people of the South were well satisfied with slavery. If there was any moral wrong in it, they had not found it out. Good and religious men, who had reflected much upon the subject, held slaves very conscientiously, and did not suppose they were doing any violence to the laws of God or man by so doing. On the contrary, if slavery was a benefit to the master, it was humanity to the slave,—a being upon whom nature has stamped the badge of mental and physical inferiority, in marks not to be mistaken or to be eradicated while the world stands,—a being imbecile and unreflecting to the last degree,—requiring the support of some superior being on whom he may lean, and who shall think for him,—incapable of rational, regulated liberty, and, therefore, requiring control,—and whom all your free presses, your abolition societies, your colonization schools in Africa or elsewhere, however much they may prate of the rights of man being violated in his person, will never be able to elevate to the position of the white man, in rights, in liberty, in moral and intellectual gifts and attainments, or in political influence, if they print and publish and dogmatize to all eternity. We, who have more experience in these matters than you have, and who have seen the slave under the most favorable aspects, tell you that it is impossible. You may abuse us for tyrants, and call upon us to make the slave free, but how can you make him free, who cannot be so,—whose very nature rises up against the mandate, and who, if Providence had intended

him to be free, would have been so long ago. He is not worthy of freedom. No person is so, who remains a slave. No person deserves to be free, who cannot vindicate his liberty in spite of your institutions. Misnamed philanthropy and patriotism may find their votaries, but the laws of nature will not be turned aside to gratify declaimers and over zealous reformers. The African race has found its level in slavery. The condition which destiny has pointed out, as peculiarly its own, is that of dependence on the white man, and subjection to his will. Besides, the slave is fitted for toil. Physical labor, more than intellectual, is the law of his being. If he will have food and clothing and shelter, he must work for these blessings, and the citizens of the South must have his services. Their soil cannot be cultivated without them. The slave exults in the genial influence of a warm sun. The slave lives and enjoys health, where the white man lingers and dies. Under these circumstances, it is idle to imagine that the South will give up its control over these beings. The people of the United States have long understood this matter. They know that the South is not to be moved from its position, though madmen rave. A love of the Union, purchased at a great cost, has been deep and inextinguishable, and has carried us through many perils, and will carry us safely, I hope, through all those which Providence has yet in store for us. It is because the people of the United States,—the citizens of the North, as well as those of the South, have well understood that this question of slavery is no trifling matter,—that it is no less than a question of union and disunion, that they have so long avoided tampering with it. You, yourself, had the good sense for a whole quarter of a century to be perfectly quiet upon the subject. In early life, you tell us, you visited the South, and carried home favorable impressions as to the character of its citizens. From that time,

during a long period of your ministry, your conscience was not roused to "the greatest of wrongs," inflicted upon a free country. Where slept your philanthropy in the interval? Who performed your solemn duties? It was surely a long time to be dreaming upon your post. But your mind, you may tell us, had not then attained the due degree of light. I know it, Sir. It was not till the discussion of the West India question poured a sudden flood of effulgence upon your darkened faculties, that you perceived that you had been sleeping, and that an awful responsibility rested upon you, which you had entirely kept out of sight. You visited England during the discussion of that agitating subject. You saw a civilized nation giving freedom to a degraded race, who were wholly unable to maintain it, and who have miserably failed in the effort,—you saw them doing this in violation of the first principles of humanity to the white race, and in despite of the sacred rights of property of its own citizens in a distant land. In the interim, the lesser lights,—the humbler intellects of New-England were not idle. From their nostrils, the first breath of the coming storm moved over the face of the troubled waters. They employed the free press of which you boast, and which is a noble engine when directed to good ends,—they employed it to minister to their own passions,—to sustain their own pride and self-importance, and to foment the rankling jealousies that existed between the North and the South. They prostituted their free privilege,—they insulted their fellow citizens in this quarter with the vilest libels,—they propagated doctrines of the most disorganizing nature, and well calculated to produce insurrection and bloodshed in the very midst of us. Was this the liberty of the press, properly improved and wisely conducted,—or the press abused to license and folly? The good sense of the majority of the citizens of the North decided that

a licentious use had been made of it, such as orderly men who loved their country could not tolerate, and they attempted to check the career of these misguided men. But who can control the wild spirit of fanaticism? What considerations of reason, justice, humanity and patriotism, when the laws suffer this mad-cap to go at large? You returned home with dreams of universal emancipation floating through your brain, and wedded yourself, heart and soul, to the cause of the abolitionists. It is true, you affected to disapprove some of their measures. Abolition was a way-ward child,—a little headstrong, but then he was a fellow of such spunk, so valorous, and had espoused so good a work, that he must be pardoned for his errors. He would soon come into the traces, show well in harness, and travel at a galloping speed, under the guidance of so faithful a driver. The most turbulent men in the country now had a pioneer of whom they were proud, and who brought philosphy, literature, humanity and the Christian religion to their aid. Why should they not attain their aims to their hearts' content, and shortly rid the country of the scourge of slavery? Nothing could seem more probable. In the first place, slavery must be abolished in the District of Columbia. Petitions were sent to Congress from all quarters of New-England for that purpose,—petitions from blacks and whites,—petitions from abolitionists and citizens,—petitions from ministers of the gospel,—petitions from men, women and children. Petitions to whom, and for what? Petitions to the great Congress of the nation, to wrest from a portion of their fellow citizens the sacred rights of property, in order that philanthropy might flourish! Petitions to trample upon a franchise, around which the Constitution of the Union had thrown its safe-guards! It is not surprising that such petitions were not entertained, nor that the abolitionists, who preferred them, were sent home with

blank visages. Our members of Congress are sent there for other objects than to legislate about such matters,—to protect the rights of their constituents,—not to assail or abridge them. If an insect, with a venomous sting, lights upon a sensible part of my body, I brush it off. If a bold and indelicate person intrudes upon my privacy, I get rid of him as early as possible. To legislate on such matters, under the circumstances of the case, would have been an insult to the very name of legislation. Defeated in your petitions, you now raise a clamor about the admission of Texas. This you admit is directly a question of union or disunion,—not a question of the amendment of the Constitution, but, clearly and palpably, of the overthrow of the Government. You are ready to debate the matter, placing it on that issue. You object to the admission of Texas, because it will perpetuate slavery; and you object to slavery, because it is contrary to the laws of God, and the rights of man. I shall inquire into the nature of your apology for this bold and startling charge.

SIDNEY.

LETTER V.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—The people of the United States are, preeminently, a religious people. They entertain a high and abiding reverence for religious institutions. We have infidels among us, but the mass of our citizens are believers in the doctrines and divine authority of Christianity,—and their attachment to their faith is so strong,—that it seems to enter into, and

constitute an essential part of their moral nature. It is not necessary to inquire, why the religious propensity of our countrymen stands out in such prominent and bold relief. It may be sufficient to say,—that the divorce of religion from politics,—and the enjoyment of a higher degree of Christian liberty, than has fallen to the lot of other nations,—have been peculiarly favorable to its full development.

You have availed yourself of this religious feeling, as holy as it is ennobling, to excite a deep prejudice and a fierce hostility against slavery. But you have not calculated the strength of your opponents. In making slavery a religious question, you have ruined your cause,—for the whole force of the argument lies on the other side. Impious and wicked as you consider us, slavery forms a part of our religion, and for the very reason, that it forms an essential part of the religion of the bible. We find our authority for it in those writings with which you profess to be conversant,—the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It is taught by the Prophets and the Apostles,—and the way-faring man, though a fool, may read the lesson. This is no idle boast. It is a settled conviction,—a result at which we have arrived by free and fearless inquiry,—and with the blessing of God, as we believe, upon our studies. It is imbedded deeply in our religious faith, and rests on foundations more lasting than the hills,—on the word of God and the dispensations of his Providence. Think not that we are devoid of understanding, and conscience, and other moral powers. We possess them like yourselves. God has not been partial in the distribution of these benefits. He has not dispensed them liberally to the citizens of the North, and sparingly to the citizens of the South. We are not heathens. We have the bible in our hands,—and we know how to improve these blessings, which God has vouchsafed to us, for our light, our encouragement,

and our salvation. If religion inculcates humanity, justice and mercy, we know it. Who shall presume to say, that we are deficient in the practice of these virtues? Where stands the judge whom God has empowered to condemn us? Revelation, Sir, is directly at war with your vaunted theories,—and much as you may plume yourself upon your superior moral light, your theories are at open war with Revelation,—with every page of it, from Genesis to the end of the sacred volume. When you come to us with your harsh charges,—your un-christian rebukes and your moral admonitions,—have a caution that your accusations do not recoil back upon you with a tenfold force! See to it, that that very Word of God which you brandish with so much confidence before you, is not turned into a fierce and flaming weapon for the overthrow of your strongest defences! "The Lord is Governor among the nations. He putteth down one and raiseth up another." If you attempt to put down that which God raiseth up, and to raise up that which God putteth down, can you hope for success? Will all the powers of your great and brilliant intellect sustain you in the effort? Presumption and folly! *Slavery is sustained by Revelation.* Were it not so, it would be vain to defend it. *Slavery is sustained by Revelation,*—and all your arguments against it are powerless. They are scattered like chaff before the wind. When God fights our battles, we fear no human foe. *Slavery is sustained by Revelation.* We feel that we are right. We are prepared to defend the institution by the highest of all arguments. We know that you cannot shake us from our position until you get the better of Revelation,—until you demolish the very foundations of our faith, and scatter our holiest hopes and expectations to the winds. Are you prepared for this work? Can you approach it with your usual courage? Have you no misgivings? When you came to us and tell us

that slavery is evil,—unmixed evil,—we reply, that it is a part of God's Providence,—no man can certainly say why. It is, in some degree, a secret. But there the institution is,—and it has existed in God's universe, with his permission, ever since the deluge, and has left the records of its existence in every nation under the face of the whole heavens. What right have you to call that evil which God, in his good pleasure, has so long permitted,—nay more, what he has expressly sanctioned? You say it breeds "infection,"—that it is useless stubble. What right have you to separate the stubble from the wheat till harvest time? When you tell us that "every principle of our Government and religion condemns slavery," did we not know that these were only brave words,—we should, in our amazement, be disposed to ask you, when last you read the Constitution, and where that religion of ours is to be found, "every principle" of which condemns slavery? When you exclaim, that "the spirit of the age condemns it," we should otherwise, in the sadness of our spirits, mourn over the corruptions of the times, which had lost all respect for Revelation. When you announce again, that "the decree of the civilized world has gone out against it," we should insist upon your showing, of what value any civilization could be that was directly opposed to Revelation. When you sum up the entire account, and tell us, that "the most enduring reputations of our times have been won by resisting it, and that the great men of this and the past generation, be they philosophers, philanthropists, poets, economists, statesmen, jurists, all swell the reprobation of slavery," we should appeal to your conscience and your sense of religion, and call upon you to inform us of the abiding value of any reputation, or any kind of human glory, that should be built up upon the ruins of Revelation. Nothing is of worth without it. God's law must triumph; and your philosophy,

your philanthropy, your poetry, your economy, your statesmanship will all appear with shorn laurels trampling upon the sacred majesty of Revelation.

