

VARIOUS

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The American Missionary – Volume 43, No. 10, October, 1889

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In drafts, checks, registered letters, or post-office orders, may be sent to H.W. Hubbard, Treasurer, 56 Reade Street, New York, or, when more convenient, to either of the Branch Offices, 21 Congregational House, Boston, Mass., or 151 Washington Street, Chicago, Ill. A payment of thirty dollars at one time constitutes a Life Member.

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FORM OF A BEQUEST

"I bequeath to my executor (or executors) the sum of – dollars, in trust, to pay the same in – days after my decease to the person who, when the same is payable, shall act as Treasurer of the 'American Missionary Association,' of New York City, to be applied, under the direction of the Executive Committee of the Association, to its charitable uses and purposes." The Will should be attested by three witnesses.

EDITORIAL

ANNUAL MEETING

The next Annual Meeting of the American Missionary Association will be held at Chicago, Ill., in the New England Church, commencing at three o'clock Tuesday afternoon, October 29th. Rev. R.R. Meredith, D.D., of Brooklyn, N.Y., will preach the sermon. Fuller details regarding the reception of delegates and their entertainment, together with rates at hotels, and railroad reductions, will be found on the last page of the cover.

We are anxious that the Churches, Local Conferences and State Associations should be fully represented at the meeting. This Association is the almoner of their bounty and seeks their aid and counsel at its annual gatherings. We believe that the work of the past year will not only meet their approval, but increase their enthusiasm for pushing forward with renewed interest what still lies before us. We request the pastors of churches to secure the appointment of delegates, and all local Conferences and State Associations whose meetings have not been held, to name their delegates.

For notice of Woman's Meeting, see page 295.

VOTING MEMBERS

Life members and delegates chosen by contributing churches, local Conferences, and State Associations, constitute the Annual Meeting, as will be seen by the following article of the Constitution.

ART. III. Members of evangelical churches may be constituted members of this Association for life by the payment of thirty dollars into its treasury, with the written declaration at the time or times of payment that the sum is to be applied to constitute a designated person a life member; and such membership shall begin sixty days after the payment shall have been completed. Other persons, by the payment of the same sum, may be made life members, without the privilege of voting.

Every evangelical church which has within a year contributed to the funds of the Association, and every State Conference or Association of such churches, may appoint two delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Association; such delegates, duly attested by credentials, shall be members of the Association for the year for which they were thus appointed.

THE CLOSE OF OUR FINANCIAL YEAR

These pages may fall into the hands of some of our constituents before the close of our fiscal year, September 30th. We hope that the opportunity will be embraced by church treasurers to remit promptly funds designed for us, and that benevolent friends who have intended to aid us during the year will carry out their purpose at once. The outlook is encouraging and we shall hail with joy and gratitude the day of deliverance from debt.

LETTERS FROM CONTRIBUTORS

"Again I have the pleasure of enclosing for the general use of the American Missionary Association a draft of one hundred dollars. The Lord bless the work of the dear workers in the field. My love to them."

"Many years ago I used to contribute to the funds of the American Missionary Association. My husband and I supported a teacher under its auspices, but times have changed and we are not able to do that now. For many years I have ceased to send any money to your treasury, for I thought what little I could afford would do no good at all. But seeing in the September MISSIONARY some contributions of a few dollars, I send the enclosed five dollars. If each one interested in the cause would do that, it would help some. My interest is unabated in your great and glorious work for humanity and immortal souls."

FROM A MISSIONARY IN CHINA

"Enclosed we send twenty-five dollars, which please accept as our subscription to the American Missionary Association work for the current year. We are more and more interested in this work, especially in view of the hateful prejudice that exists in many parts of the South against the colored people and those who have so nobly espoused the cause of their education and Christianization. This low-minded prejudice is very similar to what we have to endure here in the interior of China, yet it is harder to bear because coming from those who pretend to be enlightened Christians, while here those who indulge in personal abuse are mostly of the lowest and most ignorant heathen, though they are often backed up by the literati."

