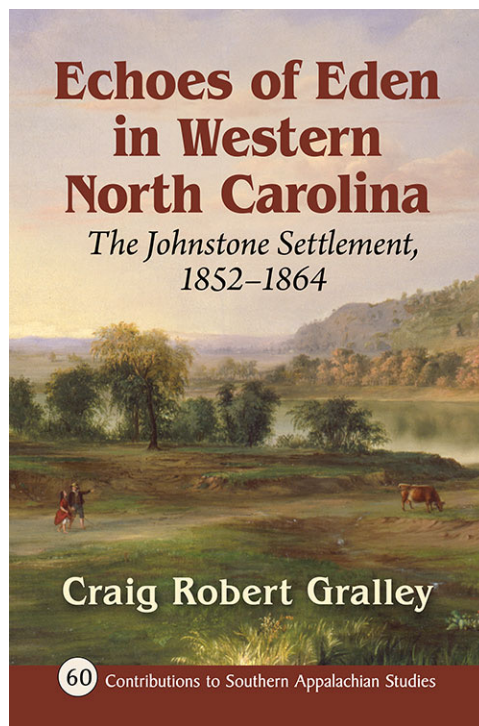


Discussion Guide

THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY

Moral and Ethical Dilemmas

Echoes of Eden in Western North Carolina: The Johnstone Settlement, 1852–1864



*A wealthy Southern enclave. A community vanished.
A story buried for 170 years — until now.*

Craig Robert Gralley

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Overview

Throughout the nineteenth century, American churches were not unified moral authorities but fractured institutions struggling to reconcile Christian ethics with the racial hierarchy on which the nation was built. Many northern clergy opposed slavery yet supported segregation, colonization schemes, or paternalistic “care” for Black Africans. By the beginning of the Civil War only a minority—most notably the Quakers—advocated racial equality. Still, in the 1840s and 1850s several major northern Protestant denominations, including the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, came to regard slavery as a moral evil serious enough to justify breaking fellowship with their southern branches. In contrast, the Episcopal Church avoided taking an official stand and remained institutionally intact, even as its southern dioceses withdrew during the Confederacy.

The Johnstone Settlement in western North Carolina offers a revealing case study. Its founders, including Francis Johnstone and Rev. James Stuart Hanckel, imagined themselves as building a Christian “Eden,” yet their vision depended on enslaved labor and a theology that naturalized a racial hierarchy. Their story provides a window into how white Christians could see themselves as benevolent while participating in a system of profound injustice.

Placed alongside the writings of Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass—who expose the moral violence of slaveholding Christianity—the Johnstone Settlement becomes a mirror for examining the contradictions of American religious belief and practice then and now.

Readings

Please note some readings are on-line or are offered as comprehensive summaries to honor copyright prohibitions. Full articles or books are provided where permissions were obtained or where there are no copyright infringement issues.

- Gralley, Craig Robert. *Echoes of Eden in Western North Carolina: The Johnstone Settlement, 1852-1864*; Introduction; Chapter 4, “An Exclusive Eden: Community Life”—(focus on The Exploited Members, the Enslaved) & Chapter 6, “Banished From Eden: The Settlers Scatter”—(focus on Rev. Hanckel and F.W. Johnstone). Readings from the book.

- Addison, James Thayer. *The Episcopal Church in the United States*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951; Chapter 13, "Slavery in the Civil War," pp. 189-199. Summary provided.
 - Jacobs, Harriet A. *Incidents of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, Chapter XIII, "The Church and Slavery," Boston, 1861. Chapter attached with on-line link to complete book (at end of reading).
 - US Episcopal Church, House of Bishops, *Pastoral Letter: The Sin of Racism*, March 1994. Summary attached with on-line link to complete letter; a link also is offered for the church's 2006 *Expression of Regret* (at end of *Pastoral Letter* summary).
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Supplemental Readings

- Gralley, Craig Robert. *Echoes of Eden in Western North Carolina: The Johnstone Settlement, 1852-1864*, Entire Chapter 4, "An Exclusive Eden: Community Life;" and Epilogue.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. Chapter IX, and Appendix and Parody; Published at the Anti-Slavery Office, no. 25, Cornhill, MA; 1845. Reading attached with on-line link to complete book (at end of reading).
- Mead, Loren and Martinez, J. Michael. "Three Episcopal Ministers, Black Communicants and the Civil War Era," *Anglican and Episcopal History*, September 2023, vol. 92, no.3, pp.398-426. Article attached as .pdf—courtesy of the author.
- Lee, Felicia. "From Noah's Curse to Slavery's Rationale," *New York Times*, November 12, 2003. Read on-line: [Noah's Curse](#)
- Lawson, Holly J. "'And So My Soul Shall Rise': Enslaved and Free African American Christianity Before Emancipation," *Montview Journal of Research & Scholarship*: Vol. 10, Article 8; 2023. Read on-line (Chapter 2): [And So My Soul Shall Rise](#)

Discussion Questions

Note: These discussion questions span a wide thematic range and are intended as points of departure rather than a scripted sequence. Group leaders should select the questions most appropriate for their class or adapt them to fit specific readings. The Jacobs and Douglass selections are especially rich for this kind of inquiry. (See Facilitator's Notes for more on how to guide the discussion.)

Religion and the Johnstone Community—Black & White

This section invites students to compare three religious worlds:

- The enslaved community’s faith, as described by Jacobs and Douglass—creative, resistant, and rooted in liberation.
- The Johnstone Settlement’s theology, which framed slavery as compatible with Christian order and benevolence.
- The broader Episcopal context, which avoided taking a stance on slavery and thus reinforced the status quo.

These different views illuminate how religion can be used to justify oppression or inspire resistance.

1. How did social position shape religious belief for Jacobs, Douglass, Johnstone, and Hanckel? What theological logic let clergy like the Hankels defend slaveholding as righteous?
 2. Should theology shape economics, politics, and social order? If so, how?
 3. Should church and state be mutually reinforcing? What happens when scripture is used to justify the existing order?
 4. Jacobs and Douglass distinguish “Christianity proper” from “slaveholding religion.” Where do you see similar gaps between personal belief and institutional practice today?
 5. What does the Johnstone settlers’ self-image as benevolent Christians reveal about the persistence of paternalism and racial hierarchy today?
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The Role of the Church in Secular Affairs

This section examines how churches navigated the political and moral crisis of slavery. Some denominations split over the issue, prioritizing moral clarity over institutional unity. Others refused to take a stand, claiming slavery was “too political.” These choices reveal competing visions of the church’s purpose.

