

Dear Sir

29? June, 1801?

In your letter of the 18th you propose
to take up the subject of
the following questions which are reducible to 8 heads
and in particular one stated; but some of
them will be answered by others. I shall add a brief
note to each article with some general remarks
on the subject, together with remarks
on the modes of my improvements used at the
various parts of the plan.

Is Slavery an Evil of any
kind? I never did so doubt
by an Evil; and as I conceive a Natural or Poli-
tical evil is a species of wrong, all the
rest of the world is right.

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penal . These are all evils : Those of the first class generally escape immediately by the hand of an ~~evil~~ ^{good} human agency . In the second class there is a ~~danger~~ ^{danger} of ~~danger~~ ^{danger} ; yet it is possible for men to be employed in them in ~~a~~ ^{an} upright manner ; and duty requires it of every Christian that they should be so employed , or take no active part in the employment .

Question 2^d. Is it generally consistent with the principles of the American Revolution? As this question belongs rather to the Political, Philosopher, and Civilian than to the Christian casuist,
it does not appear to be consistent with
any of the articles in the Declaration of Inde-
pendence; but however the expression in the
article may be apparently inconsistent,
designed to be understood in a restric-

base: For it cannot be conceived that they
designed to leave out of their constitutions
a branch, that to enjoy equal privileges
with the other branches.

ing both the kind of Slave & Slaves? A
cross various lights, where injustice and cruelty are
combined with it on the part of the Masters,
Disobedience, discontent & sloth on the part of the
Slaves, manifold evils both of a moral & material
kind, of a public & private nature must & will
result from it. But where justice, humanity &
mildness & benevolence are exercised by the Masters, with a due
sense to Religion, and where the Slaves themselves
possess correspondent dispositions, & pursue a cor-
respondent conduct, Masters may be considered
the Guardians and Benefactors of the slaves; the
Slaves may enjoy as much satisfaction as if they
were free; in many instances, more, and be really
happier than many who are accounted so; by
their virtue & reasonable labour, contributing
to the general welfare of the nation, as well as
to themselves & their immediate owners.

Ques. 4th. What is the duty of Christians among us in
respect of the Slave Trade? Ans. The Slave Trade,
with us, is much like an almanac of the last
year; At least it must terminate in a short time
viz. with the present year. No considerations can
have upon the subject, nor man any longer

can pursue are likely to have the least influence upon it so as to arrest it in its course before it must terminate, according to the general sense of the nations. Let those who think they cannot give any encouragement to it by purchasing the Slaves who are brought here under the idea that in so doing, they should sin, abstain from it. At the same time let them leave others who view things in a different light, to the liberty of their own consciences. But if all serious Christians should abstain from purchasing the slaves that are brought here, they must of course go into other hands, where it is not probable they would fare as well. Humanity then may dictate to Christians, in these circumstances, to purchase as many as they can of these poor people with an honest intention to render them as happy as circumstances will admit.

Quest. 5th What is the duty of Christians toward their Slaves, in respect of Food, cloathing, the measure of labour & Religious instruction Ans. According to the scriptures, "To give them what is just & equal;" to pay a serious regard to their religious interests; and to do to them as in a change of circumstances we would

with them to do to us". flagrante being however
the order of Providence, which places men in
different ranks & stations; and to the product
of labour; allowing on the other hand, for ex-
trouble, & expence; as well as for the price paid
in the original purchase; and taking into
view the different bettering, of the circumstan-
ces of the slaves.

