

The American Church and the African Slave Trade.

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MR. JAY'S SPEECH

in

THE NEW YORK DIOCESAN CONVENTION OF  
THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

On the 27th September, 1860.

With a Note of the Proceedings had in that Council on  
the Subject.

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MDCCCLX.

Concilium Londinense, A. D. 1102, reg Angliæ Hen. I., 3. Statutum est :

“Nequis illud nefarium negotium, quo hactenus homines in Angliâ solebant velut bruta animalia venundari, deinceps ullatenus facere præsumat.”

“ ‘ Let no man from henceforth,’ said the Christian Council of London, in 1102, ‘ presume to carry on that wicked traffic by which men in England have been hitherto sold like brute animals.’

“ *This must be the Church's rule on the banks of the Mississippi [and of the Hudson,] as it was on those of the Thames.*”

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, Lord Bishop of Oxford.

## INTRODUCTION.

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At the Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, held at St. John's Chapel, in the city of New York, on Thursday the 27th of September, 1860, the Rev. Dr. CRIGHTON temporarily occupying the Chair, in the place of the Right Rev. HORATIO PORTER, D. D., Provisional Bishop, at the conclusion of the regular business of the Convention, and after an address from the Lord Bishop of Victoria, Mr. JOHN JAY, a delegate from St. Matthew's Church, Bedford, said—

MR. PRESIDENT—I propose to offer for the consideration of this House the following preamble and resolution :

*Whereas*, This Convention are advised by numerous and convincing proofs that the traffic in African slaves, which the people of the United States intended should forever cease after the year 1808, hath been re-established in the city of New York, the seat of our Episcopate, within the limits and jurisdiction of this Diocese, in violation of the laws of God and the statutes of the Republic :

*And whereas*, It further appears that the said traffic hath during the last year increased so rapidly from this port, that the city of New York hath become, in the language of the *London Times*, “the greatest slave trading mart in the world” :

*And whereas*, It would appear that the said trade so flourishes, and the laws of the Republic are thus trampled on, for the want of an enlightened and conscientious public opinion in this community with reference to the great wickedness of the said trade :

*And whereas, also*. It belongeth to this Council of the Church to endeavour so to act that all error, ignorance, pride and prejudice may be dissipated, and that truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us. *Therefore, Resolved*,

1st. That this Convention respectfully ask the Right Reverend Bishop of the Diocese to address a Pastoral Letter to the people of this Diocese, in reference to the African slave trade, as now prosecuted from the

port of New York, within the limits and jurisdiction of this Diocese, in violation of the statutes of the Republic, of the teachings of the Church, of the rights of man, and of the laws of God; to the end that such letter may be read in all the Churches, and that the people may be warned in the language of the Christian Council of London, in 1102, "Let no man presume from henceforth to carry on that wicked traffic by which men have hitherto been sold like brute animals"

2d. That the Reverend Clergy of this Diocese be respectfully recommended from time to time to preach in their respective parishes against the wickedness of the slave trade, as now prosecuted from within this Diocese.

3d. That the laity of the Diocese be urgently recommended to exert their influence, in all legitimate ways, to stay the further prosecution of the traffic from within the limits of the Diocese.

In calling the attention of this Council of the Church a second time to the grave question of its duty touching the African slave trade—

Dr. LEONARD, (interrupting,)—I rise to a question of order. I wish to raise what is called, in parliamentary language, the question of consideration—whether this House will entertain this motion.

Mr. JAY—I submit that the motion, having been properly made and seconded—

Dr. VINTON—It is not seconded, I believe.

A MEMBER—I second it.

Mr. JAY—I am in order in presenting to the House the reasons why I think they should adopt the resolution.

Dr. LEONARD—That is not in order until the question of consideration is settled by the House.

Mr. JAY—I know of no such question. The resolution is certainly respectful, and I have claimed the right to the floor. I believe I am entitled to it.

A MEMBER—I move to lay that resolution on the table.

Mr. JAY—That is not in order while I have the floor.

Dr. VINTON—I think the gentleman is right in saying that the question is before the house when it is seconded; but at that time when it comes before the house, according to our rules, a motion is in order to lay it on the table; which motion must be decided without debate. At the last Convention no one was

found to second his proposition, and it did not appear on the record. Now, however, it will appear, because he has found a friend to second it. Yet it is the perfect right of any member to make the motion to lay on the table, which the rule admits. I am very sorry my friend will not have the opportunity to make his remarks, unless it please the Convention to vote down the motion to lay on the table.

Dr. CREIGHTON (in the Chair) said it had been moved to lay the subject on the table, and insisted that that must be voted upon in the first place.

Mr. JAY replied earnestly that he had the floor. If any person had the grace to make such a motion while he was speaking, it did not give him a parliamentary right to be first heard.

Dr. VINTON—His course of procedure should have been, if he wished to make his remarks upon the general subject of Slavery, to preface his resolution with those remarks; but the moment he read his resolution, and it was seconded, it was the property of the Convention. I hope he will consent to have the motion put, to ascertain whether it is agreeable to the Convention to hear him. He can withdraw it now; and I make an appeal to my brother to withdraw that resolution now; if not, I shall insist upon the motion to lay on the table.

Mr. Jay insisted on retaining the floor.

Dr. VINTON—I only ask the question of my friend, will he withdraw it or not?

Mr. JAY—I will not.

Dr. VINTON—Then I insist. [Cries of question, question, and great confusion.]

The Rev. Mr. MOORE raised a question of order, that Mr. Jay was entitled to the floor. He said he was not willing to gag any man in this Convention, and believed they were capable of considering the matter calmly. They could then vote it down as they did last year.

Several gentlemen called Mr. Moore to order.

Mr. MOORE—Can you cut off a man from speaking in that way? [Order, order.]

The resolutions were laid on the table by an overwhelming



majority; and after transacting some minor business, the Convention adjourned till seven o'clock that evening.

At the evening session the PROVISIONAL BISHOP, Dr. HORATIO POTTER, having resumed the Chair, after the presentation of the report of the Trustees of the Parochial Fund, and the unanimous election of Mr. John A. Dix and Mr. John Jay as Trustees thereof, for the term of three years, Mr. JAY obtained the floor and proceeded to address the Convention on the subject of the Slave Trade.