COMPROMISES AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF GEORGIA

Americans are much addicted to settling difficulties by compromises; but these compromises, in State and Church, especially in regard to slavery, have so often been the sacrifice of principle to expediency that the word has come to have a sinister meaning—implying such a sacrifice; and they have so often proved failures as to show them to be unwise, even as a matter of expediency.

A brief sketch of some of these past compromises, with their motives and failures, may throw some light upon the compromise proposed for the Congregational churches in Georgia.

POLITICAL COMPROMISES

These have usually been made from more than one motive:

1. One strong plea is that the expediency is so urgent that a small sacrifice of right is justifiable. In that celebrated law case of Shylock the Jew *versus* Antonio the merchant, so ably reported by William Shakespeare, Esq., this reason was plainly stated. The defendant's attorney, Bassanio, in order to avert from his client the dreadful forfeit of a pound of flesh taken nearest his heart, appealed to the judge:

"I beseech you
Wrest once the law to your authority;
To do a great right, do a little wrong."

The "wise young judge" knew the law, human and divine, too well to grant this plea.

But that plea had its influence in securing the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Among other difficulties in the way, a constructive guarantee of slavery seemed necessary to secure the assent of some of the Southern States. How strong the plea! Slavery was wrong to be sure, but the terrible seven years' war was ended, and a great nation was ready to come into existence! The compromise was made and the Union was formed. But did the compromise save it? No! The "pound of flesh" was at last the price. After a struggle of seventy-two years the crisis came, Sumter was fired upon and the compromise was found to be a failure. "A pound of flesh!" Nay, the flesh and blood of a million of men saved the Union.

2. Another motive for a compromise is the expectation that while it is all that can be done now, it will be a step towards the ultimate. This was strongly urged in that first compromise. It was said that the Declaration of Independence, the enthusiasm for liberty, and the world-wide boast of equal rights, must work a universal consent to the abrogation of slavery. Jefferson voiced the general sentiment when he said: "I think a change is already perceptible since the origin of the present revolution. The way I hope is preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation." But slavery grew stronger, instead of weaker, under the compromise, and from time to time required more compromises, and more surrenders. The Missouri Compromise, the Annexation of Texas, and the Fugitive Slave Law, each extorted under threats of the "dissolution of the Union," are examples. But no compromise ever wrenched an inch of territory from the clutch of slavery and gave it to freedom. Freedom *held* the whole Northwest, by the *un-compromising* requirement: "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude" there!

3. Another strong plea for compromise is the hopelessness of gaining anything better. This was the consideration urged so vehemently against the early Abolitionists. It was said: "Slavery is wrong—that we all admit—but it is a fixed fact, invulnerable, backed up by wealth, talent, pride and

political influence, and all opposition is vain. You Abolitionists are mere sentimentalists, visionaries, doctrinaires." This had great influence with the indifferent, the timid, and especially with those who vaunt themselves as "practical men," who boast that they care nothing for abstractions, but take business views of things. This plea and these men were largely influential in carrying forward some of the most iniquitous compromises preceding the war.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMPROMISES ABOUT SLAVERY

This glance at the compromises in the political history of the nation prepares us to look at those in the Church. Here, too, compromises on the subject of slavery were made as in the State, and generally from the same motives and always with the same disappointing results.

The Churches before and during the revolutionary period were emphatic in their utterances against slavery. Their accredited leaders and official convocations used such terms as these: Methodist, "The sum of all villainies;" Presbyterian, "Man stealers: stealers of men are those who bring off slaves or freemen and keep, sell or buy them;" Baptist, "Slavery is a violent deprivation of the rights of nature;" Congregational, "Slavery is in every instance wrong, unrighteous, oppressive, a great and crying sin, there being nothing equal to it on the face of the earth."

But there were slaveholders in the churches, and as population increased they became more numerous and naturally chafed under such denunciations. But their impatience reached its climax under the modern anti-slavery doctrine that immediate emancipation is the only remedy for the sin of slavery. The South was alarmed and soon became imperious and exacting; the North was timid and yielding. Then began the special era of ecclesiastical compromises. Let me specify:

1. The utterances as to the guilt of slavery were modified, reaching at length the point where some of the most eminent doctors of divinity and the most learned professors in theological seminaries tried to vindicate from the Bible the toleration of slavery.