1. How did pre–Civil War churches differ in their attitudes toward slavery? How did their beliefs shape their actions?
2. Northern churches opposed slavery but largely did not accept full racial equality. What pressures were they under that convinced them not to seek a moral transformation?

3. The Episcopal Church called slavery “too political” to address. When does political neutrality become moral evasion?
 4. Is institutional silence a form of complicity? What does it cost the community—and the institution?
 5. Is it more ethical for a church to split over injustice or stay united at the cost of moral clarity?
 6. Why did it take over 100 years for major denominations to condemn slavery? What does that delay demand of institutions today?
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Personal Reflection

This section invites students to connect historical material to their own moral frameworks, spiritual communities, and expectations of religious institutions.

1. How do Douglass’s and Jacobs’s critiques challenge your understanding of faith and power?
2. Place yourself in the shoes of a 19th century planter from South Carolina. How difficult would it have been as a member of the southern planter class to abandon the practice of slavery? Would you have been able to break with the economic, social, and historic familial associations that benefitted from the practice? How did the Episcopal Church’s silence make abolition harder?
3. Are there gradations of responsibility for slavery? Do leaders—political or religious—bear more culpability than those who simply benefitted from the practice?
4. Where do you see gaps between personal belief and institutional practice in your own community? In our nation?
5. What does this history demand of religious and civic institutions today?
6. When an institution fails to speak, what is the remedy?
7. Where might “good intentions” blind you to deeper injustice? Where do you see paternalism in modern movements?
8. Do these readings change how you think about the moral authority of churches?

9. What keeps you open to moral correction in your own life?

Summary

James Thayer Addison

The Episcopal Church in the United States, 1789-1931, Hamden, CT; Archon Books, 1969; Chapter XIII, pp.189-199.

Chapter XIII: Slavery and the Civil War

James Thayer Addison opens his chapter with a stark judgment: in the America of 1835–1865, society faced many evils—intemperance, prison abuse, mistreatment of the insane—yet all of them, he writes, “appear almost benign compared with the malignant cancer of slavery.” The Episcopal Church, meanwhile, was preoccupied with minor internal debates—whether flowers belonged on the altar, or whether the Litany could be separated from Morning Prayer. Against this backdrop, Addison asks: What was the Church’s attitude toward slavery, and how did it navigate the Civil War?

He begins by tracing the transformation of slavery itself. In the early republic, many leading Virginians—Washington, Madison, Monroe, Randolph—condemned slavery, and Jefferson “pleaded for gradual emancipation combined with deportation.” But by 1830, the cotton gin and the booming textile industry had made cotton enormously profitable. Cotton exports soared from 22% of national exports in 1820 to 57% by 1860. As Addison notes, “the more cotton was demanded the more slaves were required,” and Southern opinion shifted from viewing slavery as a temporary evil to defending it as the foundation of society.

At the same moment, Northern abolitionism intensified. William Lloyd Garrison founded *The Liberator* in 1831, and within two years over 300 new anti-slavery societies had formed. While most Northerners rejected Garrison’s extremism, they increasingly condemned slavery as morally wrong. Southern leaders responded by insisting that slavery was not merely necessary but beneficial. Addison quotes Governor Hammond of South Carolina: “God created Negroes for no other purpose than to be subordinate ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’.”

Other Churches Take Their Stands

Addison places the Episcopal Church’s response in sharp relief by comparing it to other denominations—many of which confronted slavery directly and suffered schism as a result.

The Quakers, he notes, had “the cleanest record,” having long condemned slavery, though their numbers were too small to sway national opinion.

The Methodists initially forbade slaveholding among members, but the issue became so divisive that in 1845 the southern conferences seceded, forming the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Addison notes that this new body “doubled its membership in fifteen years” and would not reunite with its northern counterpart until 1939.

The Baptists split the same year after national mission boards refused to appoint slaveholders. Southern delegates formed the “Southern Baptist Convention for Domestic and Foreign Missions,” a division that persists to this day. (Ed. Note: The Southern Baptist Convention issued a formal apology for its historic support of slavery in 1995. The US Episcopal Church made the biblical case against slavery in a *Pastoral Letter* in 1994 and officially expressed regret in 2006. See also: US Episcopal Church *Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism, 1994*; summary attached with on-line link to complete letter; a link also offered for the church’s 2006 *Expression of Regret* at end of *Pastoral Letter* summary in this Discussion Guide).

The Presbyterians fractured more slowly, complicated by earlier doctrinal divisions, but by 1861 both Old School and New School branches in the South had seceded. Their successors, Addison notes, “still form a body separate from the Northern Presbyterians.” (Ed. Note: The Presbyterian churches reunited in 1983 to form the Presbyterian Church (USA).)

These denominations split because they confronted slavery directly.

The Episcopal Church did not. Addison states the contrast plainly: “The Episcopal Church never split on the issue of slavery because it refused to take any position on that issue.”

Why the Silence?

Addison identifies several forces behind the Church’s restraint. Episcopalians had long cultivated a habit of avoiding anything that might be labeled “political.” As the bishops wrote in 1856, the clergy “have nothing to do” with “party politics... sectional disputes... [or] the ambition of the world.” Moral issues of private life—temperance, family life—were acceptable topics; public moral issues—war, slavery—were taboo.

There was also genuine sympathy between Northern and Southern Episcopalians. Many Northern clergy understood the complexity of Southern life and doubted that abolitionist solutions could work. Even if all slaves were freed overnight, Addison notes, “a baffling race problem remained—and remains.” Northern leaders hesitated to condemn their Southern brethren, not out of moral indifference but out of pastoral caution.

But the most decisive factor was fear of schism. The Church was especially strong in Virginia and South Carolina, and many Southern elites were Episcopalians. Any anti-slavery resolution at General Convention would have provoked “violent resistance,” and

likely ecclesiastical secession. Addison concludes that while this restraint “may not have been heroic,” it was “statesmanlike.”