Various attempts were made by Mr. James F. DePeyster, Mr. Samuel B. Ruggles, and other delegates, to prevent him from proceeding, by raising points of order, but the Bishop decided that by the rule recognized by the Convention in the morning, the speaker had the right, in advance of the presentation of a resolution to state his views on the subject to which it related, and appealed to the Convention to maintain silence. Notwithstanding this decision and appeal Mr. Jay was frequently interrupted by points of order; and these interruptions continued until a late hour compelled in the delivery, some abridgement of his speech, which is here given in its complete form, as published on the 29th September, during the same week, in the *New York Tribune*.

## MR. JAY'S SPEECH.

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MR. PRESIDENT:—I rise to offer a resolution, which I regard as of essential importance, not simply to the success, but to the continued existence of some of the Foreign Missions in which the Church in this Diocese feels a profound interest. The Convention, perhaps, anticipate my announcement that I refer to our missions on the Western Coast of Africa.

Mindful of the rules recognized by the Convention this morning, that a member has the right, in advance of the presentation of a resolution, to state its purport, his general views on the subject, and his reasons why it should be adopted, I shall proceed to follow this course, with such brevity as I may find convenient. I am glad, Sir, that I have the opportunity of doing this with the Provisional Bishop in his seat as the presiding officer of this hour—our own Right Rev. Father, accustomed to preside over this Council of the Church with fairness, with consistency, and with courtesy ; and who is alike able and ready to protect members in their constitutional rights, and to maintain unimpaired that decency of procedure that should characterize this Convention, against all attempts, by whomever made, to interrupt its proceedings or compromise its dignity.

The danger, Sir, that I anticipate to our mission on the Coast of Africa arises from the re-establishment at our doors of the African slave trade ; and I propose to present to the House what I think they will admit are convincing proofs that the trade is now more openly prosecuted than ever before, in defiance of the laws of God and of the Republic, from the city of New York—this seat of your Episcopate, within the limits and jurisdiction of this Diocese, and within the limits, also, of its oldest, wealthiest, and most influential parish—the parish of Trinity.

I do not forget, sir, that when at the last Convention I presented a respectful petition from well known laymen on this subject, and asked its reference to a joint committee of both orders, the petition was received with a smile, and the motion promptly and by a large vote rejected. I remember well the scene and the vote, and I trust this Convention may remember them also, as I show to them that since that vote and the exultant comments it called forth from the pro-slavery press of the country, the slave trade from this port has increased with such frightful rapidity, that the *London Times* pronounces the seat of your Episcopate to be “the greatest slave-trading mart in the world.”

It is, perhaps, proper that this House should be advised of the construction put upon the smiles and the vote of the last Convention by the *London Christian Observer*, that gentlemen may know how their reception of the petition was viewed by members of the Church of England.

I will read but a single passage from the December number of that well known and influential journal.

“We perceive from a New York paper—the *Evening Post* Sept. 30—that even the Episcopal Convention treated with utter scorn a respectful and very moderate petition setting forth that ‘in defiance of the laws of God and of the statutes of this Republic the African slave trade hath been re-opened, and is now being prosecuted from the port of New York, within the limits and jurisdiction of the Diocese,’ and praying for enquiry. Even the Episcopal Church then, it appears, is quite prepared not merely to justify men stealers, but to add the weight of its authority to their hideous cause.”

Such was the painful conviction of English Churchmen touching the meaning and effect of your scornful rejection of the resolution of reference, and while from my personal acquaintance with members of this body, I freely acquit a large number of those who voted to reject the resolution of any intention of strengthening the slave trade by their vote, I as frankly declare that I believe the effect of their vote has been as the *Christian Observer* hath it, “To add the weight of their authority to the hideous cause.”



I think there is no room for doubting that the scene and the vote in the last Convention materially assisted in giving that fresh impulse to the trade during the past year, that has aroused anew the indignation of Christendom at the insolent revival in the Diocese of New York of this infernal traffic that our fathers supposed they had extinguished more than half a century ago.

I am quite aware, sir, that the discussion of this topic will be excessively distasteful to many of the gentlemen whom I have the honor to address. They will, perhaps, do me the justice to remember that in the few remarks I made in presenting the anti-slave trade petition, I confined myself strictly to the propriety of referring the petition to a joint Committee to consider and report what action, if any, should be taken upon it. I said,

“I hope the Convention will not misunderstand the question. It is not whether the Convention ought to take any steps or not in regard to the actual prevention of the slave trade from our Diocese as certified by these petitioners. That is for the committee to report upon. The only question here is shall the petition be referred quietly, without debate, without agitation—shall the Church in calm consciousness of strength treat this subject with composure, and deliberately ask what is her duty.”

For myself, opposed as I am by habit and on principle to all unnecessary agitation, I should have preferred that more quiet way of reaching a right decision on the question of duty, to the one in which the refusal of the Convention to refer the petition has necessarily resulted. Forewarned they acted as they had the power to act. Disapproving of that action I nevertheless uncomplainingly acquiesced in it, and quietly took back the petition from your hands; and now, instead of addressing a joint committee, I address myself directly and in open day to this Council of the Church, upon what the Bishop of Oxford rightfully calls, “morally, religiously, and politically, the great question of this country and of this age.”

Conscious of my utter inability to do justice to such a theme as the whole duty of the Church towards the crime of slave trading, its accessories and its results, I think it my duty, with such ability as I may, to open the subject to the House, well

assured that the debate this day began never will be ended, until this Council true to the teachings of the spirit of Christianity, to the teachings of the liturgy, and to the ancient precedents of the Church, shall exert her influence and authority to stay the slave trade now re-opened at your door, and thus accomplish to some extent at least in the language of Lord Brougham "the greatest triumph mortal ever won over the worst crime ever man committed."

In the first place I ask your attention to proofs of the fact that the slave trade is being actually prosecuted from the port of New York, in this your Diocesan limits and jurisdiction.