Quest. 6th Is it a Sin which should be ta-
ken into serious regard by churches, for mas-
ters to send ^{asunder} husbands & wives,
and children? Ans. To do it in a random man-
ner or when there is not some urgent nece-
ssity, both in the case of husbands & wives, who
are faithful to each other; and of parents from
whom when the children are young, is no doubt
in a general way, a Sin and a sin of which
churches may with propriety take cognizance.
The State, or Government, also it is apprehen-
ded should bestow a serious attention on this
subject; and it is believed, it, as yet, has not
done its duty in making provision for slaves
in this respect; and in certain other cases, in
which the laws might operate with profita-

Quest J. 4. Would it be proper for our Association to take the subject of Slavery, and what relates to the treatment of Slaves into consideration? Ans. It is the duty of our Association to take every subject into consideration which the glory of God and our duty to man is concerned: So that the subject be taken up in a wise, prudent, and becoming manner. Perhaps the Association might be able to do something for the general good of the church and the benefit of Slaves in particular by some wise considerations and prudent measures on the subject; but it is my opinion that undertaking any thing of this kind under the idea of its leading to emancipation or superseding the holding of Slaves to be a step would destroy the influence of these Associations in the community at large, expose us to just censure, lead to civil commotion, insurrections, and be the means of rendering the condition of the slaves more unhappy than at present both in what respects their religious privileges, bodily circumstances

Ques. 8th Night we reasonably hope that such a measure would lead to a moral & speedy reformation, and so prepare the way for the latter day of glory? Ans. If by this measure, be meant, the Associations taking the subject of Slavery to represent the hold of slaves to be firm, as was noticed in the last answer, and to lead to emancipation I apprehend it would lead no otherwise to reformation, and the latter day of Glory, than the crusades did in former times, and the French Revolution in the present day - by leading us thro' previous scenes of enthusiasm, war & blood. But whatever might be done to ameliorate the condition of Slaves, to enlighten them with the knowledge of God & the Redeemer, to inspire them with a just sense of their duty; as well as their Masters,^{of} theirs, would, I apprehend, be attended with happy effects, and lead to the important object proposed in a direct manner. The hope

the best method an individual, a Church or an Association could take in this respect, would be to have with as little noise as possible, to apply themselves each for himself, to the serious performance of those duties which they would recommend to others in respect of their slaves, and thus furnish examples to all around them of the benign influence of Humanity, Justice & Religion, in such a state of things. Authority being, at the same time, duly supported, by subordination produced as well as honesty and justice exercised. — So far as the answers to your Question.

What however has been stated in these answers the great question on the lawfulness to own or hold slaves; and for us to hold them in particular in that state, still remains unanswered; or to be proved if the subject admits of proof.

It cannot be denied that God may approve numbers to be slaves in a manner perfectly consistent with his justice, and doth his glory derive more in their sins deserve a heavier punishment.

when this judgment may be in the case
of all, and actually is in the case of you, over-
ruled for good, even to themselves. That this is
order of his providence, is evident; for multu-
tudes of slaves have existed in every age of the
world since the days of Abraham, at least, if not
of Noah. 2nd God has commanded nations to
execute judgments on nations, by inflicting death
on account of national sins; as well as indi-
viduals to punish individuals for personal
sins. Slavery is a less reprobate pun-
ishment than death, especially when considered
in a moral ~~point~~^{view}, however it may be
more severe; because it affords time for
repentance & reformation. But God has ^{also} ~~for he~~
in his word admitted of Slavery —
— directions to the nation to shew her
in an especial manner made himself known
to own, to make slaves of those heithens
who were not their particular enemies — for those
who were such were doomed to destruction —
also we there spoken of born in the

house, or bought with money. The existence therefore of Slavery as an appointment of God, in a thing approved by him, under the Old Testament Dispensation; cannot be called in question, and we must have some better argument to show that holding Slaves is, ^{now becoming} then a bare usurpation, than the appointment was an creation of the Slave Economy. They are bounds of duty mentioned by our Lord "As you would that men should do to you, do likewise to them"; it is supposed, does not countenance or cancel their order of things. I never had no interfere with the Slaveholding societies in their respective stations established in Society, by creation & Providence; but is an rule of just & benevolent men, formed according to them; and not to be regulated by the capricious taste of an individual or his party to himself. Then it is not only permitted, but counted of God, in certain cases. I condemn Slavery, or the purchasing & a lot of

evil; for God never did, and never will, let
honest men to commit it. See the very oppo-
sition of which is highly absurd and injurious.