A House Quietly Divided

Within this institutional silence, Episcopal opinion was far from uniform. Some clergy published anti-slavery pamphlets; Bishop Whittingham of Maryland called slavery a “great social evil.” Laymen like William H. Seward and Salmon P. Chase were active in the Republican Party. Yet prominent Northern churchmen also defended slavery. Dr. Samuel Seabury argued in 1861 that slavery was justified by “the decree of divine Providence,” and that Christ’s teachings had “no... tendency... to subvert the relation of master and slave.” Bishop Hopkins of Vermont insisted that slavery was sanctioned by Scripture and that slaves were “the happiest laborers in the world.”

Secession and the Confederate Episcopal Church

When secession came, it was political, not theological, action that forced the Church to divide. As Addison writes, “It was political secession which preceded and prompted ecclesiastical secession.” Once Southern states declared themselves a separate nation, their Episcopalians could no longer belong to a church “of a foreign country, and a hostile country at that.” Southern bishops met in Montgomery and Columbia in 1861, drafting a constitution for the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America. The new body changed little—its constitution and canons were nearly identical to those of the U.S. Church, with only “a few alterations required by political changes.”

The Northern Church Responds

At the 1862 General Convention in New York, delegates rejected both extremes: they refused to denounce Southern bishops as guilty of “sins of rebellion, sedition, and schism,” but also refused to remain silent about the war. Instead, they passed firm but moderate resolutions affirming obedience to civil authority and offering “earnest and devout prayers” for the Union’s success. Most significantly, the Convention refused to acknowledge the Southern Church as permanently separate. “On every day of its sessions the roll of the missing dioceses was called,” a symbolic act that kept the door open for reunion.

Reunion and Retrospective Judgment

When the war ended, that reunion came quickly. Presiding Bishop Hopkins wrote to Southern bishops assuring them of “a cordial welcome.” The Church reunited with minimal discipline or recrimination. Addison sees this as both a triumph of Christian charity and a missed opportunity for moral reckoning.

His final judgment is measured but pointed. The Episcopal Church preserved unity and facilitated postwar healing, but it failed to offer prophetic leadership when slavery

demanded it most. Its restraint was understandable—rooted in pastoral sympathy, institutional caution, and fear of schism—but it came at a moral cost. Addison’s chapter reads as both history and lament: an attempt to understand why a church of influence acted with such hesitation, and what that hesitation meant for its witness in the nation’s darkest hour.

Harriet A. Jacobs

Incidents of a Slave Girl, Written By Herself, (ed. By: L. Maria Child), Published for the Author, Boston, 1861, Chapter XIII, "The Church and Slavery."

About This Reading: Harriet Jacobs

Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813–1897) was born into slavery in Edenton, North Carolina. Her autobiography, published under the pseudonym "Linda Brent," is one of the first narratives written by an enslaved woman in America and remains among the most powerful accounts of slavery's intersection with gender, sexuality, and religious hypocrisy. The book was edited by the abolitionist writer Lydia Maria Child, who vouched for its authenticity.

Chapter XIII, "The Church and Slavery," falls midway through Jacobs's narrative, after she has already described years of sexual harassment and psychological torment at the hands of her enslaver, referred to as "Dr. Flint" (the real Dr. James Norcom). By this point in the book, Jacobs has established herself as a keen observer of the moral contradictions around her — and in this chapter she turns that eye directly on the churches of her community.

The chapter unfolds through a series of vivid episodes, each exposing a different facet of how Christianity functioned in a slaveholding society. Jacobs recounts the Reverend Mr. Pike's condescending sermon ordering enslaved people to obey their masters; a Methodist class meeting where a bereaved mother cries out in anguish after her children have been sold, while the constable who leads the class suppresses his laughter; a rare and sympathetic Episcopal rector whose wife frees her slaves on her deathbed; an elderly man named Uncle Fred who secretly learns to read the Bible with Jacobs's help; and Dr. Flint's own hollow decision to join the Episcopal church — a decision that, far from reforming him, merely provides social cover for continued cruelty.

Jacobs writes with devastating irony. She does not argue against Christianity — she argues that what passes for Christianity in a slaveholding society is something else entirely. Her sharpest insights emerge in the contrast between the enslaved community's genuine, sustaining faith and the performative piety of those who profit from their bondage.

As you read, notice how Jacobs lets each episode speak for itself. She rarely tells you what to conclude — she shows you, and trusts you to see.

Chapter XIII: The Church And Slavery

After the alarm caused by Nat Turner's insurrection had subsided, the slaveholders came to the conclusion that it would be well to give the slaves enough of religious instruction to keep them from murdering their masters. The Episcopal clergyman offered to hold a separate service on Sundays for their benefit. His colored members were very few, and also very respectable—a fact which I presume had some weight with him. The difficulty was to decide on a suitable place for them to worship. The Methodist and Baptist churches admitted them in the afternoon; but their carpets and cushions were not so costly as those at the Episcopal church. It was at last decided that they should meet at the house of a free colored man, who was a member.

I was invited to attend, because I could read. Sunday evening came, and, trusting to the cover of night, I ventured out. I rarely ventured out by daylight, for I always went with fear, expecting at every turn to encounter Dr. Flint, who was sure to turn me back, or order me to his office to inquire where I got my bonnet, or some other article of dress. When the Rev. Mr. Pike came, there were some twenty persons present. The reverend gentleman knelt in prayer, then seated himself, and requested all present, who could read, to open their books, while he gave out the portions he wished them to repeat or respond to.

His text was, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."

Pious Mr. Pike brushed up his hair till it stood upright, and, in deep, solemn tones, began: "Hearken, ye servants! Give strict heed unto my words. You are rebellious sinners. Your hearts are filled with all manner of evil. 'Tis the devil who tempts you. God is angry with you, and will surely punish you, if you don't forsake your wicked ways. You that live in town are eye-servants behind your master's back. Instead of serving your masters faithfully, which is pleasing in the sight of your heavenly Master, you are idle, and shirk your work. God sees you. You tell lies. God hears you. Instead of being engaged in worshipping him, you are hidden away somewhere, feasting on your master's substance; tossing coffee-grounds with some wicked fortuneteller, or cutting cards with another old hag. Your masters may not find you out, but God sees you, and will punish you. O, the depravity of your hearts! When your master's work is done, are you quietly together, thinking of the goodness of God to such sinful creatures? No; you are quarrelling, and tying up little bags of roots to bury under the door-steps to poison each other with. God sees you. You men steal away to every grog shop to sell your master's corn, that you may buy rum to drink. God sees you. You sneak into the back streets, or among the bushes, to pitch coppers. Although your masters may not find you out, God sees you; and he will punish you. You must forsake your sinful ways, and be faithful servants. Obey your old master and your young master—your old mistress and your young mistress. If you disobey your earthly master, you offend your heavenly Master. You must obey God's commandments. When you go from here, don't stop at the corners of the streets to talk, but go directly home, and let your master and mistress see that you have come."