*The St. Louis Intelligencer*, published in a slave State, says:

"The re-opening of the slave trade is an accomplished fact.  
\* \* \* \* \* At this very time, cargoes of ignorant, barbarous and heathenish Africans, from Congo and Ashantee, are being landed in the inlets and creek mouths on the gulf coast of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, (I shall refer again to Texas presently,) driven into the interior, and distributed among the cotton plantations. A fleet of vessels, fitted out in the ports of New Orleans and New-York, is engaged in the prohibited traffic, and barracoons and depots have been established in the several large towns near the Gulf, where the freshly imported Negroes are confined until they can be disposed of to the neighboring planters."

A correspondent of the *New York Times*, writing from on board the United States ship Portsmouth, on the coast of Africa, under date of December 20, 1859, says:

"The few months' experience we have had on the coast of Africa has not been altogether thrown away. It has thoroughly convinced us that *the whole slave coast is, we may say, lined with slavers, who are generally from New York*, cleared from the Custom House, bringing all the appliances of the trade with them, and manœuvring about on the coast under various pretences and disguises of legal traffic."

The writer proceeds to give an account of the capture of the brig Tavernier, of New York, by H. M. ship Viper. It affords a glimpse of the character of the traffic, as prosecuted from this Diocese. He says:

"The brig *Tavernier* had nearly 600 slaves on board of her when captured. Most of them were mere children, from eight to sixteen years old, with some women—all naked. When visited by the officers of the ship, although in better condition than when captured, the scene was frightful—some were dying, many sick, all miserable and suffering, from the effects of cold, damp night air, producing bronchitis and cough. The officers were so horrified that they desire never again to look upon such a scene."

*The modus operandi* of shipping the Negroes is thus described by the same writer :

"On the night determined on, they sail cautiously yet boldly in, anchor, and in two or three hours are filled with Negroes, who are carried off to them in canoes. The refractory ones are clapped in irons, or made drunk with rum, and in this stupified condition they are carried on board, stowed in a sitting posture, with the knees drawn up so closely that they can hardly breathe, much less move.

"Now their sufferings become dreadful, horrible—indeed human language is incapable of describing or imagination of sketching even the faint outline of a dimly floating fancy of what their condition is. Home-sick, sea-sick, half-starved, naked, crying for air, for water—the strong killing the weak or dying, in order to make room—the hold becomes a perfect charnel house of death and misery. \* \* \* \* \* Ophthalmia breaks out—every new case is thrown overboard, under the supposition that the disease is contagious, and those who are dying meet the same fate. This is no fancy sketch. Only the other day a remarkable instance of it came under our own observation."

The *N. Y. Evening Post* published a list, which I hold in my hand, prepared by one of its correspondents, SOUTH "STREET," under date of July 28, 1860, of eighty-five slavers, under the American flag, from February, 1859, to July 1860, derived from New York and English Journals, a large proportion of which sailed from New York. And another city journal, in commenting upon it, said : "The conclusion is inevitable that this trade is at the present moment more active and more productive of profit to those engaged in it than in any former period, and that its management is concentrated in our own city."



The New York Daily *World* of July 31, 1860, remarks, "the fact that nearly an hundred slavers have been fitted out from this port within the last eighteen months, ought to arrest public attention."

In the Senate of the United States, Mr. Seward, in a debate on African Slave Trade, declared, that the trade was "an American Trade carried on from ports of the United States, acquiring slaves in Africa, and selling them either in the United States or Cuba." He said, further, "the root of the evil is in the great commercial cities, and I frankly admit *in the City of New York*." And he added: "I say, also, that the objection I found to that bill (a bill he had introduced for the more effectual suppression of the the traffic) came not so much from the Slave States as *from the Commercial interest of New York*."

Mr. President, I will not pursue this point; I do not suppose there is a sane man in this House who can doubt, upon the evidence I have adduced, that New York is, as the *London Times* declares, "the greatest Slave Trading Mart in the world"—and they have the distinct assurance of our distinguished Senator, that the chief opposition to legislation for its suppression came not from the South, but from the commercial interest of this City—this seat of the Episcopate of New York.

I repeat his remark, for it disposes at once of the objection that by acting against the slave trade we would be meddling with the institutions of other Dioceses, and shows that the African slave trade has become a Diocesan institution peculiarly our own.

I might multiply similar proofs. I might refer you to the almost daily rumors in our papers of the slavers that leave our ports—of the charges of complicity made against the Marshal and his aids—of the straw bail accepted by Federal Commissioners—of constant acquittances of slave traders pronounced by judicial officers. I think it unnecessary, and pass to the question:

What is the duty of the Church touching the New York slave trade?

Some discussion has been had by Churchmen since the last Convention in the columns of the public press, on the propriety of its action in refusing to refer the petition against the slave trade. And those who approved of that refusal rested their ap-

probation of it on the ground, first, that the Episcopal Church in this country had always on principle avoided all interference with the question of slavery, and in the next place, that any resolution passed by the Convention against the trade would be a mere paper proclamation—a *brutum fulmen*—with no practical influence whatever.

These objections are frankly stated. They shall be as frankly answered.

The assertion that the American Church has uniformly avoided meddling with the slavery question has been so often and so confidently repeated that I am inclined to think many intelligent honest people actually believe it. It has occasionally been put forth as an admitted truth by persons who might have been supposed to know something of our Church history. Many members of the Convention will remember that in 1846 the majority of the special committee to whom was referred the petition of St. Philip for admission, consisting of Messrs. John C. Spenser, Reuben H. Sherwood and William H. Harrison, opposed the admission on the ground of the relation the question bore to “the vexed and irritating question of slavery;” and they remarked—“By the wise and prudent counsels of the fathers of our Church, our denomination has been hitherto happily free from the agitation of these and kindred questions, \* \* and the consequences have been peace and quiet among ourselves and the respect of others.”

How far “our denomination,” as those gentlemen style the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, has refrained from meddling with “the vexed and irritating question of slavery,” will presently appear.

Even were the proposition as true as I shall shew it to be untrue, it would prove nothing in regard to the duty of this Convention touching the slave trade in this Diocese. The question as to our duty touching slavery as recognized by law in other States is one thing—that touching the slave traffic illegally revived in our own borders is quite another; and I do not propose to allow the plain question I now present to this House to be muddled and perplexed by confounding it with one so entirely distinct in the elements of legality, locality, and jurisdiction.