Slavery is sustained by Revelation. It is not a little surprising that any person living in these times, and in this country, and with the bible in his hands,—and more especially a learned Divine, steeped to the lips in theological lore, should call in question the truth of this proposition,—should find no warrant for the institution of slavery in the word of God. The patriarchs who lived under a theocracy,—who received their laws and code of morality directly from the Author of their being,—were slave-holders. ABRAHAM, "the father of the faithful," and "the friend of God," was a slave-holder,—the master of upwards of three hundred slaves. The "father of the faithful" must needs have been something of a "philanthropist." The "friend of God," in an eminent sense, could not have been the sworn enemy of his race. He could not have entered warmly into any plan for extending and perpetuating "the greatest of wrongs," and yet he was a slave-holder,—and God blessed this slave-holder, and said, "I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." If this slave-holder was blessed by God, he deserved not, for holding slaves, to be cursed by his countrymen,—and no man in those days ventured to do it under the threatened penalty of God's curse. It was reserved to what you call a "civilized age," to indulge in this kind of crimination against slave-holders, and in full view of the solemn consequences. Though Abraham did not "swell the reprobation of slavery," he yet belonged to a "past generation," and is as fairly entitled to a place among "great men," as any of the heroes or ambitious spirits of modern times. God says,

"*I* will make thy name *great*," and it may well be doubted, whether the "great men," who now-a-days "swell the reprobation of slavery," were greater than Abraham. Our estimate of the qualities of true greatness is often fallacious. Some place it in one thing, some in another; but he whom God makes great, must be truly eminent,—and here is an individual singled out from the rest of his race and made illustrious by God himself,—and yet he was a slave-holder, and would not, of course, "swell the reprobation of slavery." You cannot summon the authority of Abraham, Sir, to aid you in this controversy. He belongs to another fold than that of the abolitionists. ABRAHAM WAS A SLAVE-HOLDER.

ISAAC, too, the son of Abraham, was a slave-holder. He was rich in slaves. God is said to have blessed him, as he had done his father, Abraham. He appeared to him by night, and said, "I am the God of Abraham, thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake." And again it is said, "The Lord blessed him; and the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great; for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants." In enumerating the blessings which God conferred upon him, you perceive that his servants or slaves were not left out. They are directly mentioned and spoken of as blessings. But times have changed. What was then regarded as a divine blessing, for which men should be grateful, you now pronounce an "evil" and "a curse." Nor was Isaac an insignificant personage. In the balancing of ranks, he would not fall low in the scale. No, Sir. He was among the "great men" of a "past generation." He was not only "great," but "very great," as the sacred writers tell us; and good and great as he was, and enjoying, in a pre-eminent degree, as he did, the smiles of his Creator, he was yet not

among those "who swell the reprobation of slavery." He had too high an opinion of an institution which he sanctioned by his own practice. The abolitionists cannot justify their warfare upon the rights of their fellow citizens by the authority of the patriarch ISAAC. ISAAC WAS A SLAVE-HOLDER.

His son JACOB, too, was a large owner of slaves. He "went forward," like his great and good parent before him. He "increased exceedingly, and had much cattle and maid servants and men servants, and camels and asses." Him, too, God blessed,—him, the slave-holder,—as he had blessed his immediate progenitors. He was a man of great power and influence,—not one of your modern pretenders to greatness, but powerful in spiritual treasure,—powerful in the gifts of the mind,—powerful in that moral elevation of character that raises men above the vulgar herd. God says of him himself, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men." And this individual, so powerful, even in the eyes of his Creator, was a slave-holder. He, too, was among the "great men" of a "past generation." Look into the sacred records, scan the history of this great man, and see if you find any thing that he ever said or did, calculated to swell the modern "reprobation of slavery.' He "won no enduring reputation by resisting it." JACOB WAS A SLAVE-HOLDER.

The ancestors of your race, Sir, were slave-holders. "The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, was the God of slave-holders,—men with whom he deigned to hold intimate converse,—with whom he entered into a special covenant,—men whom he blessed with every blessing,—whose names, through all past ages, have been coupled with that of the Deity in a holy union,—men who have won for themselves "an enduring reputation" by the practice of every virtue,—these men were slave-holders. They held and exercised a

control over human beings as their property. The record of the fact is contained in the holy scriptures,—those scriptures which you profess to take as the foundation of your faith and duties. And yet you tell us that "every principle of" your "religion" condemns slavery! What inference are we to draw from such assertions? No other, Sir, than that the "principles of" your "religion" are not borrowed from the word of God,—that they must have some origin unknown to this Christian age. Perhaps, Sir, they are the fictions of your own imagination.

But although these men, so distinguished by the favor of the Deity, so illustrious in the history of their race, were clearly slave-holders, you may insist that this fact furnishes no conclusive evidence of any divine authority for the institution. Let us look, then, to the sacred volume.

In the 9th chapter of Genesis, God, speaking by the mouth of his inspired prophet, Noah, says of Canaan, the son of Ham, the progenitor, it is supposed, of the African race, "cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren,"—a denunciation signally fulfilled in that age, as the sacred records fully prove, and if it have reference to the African race, having a direct and fearful bearing also upon the condition of that people in all future times. That the descendants of Ham were of the sable race, may be clearly inferred from the excessive repugnance which Abraham felt to have his son Isaac intermarry with a Canaanitish woman,—from the disgust which Rebecca expressed, when she heard that Esau had been guilty of this degradation, and the fear with which she was agitated, that Jacob might follow his brother's example,—from the pious horror and excessive anguish of Ezra, the priest, when he ascertained that the Israelites had committed this offence upon a large scale, and from the express prohibition of God himself, who forbade

such alliances, and whose "anger," we are told, was so "kindled against Israel," when they violated this command, that "he sold them into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia," who held them in bondage for the space of eight years. Amalgamation, in those days, excited a general disgust and horror. It was a crime against nature. It was a crime against God. But "the spirit of our age,"—of the nineteenth century, it seems, is different. It is less scrupulous in its preferences. "It is in," what you term, "a civilized age, and amidst refinements of manners; it is amidst the lights of science, and the teachings of Christianity,—amidst expositions of the laws of nations, and enforcements of the law of universal love," that this infamous doctrine is promulgated by men whom you say you "respect," and whose cause you espouse,—men whom you take by the hand as sympathizing brothers, as co-workers in the great scheme of humanity and freedom,—whom you introduce to your polished circles as approved visiters, and who have been able to induce your wives and daughters, the refined, the modest and the beautiful of the tender sex, to think of this thing without a blush, and even to persuade them that this plan of amalgamation,—this project of degrading, brutalizing, and stamping with eternal infamy the white race, in order to raise the sooty herd to a level with them, is not the most mad and monstrous and criminal proposition that ever entered into any human imagination. In view of this matter, we may well be tempted to exclaim, "oh that our priests were Ezras, and our females Rebeccas!"

But we are not left to an isolated text. The existence of slavery, under the divine sanction, is repeatedly recognized in the Old Testament in the most explicit manner. Take, for instance, the following passage from the 25th chapter of Leviticus; "and the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai,"—a place of peculiar solemnity, where the moral law

was promulgated,—"saying, both thy bondmen and bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathens that are among you." Here the great Creator distinctly authorizes slavery by discriminating the class of people,—"the heathens,"—from among whom the Israelites should obtain slaves. If we went no further into the sacred record, it might be insisted that these "bondmen and bondmaids" were not slaves,—not property, but bound to their masters for a term of service. The next sentence, however, places the question of slavery beyond a doubt, which says, "of them shall ye *buy* bondmen and bondmaids." And it is proper to remark, that the Jews do not seem to be left to their own option in this matter. The words partake of the nature of an order or direction, "of them *shall* ye buy," &c, clearly establishing the fact of a divine sanction for the institution.

On the subject of property in the slave, the following is still more full and satisfactory: "Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy; and of their families that are with you, which they begot in your land, and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them by possession. They shall be your bondmen forever." This is an exact description of African slavery, as it exists in the Southern States of this country. The "children of the strangers," i. e. the Africans, are freely bought and sold among us. They become our "possessions." Our children receive these "possessions" by "inheritance," and will transmit them in like manner to their descendants, and this state of things is to last "forever," unless the new fangled doctrines of liberty, amalgamation and equality, which have received an impulse from "the spirit of our age," pass over the land like a besom of destruction,—unsettle the existing relations of society, and involve our rights of property, our

"possessions" themselves, and the hopes of our children in one common ruin.