2. Disclaimers were made as to the right to interfere with slavery. As, for example, a large ecclesiastical assembly by vote disclaimed "any right, wish or intention to interfere with the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slaveholding States of this Union." A distinguished bishop is reported to have said: "I have never yet advised the liberation of a slave, and I think I never shall;" and an eminent doctor of divinity declared: "If by one prayer I could liberate every slave in the land I would not dare to offer it."

3. Fine distinctions were drawn in behalf of slaveholders. It was warmly urged in their defense that while slavery was a sin, the individual slaveholder might not in every case be a sinner—a charity that was made to cover a multitude of sinners. One large religious assembly declared that it could not "exclude slaveholders from the table of the Lord;" it would rather "sympathize with and succor them in their embarrassments." An elaborate report was adopted at another large convocation, in which it was suggested that the convert should be admitted into the church while still a slaveholder, an oppressive ruler and a proud Brahmin, in the hope that under proper teaching, "the master may be prepared to break the bonds of the slave, the oppressive ruler to dispense justice to the subject, and the proud Brahmin fraternally to embrace the man of low caste."

The great motive for these concessions was the desire for church enlargement. Slavery was a sin, but the slaveholder might not always be guilty, and if church unity and church extension were to be secured in the South, some concessions must be made. Then, too, there was undoubtedly the hope that concessions and fraternal intercourse in public assemblies and in Christian work would win the confidence of the slaveholders, and perhaps prepare the way for the gradual removal of slavery; and above all there was the cogent plea that compromise or division was the only present choice. The "*half-loaf*" argument was wielded most effectually, and here, especially, the "practical men" came to the front, while on the heads of the devoted Abolitionists were showered without stint the epithets "fanatics" and "visionaries."

So much zeal for the slaveholders, and so much sacrifice of self-respect, not to say of conscience, surely deserved a better fate; but all was in vain. The slaveholders scorned the compromises, and ruthlessly rent asunder the great national churches and missionary societies. The Congregationalists, never numerous in the South, clung with great tenacity to their few churches, but at length surrendered them.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMPROMISES ABOUT CASTE

So ended the first chapter of humiliating and fruitless Church compromises; but a new chapter has begun to be written, and so far promises to read just as the other did, both as to the facts to be recorded and the end that will be reached. Slavery is dead, but the son and heir and legitimate representative, *race prejudice*, arises to take its place. This does not propose to remand the colored race back into slavery, but to hold them as inferiors, to be discriminated against as to equal rights and to bear with their color the perpetual ban of separation and degradation. This might be expected in the political world, but not in the Church where "*all are one in Christ Jesus.*" And it would be a specially sad fact if the Church should be more tardy than the State in the recognition of the equal manhood of the two races.

One great effort in the present ecclesiastical struggle is to secure the reunion of the sundered Churches; and, as in the case of slavery, other issues have been waived or compromised, leaving race-prejudice as the real point in the contest. Great have been the endeavors for harmony. Committees of Conference have been appointed, have met and conferred; enthusiastic public meetings have been held; communion services have been celebrated jointly, and great feasts have been spread to welcome visiting delegations. But the South has been inflexible on the color-line. The Northern leaders have made concessions, and in some instances have been ready to surrender the main point, but the mass of Northern Christians seem unwilling to deny the Saviour in the person of the man whose ostracism is demanded for no fault of his own, but only because God made him black.

The Presbyterian Church (North) deserves special mention for having, in the last General Assembly rejected a compromise that approved "the policy of separate churches, presbyteries and synods." The prize was nothing less than the ultimate reunion of the Northern and Southern branches of that great Church. The leaders in the Church and in the Assembly were committed to it and warmly advocated it, but when the test vote came, it was rejected by an overwhelming majority! *God grant that when the test comes for the Congregationalists they may show as much back-bone!* The present stage of the controversy finds the Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians still divided, with little prospect of reunion. The Episcopalians in South Carolina have surrendered on a compromise that permits the one colored minister in the Convention to remain in it, but utterly forbids the admission of any others.

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS IN GEORGIA

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