But, as the assertion that the Episcopal Church in the United States has always preserved a cautious neutrality on the general question of slavery, is boldly made, and the arguments attempted to be drawn from that assertion may seem to some, on a superficial view, to demand or justify the acquiescence of this body in the renewal of the slave trade in New York, I think it proper to rid the subject once and for ever of that assertion and those arguments, by showing that the assertion is erroneous, and the argument without a basis of fact.

I propose to shew that not only have many individual Bishops and Clergymen, openly and without rebuke, upheld slavery as sanctioned by Scripture and by the Church—vindicating it by their voice and recommending it by their example—that not only have Church periodicals expressed similar views of slavery, approving of its incorporation into the very institutions of the Church, that the Church might grow rich upon the unpaid labor of slaves, but that the General Convention have practically approved of the course of these pro-slavery Bishops and Clergymen—and that our Church has thus become the avowed champion and recognized bulwark of American slavery—the ally (sometimes active and again passive,) of the political party that has sought to strengthen, perpetuate, and extend slavery, and the active promoter at the South of those views in regard to the right of Americans to enslave Africans that have resulted in the revival of the slave trade in this seat of your Episcopate, under the protection of a commercial interest in this city.

This position, startling as it doubtless appears to many gentlemen who listen to me, I proceed to prove.

You are doubtless aware that in the Slave States of the South, Bishops and Clergymen are numbered amongst the slave-holders, the slave-breeders, and the slave-traders, and that both the House of Bishops and the House of Clerical and Lay Delegates have acquiesced in their so acting, never refusing, as I believe, to recommend a Clergyman for consecration as a Bishop, for the reason that he was a slave-holder or an advocate of slavery, and never expressing in any way a disapproval of their conduct in this particular.

Touching the household arrangements of the Bishops of the

South, we of the North naturally know but little. Occasionally we learn something. In September, 1853, a letter from one of the editors of the *New York Express*, which was reprinted in the *Christian Witness*, gave an account of a visit to Bishop Polk, on his plantation in Louisiana, and the facts he gave he seemed to have learned from the Bishop himself. The writer said, speaking of the Bishop's plantation:

"There are 340 slaves, 90 of whom are children under ten years of age, and 170 working hands. Eighteen children had been born on the plantation in less than a year, and a child twenty-four hours old is worth \$100."

Wordsworth, in that magnificent ode "Intimations of immortality from recollections of childhood," says:

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

And represents the infant boy as

—— "trailing clouds of glory as he comes  
From God, who is our home."

We know from scripture that "of such are the kingdom of heaven;" and we are apt from this and other passages to look with almost reverential wonder upon the sinless beauty of a new-born child—to read with new meaning the touching injunction "feed my lambs," and to reflect with awe upon the priceless value of an immortal soul. In the Diocese of Louisiana, on the Episcopal plantation, they have calculated the value of an infant one day old, before the shades of the prison house have begun to close around him, and have reduced it to figures—it is exactly \$100.

It seems small, does it not, Sir, for a young immortal, made in God's likeness and fresh from his bosom. But perhaps Scripture would afford precedent for a yet smaller sum. One of the Apostles realized, by the sale of his master, only thirty pieces of silver. An Apostolic successor, in an American Diocese, may realize thrice the number from the sale of the youngest of his little ones.

*The Spirit of Missions*, edited for the Board of Missions by the Secretaries and General Agents of the two committees, in March, 1843, announced, with approval, "that the Bishop of Georgia, in his Montpelier Institute, is testing the sufficiency of

slave labor to support it ;” and followed this announcement by a proposition that “ the proposed Mission School should be placed under the auspices of Bishop Polk, in Louisiana,” and appealed to the charity of the Church to supply means for *the purchase of a plantation to be worked by slaves*.

The proposition was distasteful to some Northern Churchmen, who remonstrated with the Board of Missions, but that body treated the petition with contempt, and declined to express any disapproval of the proposal.

In South Carolina, Bishop Bowen, in an address to the Convention of that Diocese, openly and decidedly arrayed himself and the Church, so far as he could represent it, on the side of slavery.

Referring to the efforts of Anti-slavery men to bring about the abolition of the system, he denounced what he was pleased to call “ the malignant philanthropy of abolition,” and contrasted “ the savageism and outlawry consequent on abolition,” with “ domestic servitude under the benign influence of Christian principles and Christian institutions.”

I might refer, Sir, to the newspapers of our Church openly taking the side of slavery in the contest which, during the last thirty years, has agitated the country, and to many Clergymen of the North, some among them prominent divines of this Diocese, who, from the pulpit and in public speeches, have thrown all their influence into the scale of slavery, and descending into the arena of politics, have attempted to persuade their congregations that the Fugitive Slave Act, probably the most wicked statute enacted since that of Nebuchadnezzar, in the time of Daniel, was a binding law ; and that it was the duty of all good citizens to reverence it accordingly, and, in obedience to its mandates, to become slave-catchers and tipstafis.

But I will not dwell on these facts, which are known to every member. I refer those who are curious in the matter of sermons, to the reports in our city papers during past years of the Thanksgiving sermons preached in our city Churches on the subject,—not of saving souls,—but of saving Slavery and the Union.

I come at once to a case which, if it stood alone, without another fact to support it, would dispel the illusion that the Episcopal



Church in the United States has been neutral on the slavery question, and would show of itself how wide and fearful is the responsibility she has assumed in regard to the efforts that have convulsed the Union for the continuance and extension of slavery, as well as for the re-opening of the African trade, now established in our Diocese.

In 1836, the Rev. George W. Freeman, of Christ Church, Raleigh, in North Carolina, preached from that pulpit in the presence of his Bishop, the Right Rev. Dr. Ives, two sermons on the subject of slavery, in which, in the name of the Church, he declared that "slavery, as it existed at the present day, was agreeable to the order of Divine Providence."