The benediction was pronounced. We went home, highly amused at brother Pike's gospel teaching, and we determined to hear him again. I went the next Sabbath evening, and heard pretty much a repetition of the last discourse. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Pike informed us that he found it very inconvenient to meet at the friend's house, and he should be glad to see us, every Sunday evening, at his own kitchen.

I went home with the feeling that I had heard the Reverend Mr. Pike for the last time. Some of his members repaired to his house, and found that the kitchen sported two tallow candles; the first time, I am sure, since its present occupant owned it, for the servants never had anything but pine knots. It was so long before the reverend gentleman descended from his comfortable parlor that the slaves left, and went to enjoy a Methodist shout. They never seem so happy as when shouting and singing at religious meetings. Many of them are sincere, and nearer to the gate of heaven than sanctimonious Mr. Pike, and other long-faced Christians, who see wounded Samaritans, and pass by on the other side.

The slaves generally compose their own songs and hymns; and they do not trouble their heads much about the measure. They often sing the following verses:

*“Old Satan is one busy ole man;
He rolls dem blocks all in my way;
But Jesus is my bosom friend;
He rolls dem blocks away.*

*“If I had died when I was young,
Den how my stam'ring tongue would have sung;
But I am ole, and now I stand
A narrow chance for to tread dat heavenly land.”*

I well remember one occasion when I attended a Methodist class meeting. I went with a burdened spirit, and happened to sit next a poor, bereaved mother, whose heart was still heavier than mine. The class leader was the town constable—a man who bought and sold slaves, who whipped his brethren and sisters of the church at the public whipping post, in jail or out of jail. He was ready to perform that Christian office anywhere for fifty cents. This white-faced, black-hearted brother came near us, and said to the stricken woman, “Sister, can't you tell us how the Lord deals with your soul? Do you love him as you did formerly?”

She rose to her feet, and said, in piteous tones, “My Lord and Master, help me! My load is more than I can bear. God has hid himself from me, and I am left in darkness and misery.” Then, striking her breast, she continued, “I can't tell you what is in here! They've got all my children. Last week they took the last one. God only knows where they've sold her. They let me have her sixteen years, and then— O! O! Pray for her brothers and sisters! I've got nothing to live for now. God make my time short!”

She sat down, quivering in every limb. I saw that constable class leader become crimson in the face with suppressed laughter, while he held up his handkerchief, that those who were weeping for the poor woman's calamity might not see his merriment. Then, with assumed gravity, he said to the bereaved mother, "Sister, pray to the Lord that every dispensation of his divine will may be sanctified to the good of your poor needy soul!"

The congregation struck up a hymn, and sung as though they were as free as the birds that warbled round us,—

*"Ole Satan thought he had a mighty aim;
He missed my soul, and caught my sins.
Cry Amen, cry Amen, cry Amen to God!"*

*"He took my sins upon his back;
Went muttering and grumbling down to hell.
Cry Amen, cry Amen, cry Amen to God!"*

*"Ole Satan's church is here below.
Up to God's free church I hope to go.
Cry Amen, cry Amen, cry Amen to God!"*

Precious are such moments to the poor slaves. If you were to hear them at such times, you might think they were happy. But can that hour of singing and shouting sustain them through the dreary week, toiling without wages, under constant dread of the lash?

The Episcopal clergyman, who, ever since my earliest recollection, had been a sort of god among the slaveholders, concluded, as his family was large, that he must go where money was more abundant. A very different clergyman took his place. The change was very agreeable to the colored people, who said, "God has sent us a good man this time."

They loved him, and their children followed him for a smile or a kind word. Even the slaveholders felt his influence. He brought to the rectory five slaves. His wife taught them to read and write, and to be useful to her and themselves. As soon as he was settled, he turned his attention to the needy slaves around him. He urged upon his parishioners the duty of having a meeting expressly for them every Sunday, with a sermon adapted to their comprehension. After much argument and importunity, it was finally agreed that they might occupy the gallery of the church on Sunday evenings. Many colored people, hitherto unaccustomed to attend church, now gladly went to hear the gospel preached. The sermons were simple, and they understood them. Moreover, it was the first time they had ever been addressed as human beings.

It was not long before his white parishioners began to be dissatisfied. He was accused of preaching better sermons to the negroes than he did to them. He honestly confessed that he bestowed more pains upon those sermons than upon any others; for the slaves were reared in such ignorance that it was a difficult task to adapt himself to their

comprehension. Dissensions arose in the parish. Some wanted he should preach to them in the evening, and to the slaves in the afternoon.

In the midst of these disputings his wife died, after a very short illness. Her slaves gathered round her dying bed in great sorrow. She said, "I have tried to do you good and promote your happiness; and if I have failed, it has not been for want of interest in your welfare. Do not weep for me; but prepare for the new duties that lie before you. I leave you all free. May we meet in a better world." Her liberated slaves were sent away, with funds to establish them comfortably. The colored people will long bless the memory of that truly Christian woman. Soon after her death her husband preached his farewell sermon, and many tears were shed at his departure. Several years after, he passed through our town and preached to his former congregation. In his afternoon sermon he addressed the colored people.

"My friends," said he, "it affords me great happiness to have an opportunity of speaking to you again. For two years I have been striving to do something for the colored people of my own parish; but nothing is yet accomplished. I have not even preached a sermon to them. Try to live according to the word of God, my friends. Your skin is darker than mine; but God judges men by their hearts, not by the color of their skins."

This was strange doctrine from a southern pulpit. It was very offensive to slaveholders. They said he and his wife had made fools of their slaves, and that he preached like a fool to the negroes.