It is scarcely necessary to multiply texts to prove, that slaves or servants were, in those days, held as property. A few more passages may suffice. In the 17th c. of Genesis, 13th v. God says to Abraham, "he that is born in thy house, and *he that is bought with thy money*, must needs be circumcised." Again, Gen. 20 c. 14 v. "Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men servants and women servants, and *gave* them unto Abraham." How could Abimelech *give* them unless they were his property? The word *servant* here is used instead of *slave*, showing that the terms, *servant* and *slave*, are synonymous Also, Ex. 12 c. 44 v.: "Every man's *servant* that is *bought for money*, shall eat thereof," that is, of the passover. And again, "If a man smite his *servant*, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be severely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue for a day or two, he shall not be punished, *for he is his money*," i. e. his property. Here again the term *servants* for *slaves* is used. These regulations, it will be remarked, were ushered in by the august declaration, "And the Lord said unto Moses," and were, therefore, divine enactments of the most solemn kind.

The ten commandments of the Moral Law, too, proclaimed from Mount Sinai, "amidst thunders and lightnings, and thick clouds and the voice of the trumpet," contain two distinct references to this institution, one in the fourth commandment, prohibiting labor to "man servants and maid servants" on the Sabbath; the other in the tenth commandment, viz: "Thou shalt not covet his" (thy neighbor's) "man servant nor his maid servant." You perceive, then, that God not only blesses the slave-holder, but sanctions slavery. GOD SANCTIONS SLAVERY.

Notwithstanding these authoritative declarations of the Supreme Being, in reference to slavery, you tell us that the "decree of the civilized world has gone out against it," i. e. "the decree of the civilized world has gone out against" God's "decree," and this is a proof of the world's civilization at this period! Alas, for the nineteenth century! Speaking of the slave, God says, *he is thy money*,—he is thy "possession,"—he shall be thy "possession" "forever." But you, Sir, with God's law before you, "amidst the lights of science and the teachings of Christianity," insist, on the contrary, that "man cannot be justly held and used as property." "Cannot be justly held and used as property," when God tells you that he shall be so held and used? May you not, Sir, have mistaken meteors for "the lights of science?" May not the "lights," under whose shining you have wandered so far from the high pathway of Revelation turn out at last to be false lights? May not those "teachings of Christianity," which have inculcated a code of morality and human right unknown to the ancestors of your race, be the doctrines of fallible teachers, and may you not have been deceived by their instructions? The sacred scriptures, before all other "lights," and "teachings," must decide this matter, and they have decided it in favor of slavery and the slave holder. You must first destroy a large and highly valuable part of the Bible,—you must first strike out Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus from the revealed Word and will of God, before you set up those "lights of science" and "teachings of Christianity" of which you boast,—before you prove, that "man cannot be justly held and used as property." Revelation, with its brighter light and more unerring teaching, fights with you at every step of your progress, and will be too strong for you in the end. THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT DECLARE, IN LANGUAGE NOT TO BE MISTAKEN, THAT MAN MAY JUSTLY HOLD PROPERTY IN MAN. Not

only ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB were slave-holders, but SAMUEL and NEHEMIAH and DAVID and SOLOMON and JOB speak of slavery as the settled policy of the age, under the theocracy. These were among the "great men" of a "past generation,"—men who "won an enduring reputation," not by "resisting" the law of God, but by obeying it, as far as frail human nature is competent to the effort. They were very well entitled to the character and fame of "philanthropists," though not subscribing to the doctrines of the modern school. And if Job was the author of the book that bears his name, they had "poets" among them,—a class of men who, you say, have made war on slavery. At least they had one among them, and a rare and ripe one too,—no less a "poet" than the inspired Job himself. David, also, was a "poet," and Nehemiah was a distinguished "statesman," and yet no advocate of abolition. Here are a host of good and "great men," belonging to a "past generation," none of whom "swell the reprobation of slavery." So much for the Old Testament. Let us now look into the writings of the evangelists and apostles, and see if any thing can be gathered from that source in reference to this matter.

I think it will appear, that the institution of slavery is as clearly and triumphantly sustained by the writers of the New Testament, as by those of the Old. It may be remarked in the outset, that the principles of God's government,—the laws he ordains for the regulation of the world, are the highest rules of right, and that these rules or principles of right are immutable, and remain the same in every age. Man may change,—opinions may change,—human laws may vary with the vicissitudes of opinion and circumstance, but God's laws, constituting the rule or standard of *eternal* right, never vary. If slavery was morally right among the Jews,—if God approved of it and sanctioned it among that people, it could not be

morally wrong among Christians. Revelation, as to its great moral features, must be always consistent with itself, and it is so. The great principles of right and duty are essentially the same in both dispensations. If there were any material discrepancy between the writers of the Old and New Testaments,—between the prophets and the apostles in reference to the institution of slavery,—an institution of a moral order,—one that must be either right or wrong, and which derives its highest, and indeed its only sanction, from the fact that it is right,—such a discrepancy would show that the moral nature of God may vary, and the principles of right and wrong undergo changes, but this is impossible. The institution of slavery might be modified, but the principles on which it rests, and by which it is justified or condemned, must remain the same amidst all the changes of opinion, and during the lapse of time. We accordingly find that the New Testament accords with the old on this subject, and that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,—the God of Moses and the prophets, when he became the God of Christian worshippers, proclaimed no new code of morality interfering with the existing relations of master and slave. At the time Christ appeared and commenced his public labors, slavery prevailed extensively throughout the civilized world. It was common among the Jews, and if it had been a monstrous "evil,"—"the greatest of wrongs," as you call it,—a thing clearly criminal and irreligious, he would have condemned it without mercy. There was no timidity about him. He was bold and fearless in reproving the vices, of the age and the people. Yet he never uttered a word of "reprobation" against slavery. When the centurion came to him with the request, that he would heal his sick slave, a fair opportunity was offered for him to condemn slavery, if he had thought it wrong; but he did not do it. The centurion spoke of the "authority"

which he exercised over his slaves, but our Saviour did not say to him, "you exercise this "authority" wrongfully. Your slave is your equal. You must liberate him. You "cannot justly hold property in man." It is wicked in the sight of God for you to do so. It is an infringement of the natural rights of the slave." Not a word of all this was uttered by our Saviour to the slave-holder. All that he said in reference to the slave was, "I will come and heal him." It was surely as proper to make a moral question of slavery then as now,—to look into the foundation of the institution, and if it was a crying abuse, calling aloud to heaven for redress,—if it was a violation of the first principles of right and liberty,—if God disapproved of it, and frowned upon it,—then the Saviour of the world, commissioned to make known his will to the fullest extent, with the evidences of this monstrous enormity and outrage all around him, would not, when the subject of "authority" over slaves was distinctly brought to his notice, have been silent on so momentous a subject. His silence on an occasion, when silence was inconsistent with the proper fulfilment of his mission; his declaration that he "came not to destroy the law and the prophets,"—that law which had ordained slavery,—those prophets who had sanctioned it by their practice or approval, "but to fulfil both,—both law and prophecy to the last "jot and tittle;" the fact that the two dispensations, the new and the old, *actually* harmonize in all essential respects, in the great principles of justice and morality, and that slavery was deemed right and lawful under the old dispensation, —all these are weighty considerations, and afford the highest presumptive evidence, that the Saviour of the world approved of slavery, and that what the patriarchs practised with impunity and under the sanction of the divine will, was not regarded by him as criminally wrong in Christian converts. If he did

not approve of slavery publicly and expressly, if he did not, in so many words, say, "slavery is right,—it is as right now as it ever was,"—he, at any rate, never condemned it,—never passed the slightest censure upon it, and his neglect to condemn and abolish it, is, under the circumstances, tantamount to an approval of the institution. THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD DID NOT CONDEMN SLAVERY.

His Apostles distinctly approved of and sustained it. Among others, that distinguished Apostle, of whom Christ said, "upon this rock will I build my church,"—ST PETER. "Servants," (or *slaves*, as the original should have been rendered, for the relation of master to servant was at that time one of perpetual bondage.) "Servants," says St. Peter, "be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when you are buffetted for your faults, you take it patiently; but if, when you do well and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable to God." "Servants, be subject to your masters!" Here is plain, palpable, direct authority for the institution. He does not say, "slaves, rebel and rise against your masters, and vindicate your liberty and equal rights," but "be subject to your masters." Cherish a wholesome "fear" of the consequences, in case of insubordination. If you commit "faults," you must expect to be "buffetted" and chastised for them, and patience is no virtue if you suffer under a just castigation. If you do your duty, and your masters are "froward" and hard upon you, still submit patiently. Patience, in such a case, will be creditable to you." It appears from this passage, that slave-holders used to whip their refractory and disobedient slaves then, as now, and that the Apostle insisted upon the slave's submitting to punishment with "patience," even

when it was wrongfully inflicted. There cannot be a more triumphant argument in favor of slavery than this authoritative injunction of St. Peter. Of "great men" of a "past generation," we are able to add another most important personage to those "who swell" the *approbation* of the institution.—ST. PETER APPROVED OF SLAVERY.

So did ST. PAUL, in language equally explicit and satisfactory. "Let every man," he says, "abide in the same calling wherein he is called. Art thou called, being a servant or a *slave?*" i. e. "is your calling that of a servant or slave?" "care not for it." Abide in your condition of slavery. Think not that Christianity proposes to release you from your obligations to your master. Those obligations must be strictly observed and fulfilled. "Let as many servants *as are under the yoke*, (servants that are *under the yoke*, are *slaves*,) "count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrines be not blasphemed." *In the name of God and his doctrines*, St Paul upheld slavery. In whose name would you put it down? "That the name of God and his doctrines be not *blasphemed.*" Mark this strong expression! They who attempt to unsettle the existing relations of society,—who say to the slave, "abide *not* in your calling,—count *not* your masters worthy of all honor,"—cannot then speak in the sacred "name of God and his doctrines." God has never empowered them to do so. God's "doctrines" are not accordant with their theories, and their theories are not accordant with God's "doctrines?" They prostitute the holy name of God and his doctrines by such declarations. Of what value is "civilization," and "the spirit of the age," if they are opposed to "God's doctrines?" Whither will they lead us? On what rock will they cause our proud bark to split? If St. Paul was the minister of God. let us receive him as such. Let us not admit that part of what he

said was right, and part wrong. The whole of his mission and doctrines were divine, and are to be received without exception or hesitation. ST. PAUL APPROVED OF, AND SANCTIONED SLAVERY.

