

Fugitive from Southern bondage. To say nothing of the Calhouns and Clays and Footes and Websters—the politicians of the day—how lamentable is it to witness the religious leaders of the people, of almost all denominations, apologizing (to say the least) for what reason, conscience and revelation alike condemn. “It is more than the ethics of the Bible will allow,” says a Presbyterian, “to talk about a ‘higher law’ with an oath to support the Constitution on the lips. Immediate emancipation would be more sinful than Slavery itself.” “To be loyal to the confederacy is piety, for it is fidelity towards God,” exclaims the Episcopalian.” “It is my duty,” continues the Unitarian, “to return the Fugitive.” “The Jewish polity instituted by God himself, the injunctions of the New Testament and the moral law, testify that Slavery is not immoral. It was founded in right.” So teaches a Professor in a Methodist College. “If by one prayer, I could liberate every Slave in the world, I would not dare to offer it,” concludes the Rev. Dr. Spring. And yet, dark though this picture is, light is breaking forth. There is a leaven leavening the mass—a force slowly but surely working within, which will ere long destroy every vestige of a system, so ruinous to men and so offensive to God. This light began to dawn and this leaven to work in 1832, when the New England Anti-Slavery Society was formed, and still more powerfully in the following year, when those fifty-six patriotic men met in Philadelphia, organized the National Anti-Slavery Society, and promulgated that “Declaration of Sentiments” which have since continued to be advocated so nobly, so fearlessly. Politicians are admitting this light, and one here and there is espousing the cause of freedom. Clergymen even venture to speak out on the side of human rights: and gloomy though the horizon is and lowering the heavens—the Anti-Slavery cause is advancing to a glorious consummation.

We might tell of “recreant politicians who are meeting the frowns of betrayed and indignant constituents” *—of unscrupulous government officials foiled in their attempts to hang their countrymen for “obeying God rather than man;” † but with greater pleasure do we record the noble sentiments of a Storrs, who has the courage to elevate the commandments of God above the law of the United States; of a Colver, who dares to affirm that the “inherent and manifest iniquity of the Fugitive Slave Bill, and its hostility to the law of God, render disobedience to its demands a solemn duty.” “When we have ceased to pray,” says a Beecher, “when we have rooted out the humanities, which since our connection with the Gospel have been growing within us; when we have burned

* As in the case of the Hon. Charles Sumner, who has been elected to the Senate of the United States by the Massachusetts Legislature, in the room of the Hon. Daniel Webster, whom his constituents in former times had delighted to honour, but whose base pandering to Southern “rights” has covered him with merited reproach.

† Vide Reports of the Christiana and Syracuse Rescue Trials.

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