So far as an individual Clergyman could do, he placed upon the system of slavery,—not upon some ideal imaginary system of compulsory labor—a patriarchal system, such as obtained with Abraham, or, as some suppose, with Paul and his brother beloved Onesimus—but upon "slavery as it *now exists*" he placed the seal of the Church, and blessed it in the name of the head of the Church, and declared that "no man, without a new revelation from Heaven, was entitled to pronounce it wrong."

But it may be said, why hold the Church responsible for the rash utterance of a single member? Listen further.

Had Mr. Freeman been brought to trial before his Bishop on the charge of promulgating heresy and blasphemy, and prostituting the pulpit to the service of slave-traders, and bringing dishonor upon the Church and upon Christianity, the Diocese of North Carolina would have purged itself of his crime. But what did the Bishop? He recommended the publication of the sermons, "as urgently called for at the present time;" and they were published, with his unqualified endorsement that he "had listened to them with the most unfeigned pleasure." The Diocese of South Carolina hastened to appropriate this new development of Church doctrines, which Dr. Dalcho had previously less fully announced, and the sermons were printed, *imprimatur* and all, as a religious tract, for gratuitous distribution, by "the Society for the advancement of Christianity" (!) with the Bishop of South Carolina at its head; and I submit that, by these proceedings the Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina and in South Car-

olina became the avowed champion of "slavery as it now exists."

It may be again urged these are but two Dioceses out of twenty-five or thirty, and that the Church at large has never endorsed Mr. Freeman, or even indirectly approved his teachings.

Until 1844 this may have been true. During those eight years the name of Mr. Freeman obtained an almost world-wide reputation, as the boldest champion among all the sects of the South of American Slavery. His sermons were quoted and commented on in newspapers, in pamphlets, in books, and at public conventions, both in America and in England.

The Bishop of Oxford, in his history of the American Church, quotes the sermons as evidence of "the fearful features of the life of Churchmen at the South," and based upon this, and other evidences of the servility of the American Church to the base spirit of slavery, that famous chapter, which has been since so widely known from its reprint in separate form, as "the Reproof of the American Church," a reproof which, from its dignity, its candor, and its power, was worthy alike of the Bishop of Oxford and of the son of Wilberforce.

The amazement of other English Bishops and Clergymen at the utterance of such sentiments as those of Freeman, were expressed with the utmost frankness. "I have always considered," said (in 1840) the Bishop of Norwich, referring to papers that contained extracts from Mr. Freeman's sermon, with Bishop Ives' endorsement—"I have always considered it an anomaly that any State professing Christianity could for a moment tolerate a tyranny so utterly at variance with every feeling of justice and humanity; but I never could have believed that any individuals existed, *calling themselves Ministers of the Gospel*, whose minds were so darkened by prejudice and self interest, as to avow an approval of slavery and its evil consequences, had I not found them so unequivocally confirmed in the documents above mentioned."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, referring to slavery in America and its clerical supporters, remarked: "Christianity and slavery are not to be mentioned in the same day."

Eight years had elapsed since Mr. Freeman's sermons with Bishop Ives' endorsement, and the sanction of two Dioceses had



been sent forth to startle Christendom with the boldness of his assumptions. Politicians, who had long professed to lament slavery as a moral evil—an unfortunate necessity—were prompt to accept the new gospel thus dispensed to them ; and there arose a party who swore, almost in the words of Freeman, that slavery was divine in its character, and that it hence became a religious duty to strengthen, perpetuate and extend it.

One feature of Freeman's defence of slavery is worth remembering, although it has been only partially adopted as yet by any political party. He did not rest his vindication of the system on the color of the slave, but maintained the historic approval by the Church of the slavery equally of blacks and whites.

The other sects of the South had exhibited great alacrity in complying with the demands of the Southern press to stand up for slavery, but "our denomination," as the committee called the Church, were, by Mr. Freeman, placed prominently in the front rank of slavery propagandists, and his claim as the foremost leader in that propagandism was equally acknowledged by the friends and foes of slavery.

Eight years had elapsed, and the slavery question convulsed alike the religious and the political world, and Churchmen at the North were earnestly appealed to to array themselves against the spurious Christianity that, under the lead of Freeman, was representing "slavery as it is" as a Christian institution. And at this time the General Convention met at Philadelphia to elect a Bishop "to perform Episcopal services in the State of Arkansas, and in the Indian Territory South of 36° 30', and to exercise Episcopal jurisdiction over the missions of the Church in the State of Texas."

There, was a wide field of influence—a territory embracing more than three hundred and sixty-three thousand square miles, about three times as large as Great Britain, to which the Church, as a nursing mother, was to give, in the infancy of its settlement, the first lessons of Christian civilization. Here, she was to plant those principles which, taking root in the hearts of the early pioneers making their home in the wilderness, should bear fruit in distant generations, and on untold multitudes to the end of time.

In regard to Texas, the appointment was one of peculiar interest and importance, for a mild slavery had formerly existed there, which Mexican civilization under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church had abolished; and the American invaders who raised the standard of rebellion against Mexico, had done so avowedly, in part, for the re-establishment of slavery. And now, into this young State and Arkansas, and the Indian territory, to teach them the doctrines of our Church, the General Convention was to send a Bishop; and they had a long list of faithful Clergymen in every part of our country from whom to choose.

Mr. President, after surveying the territory to be supplied, and scrutinizing the list of Clergymen, and reflecting, doubtless, upon the delicacy and importance of the step, morally, religiously and politically, the House of Bishops nominated for this post—the clerical and lay delegates confirmed the choice—and the Bishops consecrated and sent forth into the field as a Missionary Bishop,—I assure the House I am not romancing; I can point you to the record,—they actually chose and consecrated the Rev. GEORGE W. FREEMAN.

If they had selected and consecrated anew Bishop Leonidas Polk, with his hundreds of slaves—his field hands, and his women, and his children at \$100 a piece—they could not have made a more significant appointment. Never was a choice more significant at the moment, more fraught with momentous consequences to endless generations. It was the scornful answer of the General Convention to the remonstrances and rebukes of English Bishops. It was their defiant answer to the Churchmen at home who believed slavery a crime. It was an assurance, clear and definite, to the slaveholding propagandists that the Episcopal Church did not regard a man less fit for the office of a Bishop because he was the defender from the pulpit of a system that tramples upon marriage, that destroys the family relation, that dishonors the husband and insults the father, and exposes women on the auction block and sells children by the pound.