It would be easy to swell the list of authorities in behalf of this institution, which are to be found in the gospel, but it is unnecessary. If there are any persons so obstinate and unapproachable, that they will not bend their prejudices to such authorities and examples as we have already adduced,—to ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB, the ancestors of our race,—to SAMUEL, NEHEMIAH, DAVID, SOLOMON and JOB,—to "MOSES and the PROPHETS," to JESUS CHRIST himself, and his Apostles,—neither would they do it, "should one rise from the dead." It is in vain to argue with such men. They will have their own way. It is enough that those who hold slaves are satisfied that they are clearly right in so doing. They cannot doubt about the matter, when the teachers of Christianity,—those who were divinely commissioned to teach, expressly enjoin it. SLAVERY IS FULLY SUSTAINED AND SANCTIONED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It will not answer for you to say, that the *spirit* of Christianity is diametrically opposed to slavery. This is your great argument. But the *spirit* of Christianity cannot be opposed to its positive precepts. The laws of Christianity cannot enjoin one thing, and the *spirit* of Christianity enjoin a totally different thing. Both must concur. Show me a single passage in scripture that forbids slavery, and I will give up the argument. You cannot,—I am sure you cannot do it. Away then with these refinements about the *spirit*, the unseen part of Christianity. Give us what is plain and palpable. The human mind requires it. Plain, practical precepts are all that is wanting,—and be not struck with pious amazement and horror, when those who receive and obey such precepts,

as the guide of their practice and opinions, prefer them to spiritual interpretations that violate their obvious meaning.

SIDNEY.

LETTER VI.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—The doctrine of the natural liberty and equality of the human race, having no foundation in truth and justice, has ceased to be advocated by prudent men,—and is to be found only in the creed of fanatics, agrarians and abolitionists. I take the liberty to rank you in the last named class,—that of the abolitionists,—for, although you disclaim all concurrence in the extravagancies of those weak and deluded men, you yet profess to be ardently devoted to the holy and righteous cause they have espoused. You admit the soundness, or to use a theological term, the orthodoxy of their principles,—although you are not a little scared at the horrible consequences to which the adoption of these principles necessarily tends. Whether you are, or are not fairly responsible for much of the mischief which they have done to society, and are still doing,—cannot, I think, be questioned by any who know you. I have been anxious to ascertain how a person of your reputed wisdom, would manage this question of universal equality,—and I have risen up from my review of your defence of it, almost inclined to think that you have

little or no faith in it, and quite satisfied myself that the ground which has been made the theatre of so much empty rant and bluster, will finally have to be abandoned as not worth the keeping. It adds little to our information in reference to this matter, that you tell us, in the way of testimony, that all men are equal before the law, unless you make it appear, which will be somewhat difficult, that all laws are just, and the administration of justice perfectly impartial throughout the world. Besides, however just and equal laws may be, they never can narrow and merge the constitutional differences of human nature. These will remain the same, however much legislation improves. Neither do you seem to carry forward the theory an iota, when you tell us, that all men are endowed with conscience and understanding, and a capacity for indefinite improvement, for the different degrees in which men possess their moral and intellectual powers, still remains to be explained. The inequality, clear and palpable as the noonday, exists in nature, while the theory owes its existence only to the folly of its authors. The State of Massachusetts was not perfectly harmless in being the first to originate and incorporate this maxim into its old Constitution,—and it was not the most astute thing that Mr. Jefferson ever did, to copy it into the Declaration of American Independence; for, although its *ad captandum* powers, as a political watch-word, passed away with the occasion that gave birth to so flattering an illusion, it is now seized upon by the abolitionists with greater avidity than it once was by the ultra-democrats,—is preached with greater clamor and fury than ever,—and is likely to be turned seriously to the account of fanaticism, and the great confusion of the whole country.

This doctrine of liberty and equality is fraught with mischief. It is essentially revolutionary in its character, and its tendencies should be well understood by the citizens of this

country. It recognizes no just distinctions among men, but places the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, all upon the same level. Contrary to the express testimony of the Sacred Scriptures,—in opposition to the practice of all nations, through all past times,—its advocates maintain, that God never gave man the right to exercise any dominion over his fellow,—that the will of no human being ought to be subject to the will of any other human being,—that all civil governments are wrong, usurpations of human rights, invasions of the divine prerogative,—that Jesus Christ is the only rightful governor of mankind, and that all others are up-starts and tyrants,—that human laws are imperfect and unjust, and ought to be abolished, and divine laws substituted in their place,—that all the property throughout the country belongs, in justice, equally, to all citizens,—and ought to be equally divided, without distinction of color, to all such as have arrived at the age of eighteen years,—that the systems of education throughout our land, both in the institutions of the humbler and higher grades, tend only to crush the powers of the human intellect,—that they ought to be abrogated and annulled,—that no man ought to consult the judgment of any other man, or follow any other man's advice,—that children owe no duty to their parents, and that parents ought to exercise no authority over their children, even in their tender years,—that all subordination of man to man is wrong, all distribution of men into ranks and classes odious,—that all men are equal by the constitution of their nature, equal in the sight of God who made them, and that they ought to be equal in the opinion of their fellow-men, equal in their intercourse with society, and equal in the control they exercise over it. These doctrines have recently been promulgated by those far-sighted and philanthropic spirits, the abolitionists, as the

true creed of republicans, as just and legitimate consequences, resulting from the axiom, that "all men are born free and equal." It is upon the strength of this senseless sophism, fraught with results so monstrous, that you, Sir, come forward in this age of intelligence, sobriety and order, to interfere with the civil rights of the citizens of the South, and to attack, and if possible, overthrow an institution which was sanctioned by God himself at an early age of the world,—which is interwoven in the social condition of every country on the face of the globe,—of every nation, ancient or modern, polite or rude, pagan or christian,—an institution which has lasted through centuries; and has received the approbation of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, legislators, patriots and christians,—which existed in this country anterior to the Revolution, and which, when we were ready for a just, firm and steady government, was wrought into the frame-work of the Federal Constitution, and made a part of the established policy of our country.

If the equality of mankind is the proper foundation of civil and social institutions, of what value is civil society? If a republican form of government can exist and flourish only where such disorganizing opinions prevail, of what use is a republic? Why did our statesmen assemble and deliberate and discuss principles, and establish a Constitution, if all men are to be released from the restraint of the laws, because they are equal? Why do our people place their Governors in office, if there are none to obey them; or appoint expounders of the law, if every man is to be his own judge? There has been a singular waste of effort and wisdom, in building up our present system, and a woful expenditure of admiration in applauding it, if it is corrupt to the very core, and totters and falls before the first breath of the equality of our race. Americans have certainly outstripped their prede-

cessors, and the present is entitled to be regarded as a highly enlightened period, if the fanatics of the North have discovered that all the legislators, statesmen and patriots that ever lived, have been nursing and promulgating fatal errors,—if they are dispensers of the only alchemy that can turn the dross to gold; and if, on the back of this modernly constructed hobby-horse of equality, they are authorized to drive over the necks of kings and princes,—to take the yoke of wholesome government off the backs of the people,—to dissolve all the endearing ties, and abolish all the sacred duties of domestic life, and to proclaim the universal emancipation of their species from every kind of earthly thraldom. What, Sir! will you sacrifice your country, and all her noble institutions for a sophism, or will you abandon your darling sophism and preserve your country and your institutions?

If the opposition of abolitionists to slavery, as is believed, rests chiefly on this theory of equality, it cannot be sustained, or receive the countenance of intelligent men, who love their country. The wide disparity that exists between the different races of men; the diversities that are obvious between the physical, moral and intellectual powers of those of the same race, the distinction of mankind into sexes, to whom opposite duties are appointed by Providence; the existence of governments constituting a subjection of the weak to the strong, of the ignorant to the more enlightened; the distribution of men into ranks, classes and orders in every country, and the domestic relations of private life, all and each prove, that men are essentially unequal. ALL MEN ARE BORN UNEQUAL AND DEPENDENT.

If your views of equality are false and mischievous, your theory of property is entitled to as little favor; and is characterised by features still more enormous and extravagant. You have totally misapprehended the nature of the property

which the master holds in his slave, and the whole of your speculations and reasoning,—all your cavils, objections and harsh charges, are founded on this erroneous estimate. You have alarmed yourself, and terrified the good people of New-England with shadows instead of realities. Starting with the position, that property is an exclusive right,—that what one man owns, cannot belong to another, you very soon come to the conclusion, that if the master has a property in the slave, the slave has no property in himself;—that he belongs, absolutely, and in all respects, to his master,—that is to say, that the slave's soul is his master's,—the slave's body, his master's,—the slave's will, intellect and muscles, his master's,—which implies, as plainly as language can express it, that the master and the slave are identical,—are one and the same person,—and that when the master speaks of the soul and body of the slave, he speaks of his own soul and body,—and that the master has as many eyes, and ears, and noses, and souls, and bodies, as belong to all the slaves on his plantation, including both sexes, and all ages, from the child up to the full grown negro! Such is your theory of property in man! Need I say, that the citizens of the South are neither fools nor madmen, and that when they claim a property in their slaves, they ask for nothing that is either monstrous or impossible. If property is an exclusive right, it is exclusive so far, and no farther, than the ownership extends,—and this extends, in the case of the slave, not to his soul and body, his life, his limbs and his members, but simply and solely to his service during life, for an equivalent rendered, which may be made as fairly a matter of ownership as any thing else whatever, and without trampling on one of the sacred rights of justice or humanity. If you hire a domestic drudge in your family, for a year, or a term of years, you have an exclusive right to his service during that period. You have

a property in the man, so far his service extends, and no farther. He is *your* boy, or *your* man, and yet he is *his own* man. Extend the period of his service from a term of years to his whole life, and you will have an exact idea of the nature of the tenure which the master has in his slave. He is your property,—your goods and chattels, precisely in the same sense in which the slave is the property, the goods and chattels of his master; and yet, much as you boast of the equality of all men, you would be scarcely willing to admit, that the soul and body,—the moral and intellectual powers and propensities of your boot-black or footman, were, to all intents and purposes, *your* soul and body, and *your* moral and intellectual powers and propensities. It would doubtless derogate materiallv from the position you occupy in the public eye. The idea of property in man, is not the monstrous absurdity you would make it.

