

liberty of the *holder* of the slave; he may not give the freedom he wishes to give. The duty of a person thus situated, surely becomes obvious in an instant. We say to him, If a law which either imposes an impossible condition on manumission, or decrees the seizure of a manumitted slave, makes it imperative on you to detain him for the moment, ought you not to be making restless endeavours for the repeal of that law; and using every means to prepare for the easy acquisition and the safe possession of that freedom, which it is your right to give and his to enjoy? Without such endeavours, it becomes manifest that the existence of the law is but a pretext for the slaveholder, and his acquiescence in it renders him a partaker of its iniquity.

In ordinary cases, however, we conceive we cannot be in error in regarding slavery as optional. Now we raise an argument on this ground; and we cannot hesitate to affirm, that, however it might be repelled by a man of the world, it ought to be enough for a Christian. To hold a fellow-creature in bondage, is to hold him in a condition of personal degradation and disadvantage; a condition, as it now exists, which denies him access to the various sources of instruction and avenues of advancement which are open to others, which allows no sacredness to domestic ties, but sets at nought the divine institution of marriage, and with it both the affections and the duties of the conjugal and parental relations; which makes man an outcast from society, and repels him, not as an alien merely but as a brute, from the community, of which he is nevertheless a constituent and a vital part; which, in the great majority of instances, involves labours, which shorten life, and, in too many cases, the almost murderous extinction of it, and which, in fine impedes most grievously a slave's religious instruction, fosters his vices of every kind, and renders all but impossible, for the most part, his glorifying God on earth, or his learning the way to heaven. Now, we suppose it to be *at the option* of a Christian whether he will hold a fellow-creature in a condition like this. Can it for a moment be doubted what his choice will be? Or can any one, in either hemisphere, consent to call him a Christian, who *chooses* to have a slave? What! is Christianity reduced, not merely to a name, but a mockery? Does its loud proclamation of "good will to men," mean nothing more than a sanction for the right of power? Is it no longer the law of our acknowledged Sovereign, "Do ye to others, as ye would that they should do unto you?" Are equity, benevolence, and compassion, no more the characteristics and indispensable virtues of our profession?

If any one should meet this appeal by saying, that *he* treats his slaves as his children; we must be permitted to reply—first, that he can in no way do so well for them as by breaking their chains; secondly, that he cannot tell who may come after him, nor how soon; and, thirdly, that his example upholds abominations which he refuses to practise, and would appear to condemn.

Nor should we be silenced, by being informed, of what we very well know, that, in the southern states, "slavery is a political institution." We are not political meddlers. But we suppose that even the "political institution" of slavery does not deprive the freeman of his liberty. We appeal, therefore, still to the heart of a Christian, as to his individual choice. Our language is—Fellow Christian! and, if a fellow Christian, man of benevolent spirit, of universal love! *will you hold a slave?*

How can we conceive the heart of a Christian dictating, or permitting, any other answer than one to this question? I WILL NOT. We must think the case decided, therefore, with every Christian, if it be merely at his option. But we cannot let it rest here. While it may assuredly be expected, that a Christian would break every yoke *if he might*, it is important for him to remember, not only that he may, but that, if he can, he must. The declarations, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and, "Whatsoever things ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," are the voice of authority, and have the unquestioned force of law. *It is not at our option*, whether we fulfil these commands. *It is required* of us by Jesus Christ, our Lord. All his professed subjects are *bound* to obey them. Every faithful subject *will* obey them.

Is it not certain, dear brethren, that a consistent obedience to these precepts would lead to the immediate liberation of a large number of slaves? Is it not also certain, that such a proceeding, taken by Christian professors at large, in the slave-holding states, or by any considerable portion of them, would exhibit the subject in a new light; would arouse the whole community; and shake the entire system of slavery to its foundations? Is not the overthrow of this system an object to which, under the force of the same reasons, all Christians ought earnestly to address themselves. Is there any other probable method of achieving this inestimable consummation? Will it not constitute a noble and a characteristic triumph for Christianity? And is not the abetting of slavery, and even acquiescence in it, a sin, of which every disciple of Christ ought immediately to wash his hands?

The resolutions we transmit to you, dear brethren, do not refer exclusively to the fet-