And so this slavery propagandist was sent forth a Bishop, to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all authority; and when the future historian of Arkansas and Texas shall trace to their sources the influences that have determined the character of their

people, their degree of Christian civilization or African barbarism, their principles of freedom or of slavery, of morality or of crime, not least among those sources will be the vote of the General Convention at Philadelphia.

To form some idea of the inevitable effect of such doctrines as those of Mr. Freeman, it is only necessary to remember that in all ages of the world, and in every system of religion, the character of the system and the character of the people depend upon the idea embodied in their belief of the character of God.

The Odin and Thor of the Northmen were worshiped as hero kings, bloodthirsty and relentless, and their worshipers have been compared to bloodhounds. -

In India the worshipers of Kalé, the most popular of Idols, never dream of committing an act of unusual wickedness without invoking the protecting power of their beastly deity, and in China, it is said, the priests of Buddha, perfectly understanding the doctrine of the assimilation of the worshiper to the object worshiped, say, "Think of Buddha and you will be transformed into Buddha."

When, therefore, by the Bishop of Arkansas and Texas, God was represented as a being who viewed with approbation "slavery as it is," brutalizing alike both master and slave, it was but natural that the qualities thus attributed to the Deity should be reproduced in the lives and characters of the people. Arkansas, in perfect consistency with Bishop Freeman's views of the excellence of slavery, has recently resolved to reduce to that blessed condition all the free negroes remaining in the State, and so determined are her people to allow no dissent from the pro-slavery doctrines taught them in the name of the Church, that a man is now under sentence of death, passed by a mob, for procuring for sale the *New York Tribune*.

Texas is actively engaged in obtaining slaves from Africa in the ships that sail from your Diocese, and a mob in that State has just hung a Methodist Missionary whom, the *Christian Advocate* says, was "a devoutly pious and inoffensive man," on the charge of being an abolitionist.

Who, in view of such fruits, the natural results of Bishop Freeman's teachings, will pretend that the voice of the Church



has no power, or that it will be less powerful for good when it utters truth and righteousness than it was for evil when it sanctioned Freeman's defence of slavery.

If any one shall suggest that neither the Bishops nor the deputies to the General Convention knew of Freeman's championship of slavery, when they made him a Bishop, that they were ignorant of the sermons whose fame was so widely spread abroad, I reply that the suggestion is utterly incompatible with the known intelligence of those gentlemen, and with their habit of carefully scrutinizing the opinions and antecedents of their nominees for the Episcopate. Such an excuse is as clearly idle as it would have been had those same Bishops selected and consecrated the late Dudley A. Tyng, of blessed memory, after the delivery of his immortal sermon on "Our Country's Troubles," and then insisted that they had never heard of the sermon, that they knew nothing of his anti-slavery convictions, and that they, consequently, did not imply by their selection any approval of the doctrines he held on the catholic brotherhood of man.

Having shown that our General Convention practically sanctioned the teachings of Freeman that "Slavery as it exists is agreeable to the order of Divine Providence," let me ask you to note the fact so pertinent to the matter before us, that those teachings have naturally resulted in the conclusion that the slave trade, also, is a proper thing.

"The conclusion," thus logically argues the Mississippian "is irresistible, that if it is a heinous crime to purchase the African from his heathen master in his native country, it is equally wrong to purchase him from his enlightened master in one of the States of the Union. And, if it is radically wrong to import the black man for slavery, it is equally so to hold him in service anywhere. The principle involved is the same in each case, and the ingenuity of casuists cannot change it."

Accordingly, mercantile conventions and political meetings representing the influential classes at the South, have openly resolved to trample on the law and to revive the traffic; and they have found in this city ready agents and greedy capitalists to do the work, and Journals of Commercial Christianity to harp on the necessity of a supply of labor and the duty of bringing the poor

benighted African to a land of light and knowledge; and this abominable cant is unblushingly uttered by men the most prominent in your commercial circles, representative men, who help to make the character of your city. And here is a pamphlet,—a plea for the slave trade,—entitled “The Labor Question, by a New York Merchant,” said to be by a Churchman of this Diocese, and, for all I know by a member of the Convention.

Mr. President, I have shown that the assumed neutrality of our Church on the question of slavery has been not neutrality but acquiescence and approval; that the harmony of action in which gentlemen are solacing themselves, has been a harmonious co-operation with the supporters and advocates of slavery; an united action on the side of the oppressor and against the oppressed: and I have shewn, I think, that the legitimate results of that course are before you in the enslavement, in the Diocese of Arkansas, of the free negroes, and in the revival in your own Diocese of the African slave trade.

At all events the fact is clear that the slave trade is an institution of the Diocese, that it is vindicated as a Christian work by men claiming to be respectable, and by some, at least, calling themselves Churchmen.

The question remains, what now is the duty of the Convention?

Mr. President, let me remind the House of the testimony borne against slavery and the slave trade both by the Church of Rome and the Church of England. Many Roman Pontiffs since Pius II., who in 1462 in a letter to the Portuguese Bishop, condemned those who carried youth into slavery, including Paul III., in 1537, Urban VIII., in 1639, Benedict XIV., in 1748, and the late Gregory XVI., in 1839, have faithfully affirmed the truth. I will quote a part of the bull of the last named Pontiff.

“We, desiring to avert this disgrace from the whole confines of Christianity, having summoned several of our Reverend Brothers, their Eminences, the Cardinals, to our Counsel, and having maturely deliberated on the whole matter, pursuing the footsteps of our predecessors, admonish by our Apostolic authority and urgently invoke in the name of God all Christians of whatever condition, that none henceforth dare to subject to slavery, unjustly persecute or despoil of their goods, Indians, Negroes or



other classes of men, or to be accessories to others or furnish their aid or assistance in so doing, and on no account henceforth to exercise that inhuman traffic by which Negroes are reduced to slavery as if they were not men."