But 3rd of The New Testament Dispels also
round the world filled with slaves & possessed
by the Roman Empire, of which Palestine, By-
menent Greece, the lesser Asia, & Africa,
in general, the countries in which churches
first formed planted in the apostolic age,
provinces. Members of these churches are ad-
dressed under the distinctive character of ser-
vants of servants, and the terms of relation used
on these occasions are generally ^(Deputies) ~~servants~~
^(Doulos) and Δούλος, Slave. In this relation God
and man, they appear to have been received into
churches, and contained in them, and made no
application to persons in these relations, else
masters were compelled to treat their slaves
justly. To this end, in other Epistles, when
were sent to those churches, directions were given
to give these servants the just wages
to follow their business, and to remember that
they had a master in heaven. To the same end

of
honour, are strongly, described at S. Paul,
by being under the yoke (see 1 Tim. vi. 12.)
and were given to count their own masters
of all honour; and not to despise their
beloved masters; because they were brethren.
which might have been a temptation to them
to slight their authority, and treat them with
too great familiarity;) but to render them
service the more cheerfully, because they were
faithful and beloved. Their obedience, and forth-
right service is required of them, as becom-
ing for the forward, as well as for the
gentle; and as a service dues to God in
respect of his all-disposing, righteous pro-
vidence. They are directed, if called of God as
servants, so to continue with him, and with
no care for their being in that situation, but
the care, I presume, of managing by his con-
tent; but if they might be ^{and} free to useth
them; when providence should open a door
for them of opportunity for their neighbour
to himself, ^{and} supply some of the

ship existing between masters and slaves,
where the same terms in the original, before
quoted are used; and in one case the master
a servant to be sold with his wife and chil-
dren, &c. all that he had, is represented by
as an act of justice.

To say that Christ and his inspired apostles, withheld direct information on this sub-
ject, when it was the will of God that
every slave should be abolished, when the hold
of slaves was made to be sin, & when the
knowledge of the duty of emancipating them
as in the then existing state of the world could
have been so necessary, seems to amount to
the exhibition of an impious charge of unfa-
forness against them as Teachers! And to say
that they have given this informa^{tion} —
by reference to parables, and inference —
seems merely to imply, that they were in-
fluenced by some unworthy motive such as
the fear of man, than which nothing

be more foreign from the character even
of the apostle - how much more of our de-
ar Lord ! But we have seen that they do
not speak on this subject; and in such a man-
ner and with such expressions, as can only
be understood, according to common sense,
and the plain language of scripture, in
consistency with this sentiment, that it is
lawful for Christians to hold slaves.

It would seem then that we are to
strike a line of distinction between the
holding of Slaves, and the exercising of cri-
mality towards them. The one appears to be
lawful, the other cannot be so.

Still a question arises How may
persons lawfully be made slaves?
Ans, 1st by their own consent directly, or indi-
rectly given. 2nd by right of conquest, when war
is carried on with nations in a state of bar-
barism, and when that barbarism amounts to
such a degree: Particularly when it is the
practice of such a nation to kill, or tor-

live them prisoners, or reduce them to a state
of Slavery. 3^d For crimes and vices which con-
cern individuals, while at their liberty, are an
an-sance to Society; but which do not arise to so
great a height, as absolutely to require the pun-
ishment of death.