I knew an old black man, whose piety and childlike trust in God were beautiful to witness. At fifty-three years old he joined the Baptist church. He had a most earnest desire to learn to read. He thought he should know how to serve God better if he could only read the Bible. He came to me, and begged me to teach him. He said he could not pay me, for he had no money; but he would bring me nice fruit when the season for it came. I asked him if he didn't know it was contrary to law; and that slaves were whipped and imprisoned for teaching each other to read. This brought the tears into his eyes.

"Don't be troubled, uncle Fred," said I. "I have no thoughts of refusing to teach you. I only told you of the law, that you might know the danger, and be on your guard."

He thought he could plan to come three times a week without its being suspected. I selected a quiet nook, where no intruder was likely to penetrate, and there I taught him his A, B, C. Considering his age, his progress was astonishing. As soon as he could spell in two syllables he wanted to spell out words in the Bible. The happy smile that illuminated his face put joy into my heart.

After spelling out a few words, he paused, and said,

“Honey, it ’pears when I can read dis good book I shall be nearer to God. White man is got all de sense. He can larn easy. It ain’t easy for ole black man like me. I only wants to read dis book, dat I may know how to live; den I hab no fear ’bout dying.”

I tried to encourage him by speaking of the rapid progress he had made. “Hab patience, child,” he replied. “I larns slow.”

I had no need of patience. His gratitude, and the happiness I imparted, were more than a recompense for all my trouble. At the end of six months he had read through the New Testament, and could find any text in it. One day, when he had recited unusually well, I said, “Uncle Fred, how do you manage to get your lessons so well?”

“Lord bress you, chile,” he replied. “You nebber gibs me a lesson dat I don’t pray to God to help me to understan’ what I spells and what I reads. And he does help me, chile. Bress his holy name!”

There are thousands, who, like good uncle Fred, are thirsting for the water of life; but the law forbids it, and the churches withhold it. They send the Bible to heathen abroad, and neglect the heathen at home. I am glad that missionaries go out to the dark corners of the earth; but I ask them not to overlook the dark corners at home. Talk to American slaveholders as you talk to savages in Africa. Tell them it is wrong to traffic in men. Tell them it is sinful to sell their own children, and atrocious to violate their own daughters. Tell them that all men are brethren, and that man has no right to shut out the light of knowledge from his brother. Tell them they are answerable to God for sealing up the Fountain of Life from souls that are thirsting for it.

There are men who would gladly undertake such missionary work as this; but, alas! their number is small. They are hated by the south, and would be driven from its soil, or dragged to prison to die, as others have been before them. The field is ripe for the harvest, and awaits the reapers.

Perhaps the great grandchildren of uncle Fred may have freely imparted to them the divine treasures, which he sought by stealth, at the risk of the prison and the scourge. Are doctors of divinity blind, or are they hypocrites? I suppose some are the one, and some the other; but I think if they felt the interest in the poor and the lowly, that they ought to feel, they would not be so easily blinded. A clergyman who goes to the south, for the first time, has usually some feeling, however vague, that slavery is wrong. The slaveholder suspects this, and plays his game accordingly. He makes himself as agreeable as possible; talks on theology, and other kindred topics.

The reverend gentleman is asked to invoke a blessing on a table loaded with luxuries. After dinner he walks round the premises, and sees the beautiful groves and flowering vines, and the comfortable huts of favored household slaves. The southerner invites him to talk with these slaves. He asks them if they want to be free, and they say, “O, no, massa.” This is sufficient to satisfy him. He comes home to publish a “South-Side View of Slavery,” and to complain of the exaggerations of abolitionists. He assures people that he

has been to the south, and seen slavery for himself; that it is a beautiful “patriarchal institution;” that the slaves don’t want their freedom; that they have hallelujah meetings, and other religious privileges.

What does he know of the half-starved wretches toiling from dawn till dark on the plantations? of mothers shrieking for their children, torn from their arms by slave traders? of young girls dragged down into moral filth? of pools of blood around the whipping post? of hounds trained to tear human flesh? of men screwed into cotton gins to die? The slaveholder showed him none of these things, and the slaves dared not tell of them if he had asked them.

There is a great difference between Christianity and religion at the south. If a man goes to the communion table, and pays money into the treasury of the church, no matter if it be the price of blood, he is called religious. If a pastor has offspring by a woman not his wife, the church dismiss him, if she is a white woman; but if she is colored, it does not hinder his continuing to be their good shepherd.

When I was told that Dr. Flint had joined the Episcopal church, I was much surprised. I supposed that religion had a purifying effect on the character of men; but the worst persecutions I endured from him were after he was a communicant. The conversation of the doctor, the day after he had been confirmed, certainly gave me no indication that he had “renounced the devil and all his works.” In answer to some of his usual talk, I reminded him that he had just joined the church.

“Yes, Linda,” said he. “It was proper for me to do so. I am getting in years, and my position in society requires it, and it puts an end to all the damned slang. You would do well to join the church, too, Linda.”

“There are sinners enough in it already,” rejoined I. “If I could be allowed to live like a Christian, I should be glad.”

“You can do what I require; and if you are faithful to me, you will be as virtuous as my wife,” he replied.

I answered that the Bible didn’t say so.

His voice became hoarse with rage. “How dare you preach to me about your infernal Bible!” he exclaimed. “What right have you, who are my negro, to talk to me about what you would like, and what you wouldn’t like? I am your master, and you shall obey me.”

No wonder the slaves sing,—

*“Ole Satan’s church is here below;
Up to God’s free church I hope to go.”*

The entire book is available online:

[Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*](#)

Summary

US Episcopal House of Bishops, March 1994, "Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism"

This Summary also includes links to original document and The US Episcopal Church's 2006 Statement of Repentance and Regret (last page).

Ed. Note: The 1994 **Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism** offers a clear biblical case against racial hierarchy, yet it leaves major gaps: it does not name specific Episcopal complicity, address the Church's own pro-slavery biblical history, or propose reparative action. The **2006 Statement of Repentance and Regret** begins to fill these silences by explicitly acknowledging the Church's participation in slavery and introducing the language of restorative justice. Together, the documents trace a movement from broad moral exhortation (1994) toward a more concrete institutional confession (2006).