The testimony of the English Church has been borne by her Prelates with no less distinctness. Take simply the sermons preached before the society for the propagation of Christianity, and you have the testimony of Bishop Fleetwood in 1711; and in the successive years of Bishop Claggett, Archbishop Secker, Bishop Warburton, Bishop Green, Bishop Newton, Bishop Lowth, Bishop Edmund Law, Bishop Thurlow, Bishop Moore, Bishop Warner, Bishop Bagot, Bishop Prettyman, Bishop Sutton, and Bishop Vernon, not forgetting those eminent prelates Bishop Burgess, Bishop Porteus and Bishop Horsley, all of the last century, and the countless English Bishops and clergymen of the present century down to the Lord Bishop of Oxford, who has administered so timely and faithful a rebuke to the American Church, for not standing as she should have done between the living and the dead and staying the plague that so infects our country.

Mr. President, if this Church Council shall refuse to act in reference to the slave trade at its own door it will not be from want of precedent on the part of the Church. Go back to far antiquity and you have the voice of St. Cyprian writing to the Bishops of Numidia.

"Both religion and humanity make it a duty for us to work for the deliverance of the captives. \* \* \* It is Jesus Christ himself whom we ought to consider in our captive brothers. It is Him we should deliver from captivity, Him who hath delivered us from death."

Trace the history of the Church through long centuries of darkness, and you hear the same voice time and again repeated. Come down to the Christian Council held in London in 1102, and hear the mandate go forth: "Let no man henceforth presume to carry on that wicked traffic by which men have hitherto been sold in England like brute animals;" and see slavery in England fade before that mandate as mist fades before the sun. Listen to the voice of Popes and Bishops and Clergymen

down to your own day. Listen to the voice of a former Clergyman of this Diocese, now the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Maryland, in referring to the poor black groaning in slavery. Said Dr. Whittingham, "Oh that his sighs and tears be not bottled up for witnesses against us,—that his moral degradation and far worse the eternal ruin which must too often be its fruit, be not required at our hands."

Mr. President, clear as my own views are of the duty of this Convention to exert its authority as a Council of the Church to put an end to this traffic, and firm as is my belief that the Church by her influence can so purify public opinion as to give efficacy to the law of the land that declared it piracy, punishable with death, I am well aware that the force of prejudice and habit is hard to overcome, and that perhaps some gentlemen really anxious to come to the right decision may hesitate to take the step.

I have had the opportunity during the twenty-six years that have elapsed since I was honored by a seat in this body to learn something of the temper of this House and of the character of its members.

I adopt with perfect confidence the language of a Reverend Rector of this Diocese, which I find in a communication to the *Evening Post* vindicating this Convention from the inferences drawn by the "*London Christian Observer*" from the vote and the "titter" that greeted the petition which I last year had the honour to present. That Reverend Rector said:

"When the New York Convention supposes its vote will influence the slave trade and its responsibility is felt in this relation, I am much mistaken if it be not found full of hearts true to God and to humanity."

I firmly believe it. After the vote on the question of St. Philips, if no other evidence were afforded me beyond my personal acquaintance with Honorable and Reverend members of this body I could not doubt it. With all the clamour of a demoralized press, teeming with charges of fool-hardy fanaticism, with all the efforts within and without this House to deter members from voting for the recognition of a race who were declared to be "socially degraded and improper associates for the class of persons who attend our Convention:" with all the threatening

intimations that the subject was "a fire-brand," belonging to "the vexed and irritating subject of slavery,"—and that the admission of St. Philips would give mortal offence to the slave holding Bishops and Clergy of the South,—in the face of all these adverse influences when it was after long years brought to a vote, the clerical vote stood to the amazement of the world,

Ayes, 140. Nays, 13.

—More than ten to one for purifying the Church from a heathenish caste and for recognizing the negro as an equal brother, in defiance of the popular cry since re-echoed from the bench that "the black man has no rights that the white man is bound to respect."

Mr. President for that vote I owe to the Clergy of this Diocese my eternal thanks, and I now proffer them from an overflowing heart.

That vote tended to stay the tide of infidelity that had its source in the belief that our Clergy with their devotion to forms and to rubrics, were indifferent to the great underlying principles of Christian unity and catholic brotherhood. It deprived the wicked system of caste, that has at times crushed the colored man in the Free States almost to the level with the slave, of the support that the conduct of our Diocese had previously afforded it.

That vote dispelled the illusion that because this Convention was a conservative body, it must needs throw its protecting arms around false doctrine, cruelty and wrong, and look with coldness on "the desolate and the oppressed." It is true that the members of this Council are conservative but they are not of that class of conservatives who had they lived at the dawn of creation would have been agonized at the idea of light and have besought God to preserve chaos.

That vote, sir, gives me an absolute confidence of success in the present movement to array the Church against the slave trade that has now become an institution of the Diocese, as if the vote were already recorded by the Reverend Secretary, and the authoritative mandate had gone forth in the words of the Christian Council of London, already quoted "Let no man from henceforth



presume to carry on that wicked traffic by which men are sold like brute animals."

My trust is that such a vote may be recorded at this present session, but if the Convention are prepared to assume the fearful responsibility of delay, may I venture to express the hope that the opposition to this movement may not be marked by the disregard of constitutional rights, of parliamentary rules and of parliamentary courtesy that marked for years the opposition to St. Philips. May I venture to suggest that to allow the Secretary to mutilate the journal, and destroy the integrity of our records, will be alike unprincipled and inexpedient; and will be regarded as an admission by the Convention that their votes will not bear the light, at the very time they are voting in the presence of the world.

I am induced to make this remark because I find by reference to the last journal, that the habit systematically adopted of mutilating the journal and omitting resolutions, votes and proposed canons, that might be distasteful to the majority, which obtained during the struggle of St. Philips, has been now renewed in regard to the slave trade. No mention is made of the subject of the petition I presented, but only a blind statement that I offered a paper which the Convention refused to refer.

I shall offer no resolutions which I shall be ashamed to have recorded in *my* name, and if the Convention think proper to reject them let them not shirk the responsibility of *their* vote; and I hope that hereafter the Reverend Secretary with a due regard to his duties and to my rights, will record any and every resolution which as a member of this Council I shall have the honor to offer, in *ipsissimis verbis* without the addition of a word or the omission of a letter.