The case of direct consent is mentioned in
Scripture, and exemplified in the state of the
servant though an Hebrew, who, not chusing
to be set at liberty, should have his ear bored
with an awl. Indirect consent, may be given
by those nations who make a practice of re-
ducing their captives to a state of Slavery: For
in acting on this general plan they may be con-
sidered as agreeing that, according to the fortune
of war, it shall be so done to them as they do to
others. — It is a subject of pleasing reflection
that among some nations, Civilization and es-
pecially, the influence of Christianity have
softened the rigors of war; and happy would
it be for all mankind if this great Evil were
banished from the Earth; but while it ex-

ists and reasons are found to justify it, it would seem that reasons as conclusive may also be adduced from this source in justification of making men slaves: For surely it is not a greater evil to deprive them of their liberty than of their lives. Political & Moral reasons, no doubt, do not for obliging civilized nations to act toward each other on a different plan; but it seems reasonable to conclude, that, independent of the principle of retaliation, and indirect agreement, mentioned before, a civilized & humane nation ^{prisoners} may, see just cause for making slaves of the ~~poor~~^{poor} they take from an ignorant, idolatrous, depraved nation; when done with a view to their civilization and moral improvement. The propriety of reducing criminals and flagitious persons to a state of slavery, will, I suppose need by be called in question.

Let me now just attempt an application of the principles of reasoning introduced above to the case of the Africans. And, first, their free consent to become slaves may be

said to be a distinguished part of their
operations; since with the fatal nations of
y^ro Lind pick upon it, by ministerial violence
and rapacity, and by selling them prisoners as
slaves. Great numbers of these nations respec-
tively also are slaves in their own country, true
great men. Add to this what is said, by what is
said to be a historical fact, that their original
state before the slave trade commenced, was
a state of savage warfare in which the pris-
oners were generally put to death; that m-
oral & religious principles were, as they, in
to this time, in the most abject prostration a-
mong them; and that kind usage here to them
as slaves, here where the gospel light shines
and civilization prevails, render their ex-
tortion preferable, in the eye of impartial
persons, to that which they experience, or rather
suffered in their own country. I say add
these considerations to those stated above,
and the Slave trade loses much of its for-
ce and appears in many respects, con-
siderable injustice.

extend civilization to them, in their own
country. This, it is granted is laudable; and
it is hoped the day will come, when such
undertaking, will be generally instituted,
prosecuted with vigour, & carried with
success. But considering the idolatry igno-
rance, & pernicious habits of these people in their
native state, it is doubtful whether the most
vigorous exertions of our Country could have ef-
fected as much in the course of before fifteen
on that plan in the same space of time than
was shamefully the moral character & condition
of the negroes have been neglected among us
as has been produced by means of the Slave
Trade. Some attempts, however we know, have
been made on the above plan. But what
effects have they produced? The Sierra-Leone
company formed such a benevolent plan, at-
tempted the execution of it, at a vast expense,
procured a colony of negroes from America,
many of them Baptists with a preacher among
them, and settled them in Africa; & to these

of old & Missionaries, which were sent
from England, about this time, it
was become abominable. The champions
of the French first assisted them with an
arm'd force, and gave them the ^{neighboring} place
which adjoin'd them to force
them to desist; and then, in order that they
need not interfere with the Slave-trade
so as to discourage & prevent it, fell upon
it with violence, and completed their
own a colony. This however, is the in-
formation I have received, & which I believe
to be true. Benevolence is undoubt-
edly a Christian duty in itself, but
the means & exercising it in a particular
case may very well be doubtful, & at other
times impossible. It would be well
as it respects especially a bestowal
of benefit from others to the
whole of the ^{poor} assures that cer-
tainly should be done as far as pos-

The same principle operating toward the Indians
also charged with guilt might induce them to
be saved and liberated. The present association
and influence tend to have conduced with him to pro-
mote a benevolent mind to furnish him with
money for his release but if there was no cause to
believe that the doctors of Harvard and friends were
the effect of idleness & dependence on the bounty of
others. Benevolence might reasonably suggest that
it might be best to withhold supplies in these
particular cases and even to contact him by their influence
privately, to work for their support. Being
contingent with compassion, the disease
resulted from
occurred by the indiscretion and a neglect
The last carries no evidence in Europe, the
bands being thereby reduced to nakedness, no
mention of death; but I suppose it will be found
to be found that lies in America in our guilt of
not noticing them. And though I am not
accustomed generally to praise worthiness, and
praise your neighbourhood in any thing
so written his tract with a strong interest.

poor men in our Colonies, so as to put them on
an equality with him; yet I suppose there
are few who would be hardy enough to say
that this might be required of him by others as
a duty he should perform.