Pastoral Letter (Summary):

Issued by the Episcopal House of Bishops and addressed to all baptized members of the church, this letter was written in response to a mandate from the 70th General Convention, which had called on the bishops, in their teaching role, to formally address racism. The bishops acknowledged from the outset that the letter spoke not only to the church at large, but to themselves as well — an admission that racism had infected their own ranks.

Analysis: Naming the Problem

The letter opens with the prophet Amos — "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream" — and situates racism as a global as well as domestic crisis, citing ethnic cleansing in Europe, apartheid in South Africa, and violence in the Middle East as variations on the same theme. Closer to home, it points to institutionalized racial preference deeply embedded in American employment, insurance, education, law enforcement, and the courts.

The bishops ground their theological condemnation squarely in Scripture. Racism, they write, "perpetuates a basic untruth" that "distorts the biblical understanding of God's action in creation, wherein all human beings are made in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). It "blasphemes the ministry of Christ who died for all people" (John 3:16), and it "gives false permission for oppression and exploitation." The essence of racism, the letter argues, is "rooted in the sin of pride and exclusivity" — the assumption that one group is superior and therefore deserving of special privilege. Jesus, they note, "clearly called the people of God to lives of discipleship and servanthood without boundaries of race or class."

The letter also wrestles with the nature of institutional racism, noting that many white people do not think of themselves as racist yet nonetheless benefit from systems of white privilege — even where whites are a numerical minority in the surrounding community.

Confession: Corporate Repentance

The second section moves into confession, grounded in the baptismal covenant's call to "persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord." The bishops acknowledge that racism is "endemic in every aspect of society, including the church," and they confess their own complicity directly. They quote an African American priest of the church who called for confession on all sides — by whites of their unearned privilege, by Black Americans of co-dependence within a corrupt value system, and by all of collusion in a racist dynamic that excludes Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanics.

Covenant: Concrete Commitments

The third section, built around Ephesians 2:13-14 ("he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall"), lays out specific pledges the bishops make to one another and to the church. These include: conducting personal inventories of racist attitudes; refusing to participate in racially discriminatory clubs or institutions; committing to listen more carefully to those on the margins; working to transform socioeconomic systems that drive people into poverty; prioritizing the recruitment and support of persons of color at every level of the church; encouraging liturgical expressions that reflect the church's racial and ethnic diversity; and establishing a standing committee of the House of Bishops to monitor fulfillment of these commitments.

Invitation: A Call to the Whole Church

The letter closes by invoking the baptismal covenant's call to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." The bishops declare that racism "is totally inconsistent with the Gospel and, therefore, must be confronted and eradicated," and they invite all Episcopalians to join in a mission of justice, reconciliation, and unity — calling it nothing less than the church's core mission to "restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."

For the full *Pastoral Letter*, see:

[Episcopal Digital Archives: Sin of Racism, 1994](#)

For the 2006 US Episcopal Church *Expression of Regret*, see:

[Resolution 2006-A123](#)

Supplemental Readings:

Frederick Douglass

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself, Published by the Anti-Slavery Office, No. 25 Cornhill, Boston, 1845, "Chapter IX, Appendix, and A Parody."

Note from the original file: This electronic book is being released at this time to honor the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. [Born January 15, 1929] [Officially celebrated January 20, 1992]

About This Reading: Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) was born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. His *Narrative*, published when he was twenty-seven, became one of the most influential American autobiographies ever written and a cornerstone of the abolitionist movement. It was an immediate bestseller and was translated into multiple languages within years of its publication.

Chapter IX covers Douglass's time under Master Thomas Auld in St. Michael's, Maryland, beginning in March 1832. It is one of the most theologically charged chapters in the book. Douglass describes arriving hungry and mistreated in the household of a man who prayed morning, noon, and night — a man whose religious conversion, far from softening him, provided "religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty." The chapter traces a pattern that Douglass will return to throughout the *Narrative*: the more devout the slaveholder, the more vicious the abuse. Auld's house becomes "the preachers' home," where ministers are stuffed with food while the enslaved go hungry. A Sabbath school organized by a sympathetic white man is violently broken up by church class-leaders. And a disabled enslaved woman named Henny is tied up and whipped repeatedly, with Auld quoting Scripture to justify the beatings. The chapter ends with Douglass being sent to Edward Covey, a professional "slave-breaker" who is also a Methodist class-leader — a juxtaposition Douglass presents without comment, letting the reader absorb the full weight of the contradiction.

The Appendix is a standalone essay Douglass added after completing the *Narrative*, concerned that readers might mistake his attack on slaveholding religion for an attack on

Christianity itself. It contains one of the most famous passages in American nonfiction: "Between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference — so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked." What follows is a sustained, rhetorically extraordinary indictment of American churches — an inventory of hypocrisy so precise and so relentless that it reads less like autobiography than like prophecy.

"A Parody," which closes the book, is a satirical hymn attributed to a northern Methodist preacher who had witnessed slaveholding firsthand. Its bitter, rhythmic verses catalog the gap between Christian profession and slaveholding practice, and Douglass includes it as a final, sardonic coda — a mirror held up to the religion of the land.

As you read, pay attention to the relationship Douglass draws between religious conversion and moral deterioration. His argument is not that slaveholders happen to be religious — it is that religion, as practiced in a slave society, actively makes cruelty worse.

Chapter IX

I have now reached a period of my life when I can give dates. I left Baltimore, and went to live with Master Thomas Auld, at St. Michael's, in March, 1832. It was now more than seven years since I lived with him in the family of my old master, on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. We of course were now almost entire strangers to each other. He was to me a new master, and I to him a new slave. I was ignorant of his temper and disposition; he was equally so of mine. A very short time, however, brought us into full acquaintance with each other. I was made acquainted with his wife not less than with himself. They were well matched, being equally mean and cruel.