When you ask, then, in a tone of astonishment, "could I, can I be rightfully made an article of property?" The answer is, you may undoubtedly. Men are bought and sold every day,—and they as often sell themselves, as they are sold by others. They sell themselves,—some for one object, and some for another; some for a longer, and some for a shorter period of time; some for a day, some for a term of years, and some for a whole life. The prices of men vary according to their value, or their supposed value. Some command a high price, and some are sold for little or nothing; but so common is it for men to be bought and sold, that it has now grown into a maxim, that "every man has his price." Politicians are bought and sold; their price is the spoils of office. Judges and juries in former times were often bought and sold; the conductors of public presses have been bought and sold; parties, and even individuals, purchase them,—and they have been known to dispose of

themselves, both body and soul, for a valuable consideration. Voters are notoriously bought and sold at election times, in large numbers, and are a common article of traffic all the world over. Wives, in consideration of marriage, are sometimes sold to their husbands,—and husbands are sold to their wives, become their property, their tools, their instruments, think as they think, do as they bid them, will as they will,—and if they have a soul of their own, do not know it. Slaves are only another kind of commodity, in which property may just as well and rightfully be held, as in the other cases. It is true, the slave does not sell himself as the freeman does, but the freeman who sells himself, is only fit to be a slave,—and the right to sell one's self, is not of sufficient importance to be made a matter of controversy. You acknowledge, that "the slave ought *to belong* to the community, *like every other citizen.*" But what would you gain by the transfer of the slave from his master to the community, except a change of owners? He gets many masters for one, but he still is property,—he *belongs* to the community; and when you say that every citizen *belongs* to the community, you admit that every citizen may be property, and this is a direct answer, given by yourself, to your own question, "can I rightfully be held as property?" Is man's nature forced,—does he rise up indignant at such a kind of tenure in himself? Is he abused and brow-beaten by this idea of belonging to another? Far from it. There is no force about the matter. Men sell themselves, and sell each other, as naturally and as freely as the water flows down the mountain to the vale below. There is nothing in the laws of nature, or the constitution of the race, which prevents men from being held as property. All men are so held. The moment they come into the world, they are property in a natural and moral sense;—they belong to God who made them. The moment they enter into soci-

ety, they are property in a civil and political sense;—they belong to the commonwealth that protects them.

You ask furthermore, "can I rightfully be made a passive instrument of another's will and pleasure?" The answer is, yes, if you enter into society,—if you come in contact with others. Such a result follows inevitably from such a movement on your part. You cannot expect that your individual will and pleasure will be recognized as the law of the land, unless you are an absolute monarch. You must yield to the force of numbers. The "will and pleasure" of the majority will control your "will and pleasure." If you are not content with this control, you can go and live in the woods with the beasts of prey. But if you remain, and associate with your fellows, you must consent to bend your will and be governed. You must yield up your will to the popular will. If you resist it, the popular will will prove too strong for you. The popular will will put you down. It will drive you away from the face of civilization, and send you back to your haunts in the woods.

But further, you inquire, "may I rightfully be subjected to another's irresponsible power?" The answer is again, yes, if you will go to sea,—if you will enter the army or navy, or even become a member of the commonwealth. The authority of the captain, the commodore, the general and the judge, is absolute for the time being. It is so recognized by the laws. You must obey orders. If you are refractory, you will be placed in fetters, or thrown into jail, or be punished in some way, till you promise and practise amendment. Wars could not be waged, commerce could not be maintained, governments could not subsist for a moment, unless absolute power existed, and was exercised freely whenever it became necessary. But these, you say, are only subordinate agents, who may be called to account for an abuse of trust.

True, there may be an appeal from their decisions to the law, but what appeal is there from the law? When you get to that point, you cannot go an inch beyond it; you will find no other arbiter to hear your complaints, or redress your wrongs. The law is a monarch, whose decrees are final. In going from the dispensers of the law up to the law itself, you only move one step higher in the scale, you soon reach that limit, and there you find an irresponsible power, that must not be resisted, and that is perfectly irresistible.

Still again you demand, "may I rightfully be subjected to stripes at another's will?" You put the question distinctly, and I am, therefore, entitled to reply,—certainly. The thing is frequently done. The country says it is right, and why should not you? The captain ties up the obstinate sailor to the mast, and gives him *the law*. The free citizen who is convicted for petit larceny, is publicly whipped in the market place, and the lazy slave, whom you feed, is chastized for his negligence or his errors. Men whip their children, and Solomon says they ought to do it, if they would not spoil them,—and what more is a slave than a grown child, who has not half the sense of a child, and who must be curbed, controlled, and punished like a child, when he is wayward? If you inflict a wound upon a man's body, time will heal it. It may leave a mark, but the mark will perish with the body; but the wound you inflict upon the immortal mind lasts forever. When you slander a man's character,—when you accuse the slave-holder wrongfully of crime, tyranny and injustice, you inflict a wound upon his soul, upon the immortal spirit, that never perishes. Who is the greater criminal—he who castigates the slave's body, when he deserves it, or he who lacerates his master's soul, merely to gratify his love of theory, and pride of opinion? I make the appeal, Sir, to your conscience, and I leave you to the Judge of all men. MEN ARE, AND MAY, RIGHTFULLY, BE HELD AS PROPERTY.

Your theory of *Rights*, being built on your theory of *Property*, must fall with it. If the latter is false, as it is, the former cannot be true. Indeed its falsity appears upon its very face, without reasoning. You go the whole length of the doctrine, that, by the tenure of slavery, the slaves's rights are the rights of his master, which is a natural impossibility. Do you think that the citizens of the South are so simple minded as to assert and endeavor to maintain a natural impossibility? If so, we are certainly much behind the age, and will have to be sent back to the nursery, with all convenient dispatch, to learn common sense. But your theory not only involves this absurdity, but propounds other riddles. You tell us, that "a man cannot be seized and held as property, *because he has rights*." What are rights? Merely the laws of existence, whether applied to men or things. Every thing that we hold as property, has rights, and would be valueless without them. Birds have a right to fly in the air, but birds are game for the sportsman and food for the table. Fishes have a right to swim in the sea, and yet they are bought and sold and eaten. An elephant has a right to feel with his trunk, but still he is kept for show, and belongs to his proprietor. A dog has a right to bark, but the dog follows his master, and wears his master's collar. A horse has a right to go on four feet, but you penetrate the prairies, you seize upon the fierce and noble creature, you tame his proud spirit, you subdue him to your own uses, and he becomes your property. The sun has a right to shine, while I enjoy fully its warmth and splendor. The stars have a right to twinkle, but this does not prevent me from gazing out upon the blue concave of the heavens, and exulting in the prospect. The earth has a right to revolve every day upon its own axis, and to revolve round the sun once a year, but the earth still belongs to me as much as it ever did. Fire has a right to burn,

and water has a right to wet. Do these rights prevent me from having a fire in my chimney of a cold day, or a well of water in my yard of a hot one? A watch, when it is wound up, has a right to go forward and tell the hour, and when it runs down, it has a right to stop. I put the watch, notwithstanding, in my pocket; I carry it about with me, and I sell it, if I think proper. A man has a right to go to market, and a right to build a house, and yet he is a member of the community in which he lives, and belongs to that community. What would any of his rights be worth, if he did not belong to the community? Could he maintain them single handed? Not one of them. The country does not impair, much less take away, his rights. It, on the contrary, secures and protects them, and renders them valuable to their possessor. Governments are instituted for this express purpose. Social, civil, and religious institutions have no other object in view, than the security of human rights. There is no conflict between the country and its citizens in reference to this matter. The citizen may enjoy all his rights, powers and privileges, to a reasonable extent, and yet fairly belong to his country. His country may, at any moment, demand his labor, his skill, his choicest hours, the best gifts of his mind, his valor and his strength, in various public stations, in the cabinet, the forum, the halls of legislation and the field of battle. It may require, in some cases, an abridgement of his liberty, and even a sacrifice of his life, if necessary to the public interests, and he is bound by every principle of duty, to obey the call. A slave, too, has his rights. No one denies him the enjoyment and exercise of any of his lawful privileges. He has a right to eat, when he is hungry; to drink, when he is dry; and to sleep, when nature appoints the hours of repose; and he often fares better, in these particulars, than the poor man, who boasts more of his rights and liberty.

He has a right to think his own thoughts, to discharge his own duties, and to employ his own limbs in the manner and for the ends which nature and society point out. He has a right, and one of the noblest rights of humanity,—a right to labor, "working with his own hands," as good men have done before him, and as every man must do, who would earn his daily bread. He has a right to an equivalent for his labor, and he gets it in food, clothing and shelter, with which he ought to be content. He has a right to enter into domestic relations, like other people, and to be faithful to them. If he conducts properly, he has a right to be exempt from punishment, and he has a right to be punished, if he deserves it, for his own benefit, and for the benefit of others. He has a right to go to Sunday School and learn his moral duties, and a right to go to church on Sunday, and hear the doctrines and precepts of Christianity explained and inculcated. He has no right to be a philosopher, a mathematician or a statesman, because nature has thrown an impediment in his way by the limitation of his faculties. He has no right to civil liberty,—such as Americans enjoy, because he can neither understand, appreciate nor maintain it. He has no right to places of high responsibility in the commonwealth, because he is destitute of the proper qualifications, and is incapable of acquiring them. He has no right to enter into social relations on a footing of equality with white citizens, because his skin is black, and because he is of a different and inferior race. But he has a right to be docile, submissive, obedient, industrious, honest and faithful, and he has a right to secure the favor in the eyes of his superiors to which these moral qualities entitle him. The slave may have all these rights, and yet belong to his master more completely than the citizen belongs to the commonwealth. If he did not belong to some one, he could not maintain his rights, and they would be

wholly useless to him. The being held as property, is absolutely essential to the preservation of his rights. If he belonged to the community, instead of belonging to his master, he would still have rights, but it is very questionable whether he would enjoy and exercise them to as much advantage, or to as full an extent, as he now does. A MAN IS NOT PREVENTED FROM BEING HELD AS PROPERTY, BECAUSE HE HAS RIGHTS.