But I trust, I sincerely trust, Mr. President, there will be no delay on the part of this body in acting upon this subject. Since the last Convention scores of slavers have left our port, and tens of thousands of victims have been torn from their homes and consigned to misery, slavery and death. If any better course can be devised for arraying the great authority and influence of this Church against the traffic, than that proposed in the resolution I now offer you let it be suggested, but let us so act

that if during the coming year even one slaver shall sail from our port or one African be reduced to slavery, the awful responsibility for the crime shall not rest on our heads, nor the blood of our brother be demanded at our hands.

I move, sir, the adoption of these Resolutions.

*Whereas*, The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States have through their Board of Foreign Missions, established various missions on the coast of Africa, and this Convention feels a strong interest in the success of the said missions as a means for the conversion of Africa to the principles and practices of Christianity,

*And whereas*, It has been made to appear to this Convention that a class of persons residing in the Diocese of New York are engaged in sending vessels to the western coast of Africa, with the view of kidnapping and reducing to slavery large numbers of the said people; and it is publicly pretended and asserted that the doctrine of Christianity justifies and approves of the enslaving men, women and children, and reducing them to the condition of chattles; and there is good reason to believe that the said trade will interfere materially with the said missions, and that a belief on the part of the Africans that those who engage in the African slave trade are Christians, may indispose the Africans so believing to embrace Christianity, and lead them to reject with scorn and indignation the teachings of our missionaries,

*Therefore Resolved*, that this Convention, in order to prevent all misapprehension in regard to the position of the Church in this Diocese on the subject of the slave trade, do hereby declare and announce that this Convention do utterly reject the doctrine that men may be lawfully kidnapped and held in slavery by any other persons, and do utterly condemn the said practice as a great sin against God and man, and do adopt, in regard thereto, the words of St. Cyprian, in writing to the Bishops of Numida:

"Both religion and humanity make it a duty for us to work for the deliverance of the captive. \* \* \* It is Jesus Christ, himself, whom we ought to consider in our captive brothers. It is Him whom we should deliver from captivity—Him who hath delivered us from death."

Dr. JAMES MCCUNE SMITH, one of the Lay Delegates from St. Philip's Church, New York, seconded the resolutions.

Mr. FLOYD SMITH, a delegate from the Church of the Ascension, New York, moved that the resolutions be laid on the table.

Mr. JAY called for a vote by orders.

Dr. LEONARD wished to meet the question in some manner, else



it would come up next year. He wished his brother long life, but hoped he wouldn't bring this question up as long as he lived. He moved that neither the preamble nor the resolution be considered, and on that he called for the vote by orders.

The Rev. Dr. Vinton said the resolution was defective, as it pledged them to nothing.

Mr. JAY said he would cheerfully assent to any amendment which the Rev. and learned gentleman from Trinity might suggest, to make the action sought for by the resolutions more direct and effective.

No amendment to the resolution was offered, and the vote to lay the resolutions on the table being called for by orders, and by Ayes and Noes, resulted as follows:—

#### CLERGY.

Ayes.—Messrs. Bostwick, J. H. H. Brown, Buel, Clarkson, Coffey, E. R. T. Cook, Cornwall, J. F. Cox; Drs. Creighton, Cressy; Messrs. S. Davis, Dix, Drowne, Duffie, Eaton; Dr. Eigenbrodt; Messrs. Elmendorf, Farrington, Gallaudet, Gibson, Hollingsworth, Hopkins, Hughes, Jacobs; Dr. S. R. Johnson; Messrs. Judd, Kenney; Dr. Leonard; Messrs. Livingston, Malaby, Maybin, Miller, Montgomery, W. H. Moore, Neide; Dr. Ogilby; Mr. Olssen; Drs. Payne, Pitkin, Price; Messrs. S. Reed, E. Roberts, H. F. Roberts, R. C. Rogers, W. W. Seymour, Sill, J. Cotton Smith, J. S. Spencer, Thomas; Dr. Vinton; Messrs. G. H. Walsh, Waters, Watson, Wellman, Wood. Ayes, 55.

Noes.—Messrs. Franklin Babbitt, Boggs; Dr. Canfield; Messrs. Dickinson, Fogg, Geer; Dr. Hobart. Noes, 7.

#### LAITY.

Ayes.—Albany, St. Peter's; Hudson, Christ; Poughkeepsie, Christ, St. Paul's; Athens, Trinity; Catskill, St. Luke's; Brooklyn, Redeemer, St. John's, St. Luke's, St. Mary's; Williamsburgh, St. Paul's; Green Point, Ascension; New-Utrecht, Bay-ridge, Christ; New York City and County, Annunciation, As-

consion, Calvary, Christ, Holy Apostle's, Holy Innocent's, Incarnation, St. Clement's, St. George the Martyr's, St. John Evangelist's, St. Luke's, St. Mark's, St. Peter's, St. Stephen's, Trinity, with St. Paul's, St. John's and Trinity Chapels, Zion; Newburgh, St. George's, St. Paul's; Walden, St. Andrew's; Glen Cove, St. Paul's; Whitestone, Grace; Troy, Christ; Piermont, Christ; Rondout, Holy Spirit; Granville, Trinity; Mott Haven, St. Mary's; Sing Sing, St. Pauls; Yonkers, St. Paul's. Ayes, 44.

NOES.—New York City and County, Holy Evangelists', Redeemer, St. Philip's; Canterbury, St. John's; Bedford, St. Matthew's; Somers, St. Lukes. Noes, 6.

So the Preamble and Resolution was laid upon the table.\*

The Convention then adjourned.

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• According to the official "Journal of the Convention," the number of Clergy present at the Convention was..... 211  
And the number of Parishes and Chapels represented was:..... 187

From this it appears that upon the question, the proportion voting and not voting was as follows:

#### MEMBERS VOTING.

CLERGY,.....62  
LAITY,.....50

#### MEMBERS NOT VOTING.

CLERGY,.....149  
LAITY,.....137