I was now, for the first time during a space of more than seven years, made to feel the painful gnawings of hunger—a something which I had not experienced before since I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. It went hard enough with me then, when I could look back to no period at which I had enjoyed a sufficiency. It was tenfold harder after living in Master Hugh's family, where I had always had enough to eat, and of that which was good. I have said Master Thomas was a mean man. He was so. Not to give a slave enough to eat, is regarded as the most aggravated development of meanness even among slaveholders. The rule is, no matter how coarse the food, only let there be enough of it. This is the theory; and in the part of Maryland from which I came, it is the general practice,—though there are many exceptions. Master Thomas gave us enough of neither coarse nor fine food. There were four slaves of us in the kitchen—my sister Eliza, my aunt Priscilla, Henny, and myself; and we were allowed less than a half of a bushel of corn-meal per week, and very little else, either in the shape of meat or vegetables. It was not enough for us to subsist upon. We were therefore reduced to the wretched necessity of living at the expense of our neighbors. This we did by begging and stealing, whichever came handy in the time of

need, the one being considered as legitimate as the other. A great many times have we poor creatures been nearly perishing with hunger, when food in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning, and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!

Bad as all slaveholders are, we seldom meet one destitute of every element of character commanding respect. My master was one of this rare sort. I do not know of one single noble act ever performed by him. The leading trait in his character was meanness; and if there were any other element in his nature, it was made subject to this. He was mean; and, like most other mean men, he lacked the ability to conceal his meanness. Captain Auld was not born a slaveholder. He had been a poor man, master only of a Bay craft. He came into possession of all his slaves by marriage; and of all men, adopted slaveholders are the worst. He was cruel, but cowardly. He commanded without firmness. In the enforcement of his rules, he was at times rigid, and at times lax. At times, he spoke to his slaves with the firmness of Napoleon and the fury of a demon; at other times, he might well be mistaken for an inquirer who had lost his way. He did nothing of himself. He might have passed for a lion, but for his ears. In all things noble which he attempted, his own meanness shone most conspicuous. His airs, words, and actions, were the airs, words, and actions of born slaveholders, and, being assumed, were awkward enough. He was not even a good imitator.

He possessed all the disposition to deceive, but wanted the power. Having no resources within himself, he was compelled to be the copyist of many, and being such, he was forever the victim of inconsistency; and of consequence he was an object of contempt, and was held as such even by his slaves. The luxury of having slaves of his own to wait upon him was something new and unprepared for. He was a slaveholder without the ability to hold slaves. He found himself incapable of managing his slaves either by force, fear, or fraud. We seldom called him "master;" we generally called him "Captain Auld," and were hardly disposed to title him at all.

I doubt not that our conduct had much to do with making him appear awkward, and of consequence fretful. Our want of reverence for him must have perplexed him greatly. He wished to have us call him master, but lacked the firmness necessary to command us to do so. His wife used to insist upon our calling him so, but to no purpose. In August, 1832, my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting held in the Bay-side, Talbot county, and there experienced religion. I indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that, if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him to be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them. If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before.

Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety. His house was the house of prayer. He prayed morning, noon, and night. He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren, and was soon made a class-leader and exhorter. His activity in revivals was great, and he proved himself an instrument in the hands of the church in converting many souls. His house was the preachers' home. They used to take great pleasure in coming there to put up; for while he starved us, he stuffed them.

We have had three or four preachers there at a time. The names of those who used to come most frequently while I lived there, were Mr. Storcks, Mr. Ewery, Mr. Humphry, and Mr. Hickey. I have also seen Mr. George Cookman at our house. We slaves loved Mr. Cookman. We believed him to be a good man. We thought him instrumental in getting Mr. Samuel Harrison, a very rich slaveholder, to emancipate his slaves; and by some means got the impression that he was laboring to effect the emancipation of all the slaves. When he was at our house, we were sure to be called in to prayers. When the others were there, we were sometimes called in and sometimes not. Mr. Cookman took more notice of us than either of the other ministers. He could not come among us without betraying his sympathy for us, and, stupid as we were, we had the sagacity to see it.

While I lived with my master in St. Michael's, there was a white young man, a Mr. Wilson, who proposed to keep a Sabbath school for the instruction of such slaves as might be disposed to learn to read the New Testament. We met but three times, when Mr. West and Mr. Fairbanks, both class-leaders, with many others, came upon us with sticks and other missiles, drove us off, and forbade us to meet again. Thus ended our little Sabbath school in the pious town of St. Michael's.

I have said my master found religious sanction for his cruelty. As an example, I will state one of many facts going to prove the charge. I have seen him tie up a lame young woman, and whip her with a heavy cowskin upon her naked shoulders, causing the warm red blood to drip; and, in justification of the bloody deed, he would quote this passage of Scripture—"He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Master would keep this lacerated young woman tied up in this horrid situation four or five hours at a time. I have known him to tie her up early in the morning, and whip her before breakfast; leave her, go to his store, return at dinner, and whip her again, cutting her in the places already made raw with his cruel lash. The secret of master's cruelty toward "Henny" is found in the fact of her being almost helpless. When quite a child, she fell into the fire, and burned herself horribly. Her hands were so burnt that she never got the use of them. She could do very little but bear heavy burdens. She was to master a bill

of expense; and as he was a mean man, she was a constant offence to him. He seemed desirous of getting the poor girl out of existence. He gave her away once to his sister; but, being a poor gift, she was not disposed to keep her. Finally, my benevolent master, to use his own words, “set her adrift to take care of herself.” Here was a recently-converted man, holding on upon the mother, and at the same time turning out her helpless child, to starve and die! Master Thomas was one of the many pious slaveholders who hold slaves for the very charitable purpose of taking care of them.

My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose. My city life, he said, had had a very pernicious effect upon me. It had almost ruined me for every good purpose, and fitted me for everything which was bad. One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-in-law’s farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael’s. I would then have to go after it.

My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master’s father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and, for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey. Mr. Covey was a poor man, a farm-renter. He rented the place upon which he lived, as also the hands with which he tilled it.

Mr. Covey had acquired a very high reputation for breaking young slaves, and this reputation was of immense value to him. It enabled him to get his farm tilled with much less expense to himself than he could have had it done without such a reputation. Some slaveholders thought it not much loss to allow Mr. Covey to have their slaves one year, for the sake of the training to which they were subjected, without any other compensation. He could hire young help with great ease, in consequence of this reputation. Added to the natural good qualities of Mr. Covey, he was a professor of religion—a pious soul—a member and a class-leader in the Methodist church. All of this added weight to his reputation as a “nigger-breaker.” I was aware of all the facts, having been made acquainted with them by a young man who had lived there. I nevertheless made the change gladly; for I was sure of getting enough to eat, which is not the smallest consideration to a hungry man.