Your most powerful objection, as you tell us, to a man's being property, is, that "man is a rational, moral and immortal being," and you maintain that no man can be held as property that is so,—that "is rational, moral and immortal." To the discussion of this point, you have brought all your powers of logic, of demonstration, of declamation and abuse. Need I tell you, Sir, that your abilities have been exhausted in a vain effort,—that you have been fighting with the wind,—that you have been building up a mere man of straw, only to knock it down? Your advocates may admire your skill and your workmanship. They may extol your man, as an ingenious creation, until they discover that it is made of straw, and their homage will then be less. In this case, as in the others, your false theory of property has carried you far out of the regions of earthly probability, and you are enunciating fallacies from the head quarters of Plato's republic. Your idea is, that by the master's tenure of property in his slave, the slave's reason,—the slave's logic, is his master's reason and his master's logic,—that the slave's moral powers, by which you mean his disposition, are his master's moral power and his master's disposition, so that if the slave's inclination leads him to lie and cheat and rob a hen roost, that his master's inclination, *pari passu*, for they are identical, leads his master to lie and cheat and rob a hen roost; that the slave's immortality is his master's immortality, and that

wherever the slave goes to after death, whether it be to heaven or hell, his master will and must go along with him, since the slave's immortality being actually his master's immortality, will be sure to carry him up or down, and land him at last in the same region! We have heard here, Sir, that this was the age of the march of mind, and that mind, "taking up the line of march," had marched straight forward to Boston, the city of congenial spirits,—the Athens of our republic. We have heard that there at least,—at Boston, learned men were thoroughly versed in all the profound arts of scholastic disputation,—that syllogisms were their food by day, and inductions their dreams by night; but here we have a postulate about reason and immortality, more worthy of the ninth century,—the darkest of the dark ages. It is not necessary to pull down the proud superstructure that you have built upon it. It falls by its own weight. MEN MAY BE RATIONAL, MORAL AND IMMORTAL BEINGS, AND YET BE PROPERTY.

Finally, you inform us, that man cannot be held as property, "because reducing a man to slavery is a high crime!" I do not know what this question of guilt or innocence has to do with property, but I do know, that it is one in which the slaveholder is deeply concerned, and I cannot suffer it to pass without paying to it the consideration that it deserves. If "reducing a man to slavery is a high crime," how many criminals, think you, will stand before the judgment seat of God? What will become of the patriarchs, the prophets and the apostles? What will become of ABRAHAM, of ISAAC, and of JACOB, of ST. PETER and ST. PAUL? For, although the two last may not certainly have *reduced* men to slavery, they have stood by, consenting to the act. Where are men now-a-days, —where have they been heretofore, *reduced to slavery?* In Africa, sir! In a country overrun with barbarism, ignorance tyranny and crime. From the bosom of such a country,

slaves come,—from among a people upon whom God has placed an everlasting badge of inferiority,—a people devoted to the grossest animal indulgences,—to whom crime, in all its deformities, is an indurated habit,—from a people low in intellect, base in person, cruel in the exercise of power, passive under domination and the rod, mischievous and crafty in the daily routine of their lives,—from a people to whom "necessity is the only possible restraint, force the only law,"—from a people of no soaring aims, of no intellectual power, who never made a useful discovery, and over whose spirits the idea of an art or science never passed, as any thing practicable or praiseworthy,—from a people whose religion is idolatry, and whose highest idea of a God is a reptile or a snake,—from a people of this degraded rank and character and condition, slaves come. Who shall say, that 'reducing men to slavery' in such a country and from among such a people, is guilty of a high crime? Have these people, imbecile as they are to all lofty objects, been brought into being for no use, for no end, except to degrade the name of man,—to prey upon each other, and be preyed upon themselves? Tell me not, Sir, that he who takes these wretched people from bondage and violence,—from the soil of heathenism,—from the land of moral and intellectual darkness, and who transports them over the ocean to the shores of a civilized and Christian country, exulting in all the blessings of civil and social order, is guilty of a high crime. Tell me not that he who takes these miserable beings under his protection,—who feeds and clothes and shelters them,—who ministers to them when sick,—who supplies all their reasonable wants,—who humanizes and civilizes them,—who instructs them in Christian duty,—who teaches them to lift their thoughts from earth to heaven,—from the present to the future,—from the creature to the God who made him, and who, for all this humanity

and protecting care, and enlightening influence, asks only a return of moderate, wholesome and useful labor during life,—tell me not that such a man is guilty of a mighty wrong,—of a crying injustice, and that he richly merits God's vengeance and the civilized world's scorn. The voice of nature, more powerful than any theory, calls upon the strong to protect the weak,—the enlightened to inform the ignorant,—the parent to nurture, guard and control the child,—the husband to protect her of the tender sex, and it is equally powerful in the breast of the white man towards the African race who call for help, and equally peremptory in its commands to the master, to do whatever is just and necessary for the comfort and well being of the slave. Tell me not that he who hears and practises these lessons of truth and humanity, is a monster unfit to live. If Christianity and religion enjoin any other kind of humanity or justice, they have not been made known to us. Tell me not that he who fails to place these imbecile and humble creatures on a footing of equality with himself in civil and social privileges,—in literary and philosophical attainments,—in art and discovery and improvements, is a tyrant for denying to them means and opportunities which God and nature never intended them to enjoy, and for which they were utterly unfitted. Declamation may find some more suitable theme for awakening the angry passions, and philanthropy some better expedients for elevating the condition of the human race. SLAVERY IS RIGHT.

I have thus shown, Sir, that this institution is authorized, not only BY SCRIPTURE, but by THE LAWS OF NATURE, and that if the United States will make Texas a part of the Union, there is nothing to prevent them in the fact, that Texas holds slaves, and that slavery will be thus perpetuated.

SIDNEY.

LETTER VII.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—Suppose the advocates of equality attain the two great objects they now have in view? Suppose they accomplish the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and prevent the annexation of Texas to the Union? Will these achievements content them? Is there any certainty that the waves of trouble and discord will then subside, and that agitation will cease? No, Sir, you will still continue to make war upon slavery. Your views of Christianity, and civilization, and human rights, and the goadings of your conscience, will not suffer you to remain quiet. The Union, as it is, will, ere long, become a noisome stench in your nostrils. You will look upon it as a pillar of defence to iniquity and injustice. Nothing will be so odious to you as the Union which your ancestors loved,—nothing so galling and humbling as the political ties which now bind the States together. If the Union, with Texas annexed, is so monstrous,—if you start back with horror at the prospect,—the Union, with the Southern and the South Western States attached to it, will soon seem to you equally flagitious. That very Union will still continue to be cursed with your "greatest of evils." What will be done? Why, you tell us that slavery will have to be abolished, and you are certain that it will be. The people will not long tamely submit to the infliction of this terrible calamity. Your calculation is predicated on the known principles of human nature. People prefer the enjoyment of a great good,—liberty,—to the suffering of a great evil—slavery. Calculation did I say? With you it

is more,—it is prophecy. "The fall of slavery," you tell us, "is as sure as the descent of the Ohio." There is no resisting the power of prophecy, Sir. You must speak from actual knowledge of coming events. You might otherwise have glanced at their shadows, and have thus arrived, with mathematical precision, at their proportions. But prophecy,—that confident tone in which you speak, silences doubt and renders calculation useless. You look at events as they are, or rather as they will be. You see them in all the light of noon tide splendour, and not a shadow intervenes to interrupt your steady gaze. The South, it is true, had thought, and thought justly, that her peculiar institutions were secured to her by the Constitution. How then is the downfall of slavery,—this "greatest of evils,"—to be achieved? Only by the overthrow of the Constitution. That document, with its checks and balances, and limitations, and sanctions, will have to be destroyed, and its memory, if possible, be obliterated from the minds of men. That is the only way to uproot slavery; for your plan of emancipating the blacks by suffering them to remain with their present proprietors, as freemen, with a few paltry restrictions, is the most impracticable of all the modern projects of abolitionism, and is a proof, when you visited the South in your youth, either that your judgment was immature, or that you did not improve your opportunities to acquire a proper knowledge of the relative position of the black and white races. In order to overthrow slavery, you must revolutionize the country and destroy the existing government. Make the Union a rope of sand, that dissolves at the touch,—convert the Constitution of your country into the day-dream of a creative imagination, and slavery will fly before you, like mist before the sun. Resolve society into its original elements,—lay the foundations of government anew,—bring back civilization to a state of

nature, if you can find such a state any where except in books, and you may then, if you choose, place the degraded African on a footing with yourselves, and boast of the equality. You may bow the knee to a woolly headed tyrant, for the African negro, if not a slave, will be sure to be a despot. There is no middle grade which Providence has assigned to him. You can effect this thorough change in our social system by revolution, and by revolution alone. And how is revolution to be effected? By men and means. By the same men and the same means that you are now employing, in the opening scenes of the great tragedy. Resort, Sir, to the press. All sorts of opinions can be poured out upon the public ear through that channel. Your views of human rights and property in the souls and bodies of the African race, if strongly presented, will obtain converts. Do not doubt it. You will make an impression upon the popular mind. Send out your abolition lecturers into the country parishes. There are physicians of souls to be found in many a quiet nook in New-England, who will open their pulpits gladly to the emancipators of their race, and who will aid them with their ghostly counsels. Those philanthropic characters hate your large cities. They entertain a pious and instinctive horror for the movements of your civilized mobs. The country is their theatre of action, and the sovereign people, the tools with which they expect to work and effect changes. The idea of universal equality is their best argument. It pleases, while it subdues the heart; persuade the honest but ignorant yeoman, that he is, to all intents and purposes, equal to the Governor of the State, or the President of the Union, and you will find it no difficult task to get him to admit, that the African slave is, or ought to be, equal to himself, in political importance. His feelings are flattered and his consent obtained, though his reason is not convinced. He

claps his hands and joins the general shout of "down with slavery!" Proceed in this manner, Sir, and you will, in due time, change popular sentiment throughout the Northern States. People who now care nothing about slavery, and who know nothing about it but what you tell them, will begin to look upon themselves as sufferers, and will rise up against the government that inflicts the deadly blow. This is your plan of operations. I do you no injustice, when I say so. There is truth after all, I believe, in some nursery tales. Your climate is cold, Sir. The birds in their autumnal migration, have passed over to our more genial region, and blabbed the whole matter. You mean to change the suffrages of the people with a special view to this object. No man hereafter is to represent you, who is a friend to the institutions of the South. Slavery or anti-slavery is to be your test of political fitness. The whole New-England delegation is to receive instructions which they must obey, or forfeit their places. With a majority in the halls of Congress, the non-slaveholding are to say to the slaveholding States, "The institution of slavery shall exist no longer!" The Constitution will then be trampled under foot, and revolution will ensue, as a natural consequence. You cannot overthrow slavery, Sir, without a revolution. Your plans of getting rid of the imagined evil, will not meet the emergency, or ward off the fatal result.

