

ingly, on receiving the \$150," says Mr. Hooker, "he sent me a bill of sale of 'James Pembroke, a negro slave,' and for two or three days I was the owner of Rev. James W. C. Pennington, D.D.; probably the first instance in the history of the world when a man has been known in that sense to own a doctor of divinity. Sometimes they can be bought very cheaply, but not in this way. I had then acquired the title to him; it was in my power to set him free; and I executed the paper by which I set free 'James Pembroke, otherwise known as Rev. Dr. James W. C. Pennington,' and the deed of manumission is on record in the public records of Hartford. In doing this I merely took my hands off from him; I gave him nothing; I simply let him go out of my hands. It was one of the elementary principles of slave-law that a slave could own nothing. . . . Now the doctorate of divinity which Mr. Pennington fancied was his own property, was mine, and I never gave it up at all. So to this day, I am, by the best of legal titles, a doctor of divinity and therefore it was proper for me, if no one else responded to the call for doctors of divinity that are descended from Thomas Hooker, to present myself here, for the honor of our ancestor Thomas Hooker, as a doctor of divinity."

A narrative like this is strange reading to many of this generation, to those who have no remembrance of slavery in this country, no personal knowledge of the horrors of that system which was sustained by the conservative public sentiment of the North as well as by the pecuniary interests of the South. In those days the pulpit was on the side of slavery. "The language of the ministry and the practice of the church members," wrote Albert Barnes, "give such a sanction to this enormous evil as could be derived from no other source, and such that it is useless to convince the world of the evil." Alexander Campbell wrote: "There is not one verse in the Bible inhibiting it [slavery] but many regulating it. I would as soon become a socialist, or a freethinker, or a skeptic as say or think that it is immoral or un-Christian to hold a bond-servant in any case whatever or allow that a Christian man can have no property in man." Moses Stuart, of Anderson, defended slavery. Human flesh and blood were sold to satisfy mortgages in favor of theological schools and churches. Churches held slaves and paid their pastor from the labor of these slaves. Slaveholding preachers were often selected for missionaries to heathen lands. How different the public sentiment which now prevails in regard to slavery from that which existed when honest John Hooker bought the slave Pennington, and thereby came in legal possession of a doctorate of divinity! All honor to Hon. John Hooker, D.D.



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