APPENDIX

I find, since reading over the foregoing Narrative, that I have, in several instances, spoken in such a tone and manner, respecting religion, as may possibly lead those unacquainted

with my religious views to suppose me an opponent of all religion. To remove the liability of such misapprehension, I deem it proper to append the following brief explanation. What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the *slaveholding religion* of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. To be the friend of the one, is of necessity to be the enemy of the other.

I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land. Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. Never was there a clearer case of “stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in.”

I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which everywhere surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. The man who robs me of my earnings at the end of each week meets me as a class-leader on Sunday morning, to show me the way of life, and the path of salvation. He who sells my sister, for purposes of prostitution, stands forth as the pious advocate of purity. He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible denies me the right of learning to read the name of the God who made me. He who is the religious advocate of marriage robs whole millions of its sacred influence, and leaves them to the ravages of wholesale pollution. The warm defender of the sacredness of the family relation is the same that scatters whole families,—sundering husbands and wives, parents and children, sisters and brothers,—leaving the hut vacant, and the hearth desolate. We see the thief preaching against theft, and the adulterer against adultery. We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the *Poor Heathen! All For The Glory Of God And The Good Of Souls!*

The slave auctioneer’s bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master. Revivals of religion and revivals in the slave-trade go hand in hand together. The slave prison and the church stand near each other. The clanking of fetters and the rattling of chains in the prison, and the pious psalm and solemn prayer in the church, may be heard at the same time. The dealers in the bodies and souls of men erect their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood-stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business

with the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other— devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise.

“Just God! and these are they, v Who minister at thine altar, God of right!
Men who their hands, with prayer and blessing, lay
On Israel's ark of light.

“What! preach, and kidnap men?
Give thanks, and rob thy own afflicted poor?
Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then
Bolt hard the captive's door?

“What! servants of thy own
Merciful Son, who came to seek and save
The homeless and the outcast, fettering down
The tasked and plundered slave!

“Pilate and Herod friends!
Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!
Just God and holy! is that church which lends
Strength to the spoiler thine?”

The Christianity of America is a Christianity, of whose votaries it may be as truly said, as it was of the ancient scribes and Pharisees, “They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. All their works they do for to be seen of men.—They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.—But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but within, they are full of extortion and excess.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of

dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Dark and terrible as is this picture, I hold it to be strictly true of the overwhelming mass of professed Christians in America. They strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Could anything be more true of our churches? They would be shocked at the proposition of fellowshipping a *sheep-stealer*; and at the same time they hug to their communion a *man-stealer*, and brand me with being an infidel, if I find fault with them for it. They attend with Pharisaical strictness to the outward forms of religion, and at the same time neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. They are always ready to sacrifice, but seldom to show mercy. They are they who are represented as professing to love God whom they have not seen, whilst they hate their brother whom they have seen. They love the heathen on the other side of the globe. They can pray for him, pay money to have the Bible put into his hand, and missionaries to instruct him; while they despise and totally neglect the heathen at their own doors.

Such is, very briefly, my view of the religion of this land; and to avoid any misunderstanding, growing out of the use of general terms, I mean by the religion of this land, that which is revealed in the words, deeds, and actions, of those bodies, north and south, calling themselves Christian churches, and yet in union with slaveholders. It is against religion, as presented by these bodies, that I have felt it my duty to testify.

I conclude these remarks by copying the following portrait of the religion of the south, (which is, by communion and fellowship, the religion of the north,) which I soberly affirm is "true to the life," and without caricature or the slightest exaggeration. It is said to have been drawn, several years before the present anti-slavery agitation began, by a northern Methodist preacher, who, while residing at the south, had an opportunity to see slaveholding morals, manners, and piety, with his own eyes. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

A PARODY

"Come, saints and sinners, hear me tell
How pious priests whip Jack and Nell,
And women buy and children sell,

And preach all sinners down to hell,
And sing of heavenly union.

"They'll bleat and baa, dona like goats,
Gorge down black sheep, and strain at motes,
Array their backs in fine black coats,
Then seize their negroes by their throats,
And choke, for heavenly union.

“They’ll church you if you sip a dram,
And damn you if you steal a lamb;
Yet rob old Tony, Doll, and Sam,
Of human rights, and bread and ham;
Kidnapper’s heavenly union.

“They’ll loudly talk of Christ’s reward,
And bind his image with a cord,
And scold, and swing the lash abhorred,
And sell their brother in the Lord
To handcuffed heavenly union.

“They’ll read and sing a sacred song,
And make a prayer both loud and long,
And teach the right and do the wrong,
Hailing the brother, sister throng,
With words of heavenly union.

“We wonder how such saints can sing,
Or praise the Lord upon the wing,
Who roar, and scold, and whip, and sting,
And to their slaves and mammon cling,
In guilty conscience union.

“They’ll raise tobacco, corn, and rye,
And drive, and thief, and cheat, and lie,
And lay up treasures in the sky,
By making switch and cowskin fly,
In hope of heavenly union.

“They’ll crack old Tony on the skull,
And preach and roar like Bashan bull,
Or braying ass, of mischief full,
Then seize old Jacob by the wool,
And pull for heavenly union.

“A roaring, ranting, sleek man-thief,
Who lived on mutton, veal, and beef,
Yet never would afford relief

To needy, sable sons of grief,
Was big with heavenly union.

“Love not the world,’ the preacher said,
And winked his eye, and shook his head;
He seized on Tom, and Dick, and Ned,
Cut short their meat, and clothes, and bread,
Yet still loved heavenly union.

“Another preacher whining spoke
Of One whose heart for sinners broke:
He tied old Nanny to an oak,
And drew the blood at every stroke,
And prayed for heavenly union.

“Two others oped their iron jaws,
And waved their children-stealing paws;
There sat their children in gewgaws;
By stinting negroes’ backs and maws,
They kept up heavenly union.

“All good from Jack another takes,
And entertains their flirts and rakes,
Who dress as sleek as glossy snakes,
And cram their mouths with sweetened cakes;
And this goes down for union.”

Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds—faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts—and solemnly pledging myself anew to the sacred cause,—I subscribe myself,

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.
LYNN, Mass., April 28, 1845.

Complete book is available: *[Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave](#)*