What, Sir, is the South to do? Shall she sit still and shut her eyes and fold her hands, and permit the work of destruction to go forward without putting forth an effort for the preservation of her dear bought rights, and the rescue of the Union? No, Sir, she must strengthen her position. She must do it by the annexation of Texas to the Union. That is her policy. With Texas in her rear, and assisting her, she will hold the Union together. She will preserve the

country and perpetuate its institutions. She will set the arts and exertions of fanatics and abolitionists at defiance. Is not the annexation of Texas, then, a desirable measure for the South? Most unquestionably. The South thinks so. If there are any who oppose the measure in this quarter, they are not in the confidence of our citizens. Politically speaking, they are dead men, and as patriots, looking to the true interests of the South, they are little better. There is probably as much unanimity on this subject, as upon any great national question that was ever agitated among us. All agree here, that Texas must be united to the Union. All our citizens will exert their best efforts to effect so necessary an object. If petitions are poured into Congress from the North against the measure, they will be met by equally numerous petitions from the South in its favor. If your statesmen oppose it on the ground that it will be calculated to sustain Southern institutions; those who represent our opinions in this section of the country, will maintain it with their best abilities and zeal, for that very reason. Slavery is a vital interest to the South,—and the South will vindicate and uphold it by all the means in her power.

But you tell us, that the South is strong enough already,—that she even now exerts "a disproportionate share of influence on the confederacy,"—that she moves forward harmoniously and vigorously, under the impulse of "a common interest," whose natural tendency is, to draw men together, and of which the North knows nothing. The North, you complain, slumbers,—while the South is vigilant and active; or, if the North moves, "political power" is lost sight of in "the eager and universal competition for gain." Her "energy is absorbed in associations of a religious, philanthropic and literary character." It is these very associations, Sir, particularly those of a "philanthropic" order, that the South dreads.

Our statesmen are well instructed in their duties, and know how to discharge them with reputation,—but what are a few politicians, confessedly men of power and influence in the councils of the nation, opposed to whole associations of men, hostile to the "common interest" that binds the South together! Strong as the South may be, she yet has to contend with combined forces of Northern and Eastern fanatics, who use every possible means to weaken and overpower her. Self preservation is the primordial law of nature,—whether applied to States or individuals,—and the South is entitled to resort to any practicable expedients which will enable her to resist encroachments on her chartered rights.

But the South, you think, is unfriendly to the North,—and you do not wish to countenance any measures, which, by increasing the influence of the South, will strengthen a power that is already viewed with distrust and dread. The South and the North, Sir, have moved on very harmoniously together, until latterly, since you have begun to irritate the former by unkind and opprobrious language,—to impeach the purity of her motives, and to impute to her crime, tyranny and injustice,—charges of which we are as innocent as yourselves. Is this the way, Sir, to win our love? Is this the most approved method that can be adopted to strengthen the bonds of union and good fellowship? Will you make war upon our institutions, and then complain that the South does not look upon these movements of yours with a friendly eye? The South must defend herself from your assaults, and if you lose something of her esteem in the encounter, you should consider that you were the first to stir the troubled waters. You cannot expect her to caress you, when you are aiming a fatal blow at her essential interests. Leave the subject of her peculiar institutions where the Constitution left it,—disturb not the existing relations of things established by the sages

of the Revolution, and the South will forget the past. She will be as warm and devoted in her attachment to you as ever. But while you act as her enemy,—while you indulge in vituperation and obloquy, whenever you speak of her, you cannot expect her to wear towards you the smiling brow of a friend, who exults in your intimacy.

But, you say, there are "constitutional questions and conflicts which cannot be adjusted." Why not, Sir? The same constitutional questions existed when Louisiana and Florida were admitted into the Union, and yet they were adjusted. At that time, the North held the balance of power in her hands,—a fact which you seem to have forgotten. It was perceived, then, that if the South was strengthened by the addition of Louisiana and Florida, that the South would sieze and occupy the vantage ground. All the Eastern States, therefore, raised an outcry against the measure, as unconstitutional,—as inconsistent with those "geographical relations and local interests which were among the essential conditions on which the compromise was made." And yet Louisiana was admitted into the Union, and her admission silenced constitutional scruples, and furnished a precedent suitable to govern the present, and all similar cases. Besides, if the "essential conditions of this compromise," of which you speak, existed out of the Constitution, they never existed in it. You resort to cotemporaneous exposition. Your argument is not built upon the express words of the Constitution. You leave the plain, obvious tenor of that instrument, and seek its interpretation in the opinions of conflicting statesmen, expressed at the time the Constitution was formed. What if the cotemporaneous exposition had never been transmitted to us? What, if the debates that took place in the Convention that formed the Constitution, had been destroyed, and if nothing remained to guide us, but the Constitution

alone? You admit, that "our National Government is a limited one." Limited by what? By the Constitution. And does any one doubt, that the Federal Government, under the Constitution, has a right to admit new States into the Union? The power is expressly given. But you do not look upon Texas as a *State.* You say she is an "independent community, invested with sovereignty," and you ask, how such a community can be admitted into the confederation? Can the treaty making power do this? Can it receive foreign nations, however vast, to the Union? Does not the question carry its own answer? It would seem to do so in your apprehension. Nothing seems clearer to your understanding, than that the treaty making power can do no such thing. An interrogatory alone settles, for you, the mighty controversy. Would to God, that all vexed question that agitate the passions, and disturb the peace of the country, might be as easily disposed of!

You draw hair breadth distinctions between the case of Louisiana and that of Texas. You say the former was the case of the "purchase of a territory,"—the latter, the admission of of an "independent community, invested with sovereignty." Louisiana, Sir, was not admitted into the Union, as "a territory," but as "a State," and if Texas is admitted, she must come in, as "a State" also. I fear this constitutional difficulty, about which so much is said, will, after all, turn on a quibble about the definition of a term which, by this time, ought to be pretty well settled. What is a "State?" Mr. McLane, of Delaware, in his speech upon the Missouri question, has given a good definition of the term. "A State" he says, "is a body of men, united together for their common interest. The term imports sovereignty." What is meant by the admission of a State into the Union? In the language of the same distinguished individual, I reply, "when we speak of admitting a State into the Union, we can mean nothing more, than the

admission of a community of people in whom the sovereign power resides, into another community of States, by which they voluntarily agree to refrain from the exercise of a certain portion of their power, whenever it is incompitable with the power of the Union; in every other respect, their power remains as it did before their admission" Texas then, may be "an independent community, invested with sovereignty," and yet be a State, according to the strictest meaning of the term. She may be admitted, as a sovereign State, into the Union. If Congress has the power to purchase territory which did not belong to her when the government was formed, and to admit that territory, in the character of a State, into the Union, she has the power equally to accept the cession of a sovereign State, which did not originally belong to her, and to admit the State, so ceded, upon its own application, into the "community of States." These fears about power leaving one point of the compass and going over to another, are, after all, rather farcical and ill-timed. Who is competent, at this moment, to say, with what section of the Union the greatest amount of power will finally rest. No prophet has yet arisen in the land, who has pretended to unriddle the mystery, and it depends upon too many contingencies to be made a question of arithmetic for schoolmen or politicians. Should the West continue to increase in the same ratio that she has done for the last twenty-five years, she will at the end of another similar period,—the other sections of the country remaining stationary,—hold in her hands more power than the North and the South united. Should Texas be united to the Union, the South will undoubtedly acquire a great accession of influence. She will be far stronger than she now is, but no stronger probably than she ought to be. On the contrary, should the Canadas declare their independence, and be united to this country,—an event not altogether unlikely,—the

North will hold the balance of power between the South and the West, and the three sections be equipoised. Why foment sectional jealousies,—why quarrel about the relative importance of different parts of our common country? Each section of it has its own advantages and occasions of self-gratulation, and no one portion of the Union, while it remains in the Union, however formidable its power, will ever be half so strong as the Constitution, which binds the whole country together and make us one people.

SIDNEY.

LETTER VIII.

To William E. Channing, D. D.

Sir,—Texas, you tell us, is a foreign nation. No more foreign than was Louisiana, at the time she was purchased by our government,—not *foreign* in the same sense in which England and France are *foreign* nations. Texas belongs to North America. She borders on Louisiana. She is *foreign* in no other sense than that she does not now belong to our territory. She is not foreign in her position, her language, her institutions, or her customs. She is not foreign in the form of her government. Texas is a representative republic. She is not foreign in her national recollections. Her citizens were once citizens of the United States, and claim a participation in the glories of our own Revolution, and are proud of the doctrines to which our Revolution gave birth. She has engrafted upon her country the same form of civiliza-

tion and freedom which is our peculiar pride. Thither have gone our parents, our brothers, our sisters, and our children. Why should we regard Texas as a *foreign* nation? She is not so. Texas is not an outcast. She is a part of us already. Government can do little more than recognize ties which already exist in their full force. Texas has acted her part well and nobly. No country that claims any rank in the scale of nations, can fail to honor her. Whatever course policy may dictate, our hearts can never be alienated from her rising fortunes.

You have identified the annexation of Texas with the cause of the abolition of slavery You have viewed this great question only in one of the many lights in which it is presented to us. The idea of slavery is ever uppermost in your mind, and you find no place in your speculations for any other interest. Is not the annexation of Texas connected intimately with our agricultural and commercial relations? If we reject her application, and Texas continues, as she now is, independent of us, will she not, after the lapse of a few years, become our powerful rival? The cheapness and fertility of her soil, and her free institutions present powerful attractions to the adventurous and enterprizing emigrant. Her rapid increase in population is unexampled in the history of nations. It is scarcely two years since the breaking out of her revolution. At that time her population, you tell us, was "a mere handful." It consisted of only "twenty thousand persons, including men, women and children." What is it now? Texas, at this moment, numbers one hundred thousand inhabitants, and she is capable of bringing eight thousand vigorous soldiers into the field. Every day emigrants flock thither in crowds, and Texas grows rapidly. Who, a few years ago, had ever heard of that country? Children, perhaps, traced out the

name upon the map, and parents and teachers told them that that was a wild, uncultivated region, inhabited chiefly by savage tribes of Indians. But now the name of Texas, is upon the lips of every one. She is spoken of with a sort of enthusiasm as the nursing mother of free and brave men. She is the El Dorado of the South, as Alabama once was. It is not perhaps hazarding too much to predict that Texas, at the close of another quarter of a century, will contain a population as large as that of the whole American Colonies at the time of the breaking out of the American Revolution. And by what sort of people is Texas inhabited? We have heard much abuse of the character of her citizens. They are said to consist of needy adventurers, of unprincipled speculators, of fugitives from justice, of men who profess no religion, and who respect no law but force. There is much injustice in these representations, which are industriously circulated through the country for interested objects. Texas consists of a mixed population, in which characters the most opposite are to be found. There are to be traced in her yet untamed forests as estimable and high-minded men as those of which any age or country can boast,—men of great moral and mental energy and of rare excellence. We see them already figuring in her Congress and beginning to take a commanding position, and whether Texas remains independent or is united to this country, their influence will, in due time, be extensively known and felt. If bad men go to Texas, honesty is their best policy, even without laws. They always find it to be so, and are compelled, by the mere force of circumstances, to respect the principles of justice and order. But Texas is a country of laws, and highly appreciates her religious privileges. Is it probable that bad and weak men will ever get the better of the virtuous and well informed, in the management of her

commonwealth? Nothing so improbable. But admit that the people of that country are as depraved and criminal as they are represented to be. Are they to be denationalized on that account? Did any country, as all history shows, ever commence its career with a more heterogeneous and worse population, or with gloomier prospects, than ancient Rome? And yet Rome became the most glorious of all the republics of antiquity, and the fame of her generals, statesmen and orators has come down to our times and will be transmitted to the latest age. Admit that adventurers, men without means,—speculators, if you please,—constitute nine-tenths of the citizens of Texas, are they to be despised for that reason? Was not our own country first settled by bold and hardy men, who set danger and death at defiance? Does not every country begin its career under the guidance of such men? Adventurers! Why, there is not an art or a science that would ever have been known to the world but for adventurers. All original thinkers,—all men of great genius and profound thought, are adventurers. What would become of society were it not for adventurers? It would either be stationary, or become retrograde in its movements. Men, too, without means, must obtain them, if they would maintain a position, and fulfil the duties assigned to them by Providence.

We hear much of the speculating spirit of the people of Texas. It no doubt prevails there to a considerable extent, but it is not limited in its range and operation to Texas. It exists in civilized Europe and free America. Where, in fact, does it not prevail? Men are every where ambitious to make the best of their circumstances, and this, applied to the accumulation of property, is the spirit of speculation. There are many who consider this an unholy passion,—one whose indulgence is to be deprecated by a Christian people.

Its excessive indulgence is to be so, for it then becomes a crime; but the moderate and animating love of gain, for proper ends, has given birth to many sterling virtues. It is the source of individual comfort, and the best cement of the social fabric. Observe, Sir, I protest against all fraudulent arts. Texas has been the scene of them,—but they have flourished,—chiefly owing to the unprincipled cupidity of the Mexican empresarios. They have been the chief agents in this work of iniquity. If the citizens of Texas have forgotten justice, God forgive them! I see no trace of such wickedness in their history, since they became an independent people,—and their conduct, during their war of independence, was distinguished by decorum and gallantry. Yet you ridicule the idea of "twenty thousand men, women and children raising the standard of war," and proposing to dismember a "mighty empire." "*Proposing*," Sir!—and is this a problem yet to be wrought out? Have you never heard of the victories of San Antonio, Goliad, Conception and San Jacinto, as connected with the history of this rising people? Is the capture of the Mexican commander-in-chief, and the subsequent organization of the Texan Republic, news to you? What is this "mighty empire" of which you speak? It is Mexico, Sir,—an empire "mighty" in numbers, but powerless in valiant men,—"mighty" in wealth, but weak in the means of converting wealth to useful and noble ends,—"mighty" in dissensions and revolutionary movements, but destitute of that unity of spirit in her governors, which is necessary to ensure peace. Against this "mighty empire," a mere "handful of people" raised the standard of war, and prevailed! They not only *proposed*, but *accomplished* a "dismemberment" of this "mighty empire." But such a handful! There is a difference, Sir, between men,—a wide difference betwen the oppressor and the oppressed,—between

those who abuse power and those who maintain privilege. Some insist that there is a marked difference betwen the Anglo-Saxon and the Mexican races. That may very well be, if the force of mind is to be determined by the actions of men. I am not anxious, however, to dwell much on this ground of distinction. The great secret of the strength of Texas, after all, consisted in her bold hearts and in her just cause. Was it not a noble sight to see a small number of people rising up against the assaults of a powerful empire,—hurling defiance at the blood-thirsty tyrant and his minions,—and, with greatly disproportioned numbers, coming off conquerors on the field of battle! The sympathies of human nature, in hearts justly disposed, are powerfully roused by such a scene,—and we pay to individuals successful in so just and glorious a cause, the involuntary tribute of our admiration and gratitude. Such a people will be likely to maintain free institutions through every reverse of fortune. Mexico may blockade her ports,—but Texas does not care for Mexico; much less do the United States. If Mexico could not subdue Texas, when Texas stood alone,—how can she do it, when Texas is united to this country?

Let us not forego the opportunity which is offered by the proposition of this gallant people, for adding her own means to the resources, wealth and glory of our country. It is a generous proposal. How much, Sir, did the United States pay France for her claim to Louisiana? I do not recollect the exact amount,—but it was a very large sum. Mr. Jefferson considered its purchase the most important achievement of his whole administration, and justly. He never did an act more useful to the country, although it was a costly one. Texas lies just the other side of Louisiana,—and is a country rich, surpassingly rich in agricultural resources,—and the United States may have Texas for nothing. But we will not comply

with this liberal offer,—we will not receive this rich gift, because, it is said, Texas is a sovereign nation. But is Texas more sovereign than France, from whom the United States purchased Louisiana? Is she more sovereign than Mexico, with whom General Jackson entered into a negotiation for the purchase of the very country in question? Our Government, a short time ago, were willing to pay Mexico a handsome sum for Texas,—and now, when Texas comes forward, and proposes to be annexed to the Union, we are not willing to receive her, because she is a sovereign nation,—and that, too, when the Constitution itself provides for the admission of sovereign States into the Union!

Will it not be better to have Texas a friend, than a rival? In the latter capacity, she will make whatever terms she chooses with foreign nations,—very disadvantageous, it may be, to our commerce. The great staples of Texas, will be the staples of the Southern States,—Rice, Cotton, Indigo and Tobacco. Suppose the Government of Texas imposes tariffs much lower than those of the United States, on the same articles,—or even establishes free ports of entry? In such a contingency, can this country compete with her at all, without adopting a similar course of policy? Will not our own revenue laws be constantly violated,—and smuggling be practiced on a far more extensive scale, than when our tariffs, on certain imported articles, amounted nearly to prohibition? Will not the local authorities of the two countries, separated by only an imaginary line, come into frequent and violent collision? Will the laws be respected, or will the administration of justice be secure in either? The evils resulting from such a frontier government will be numerous, and far more to be dreaded, than the prospect of imaginary wars with foreign nations, growing out of our connexion with a country to which we are bound, by our natural position, by our institutions, and the strong bonds of mutual interest.

I have now done, Sir, with this subject. I entered upon its examination, influenced solely by considerations of duty. Your opinions, on certain subjects, are regarded here as dangerous. It was necessary to show that they were false. In attempting to do this, I have not looked merely to "the shouts of the passing moment." The welfare of the whole country and the perpetuity of the Union, are intimately involved in this controversy,—and he who engages in it, enters upon solemn business. Truth,—everlasting truth,—God's Providence, and man's nature, pass in review before him,—and are subjects not to be lightly dealt with I have aimed to avoid the use of harsh language in speaking of these weighty matters. This design has not been inconsistent, however, with the employment of great freedom of speech. I readily adopt your own language, that "nothing is to be gained by caution, circumlocution, plausible softenings of language and other arts, which, in destroying confidence, defeat their own ends."

But yet, "I am not conscious of the slightest asperity of feeling towards any party, or any individual." I will add, Sir, that I have no personal acquaintance with you, whatever. I know you only through the medium of your published writings,—many of which I heartily approve; and in respect to those which I disapprove, I exercise nothing more than the common privilege, which belongs to every individual, of using his own judgment. Although I may not have attained to your advanced age or wisdom, I have, notwithstanding, lived long enough to know "the emptiness of human favor, and the instability of earthly goods,"—and to consider of paramount importance, the duties which I owe to myself, to my country,"—"to mankind, to the benevolent principles of the Christian faith,—and to the common Father of the whole human race."

SIDNEY.

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