If the holding of slaves is justifiable,
then the arguments last advanced will have
an easy application to the subject, on principles
of both property. In the present state
of things it is doubtful whether better
could be done a property exercised by us, than
in the Africans, than in purchasing them as
slaves, others brought here, with an honest
intention, and correspondent conduct, to use
them well & instruct them in Christianity.
Should they, in general be set at liberty, a
great proportion of the aged & infirm &
the infidels who are now allowed to go to
the habitation of such as are able to work, and
by the one of them to live, would be left to
starve; there as is said to be the case with
those who have been educated in the South

blacks, which, by their conduct & meanness, come
inuisance to Society; and the body of them are
morous as they are in these Southern States, may
perhaps, attempt to repeat the tragedy which
has lately been exhibited — in St. Domingo.
Thus, destruction, the whites & blacks, of one another,
succumb, subjugate, each other. We know
that the scenes of desolation & blood, which
have been displayed, was that unhappy & hor-
rible scene in the liberation of the slaves
which was proclaimed by the popular doc-
trine of Liberty & Equality.

But it remains that I take some
notice of what you have said of my
ambition to be at the head of the nation, and the
riches you have given to me. In doing
this, I will be avoid the asperity with
which you last letter abounds. That re-
lates to the doctrine of the apostles in 1 Cor 4:5
which has been considered already, and we
must grant that the apostles have taught

that Slavery is inadmissible under the Gospel dispensation, without obtaining a very different view of their writings than I have yet obtained. The crime of Men-stealing being mentioned by them does not prove it. This crime may be committed when a free member of a community is stolen away by a member of the same or another community, and deprived of his liberty; or when a Slave is stolen from his master. Thus we have laws among us to punish Negro-stealing, as well as horse-stealing. The various references to the law of God or enumeration of the duties & crimes which we find in the apostolic writings can not prove holding slaves to be a sin, unless it were specified among the crimes, or proved to be absolutely inconsistent with the divine law. But for clearing up this point, I refer to the arguments already produced, when the rule for doing to others as we would have them do to us, is as considered. — I observe that in considering the argument I advanced, from the

directions given by the apostles to Masters and
Servants, you only take up the direction given to
Servants, and represent it as a parallel to the
which is given to Christians generally, respect-
ing bearing abuse with meekness & patience.
But this is not considering the subject pro-
perly. If holding Slaves were unlawful, would
not Christians the Apostles, instead of direc-
ting Christian Masters to give to their
Slaves things just & equal as Servants, have
at once demanded their liberation? And
can we suppose in this case, that Christ-
ian "Servants under the yoke", would be for-
bidden despising their believing Masters, and
be directed, the more urgently, to render them
willing obedience? Where also, in justifi-
cation of the supposed parallel, shall we
find an example of an exhortation being
given to persons who smite & abuse their
fellow men, to give them things just & equal
in inflicting that abuse? ^{giving things just & equal to slaves.} But this is the

birection given to masters. I will just add once for all, on this passage, that the form of expression here used appears to be particularly suited to ^{the state of} Slaves: For their persons, & general circumstances in life, being at the disposal of their masters, the benefits bestowed on them may justly be considered as optional, & come properly under the description of a gift; but the wages of a hired Servant are by contract become a debt, and therefore, the payment may be compelled by law.

It is granted that great acts of wickedness may be over-ruled for good, and the crucifixion of our blessed Lord is a case in point, to prove the general proposition; but it is humbly conceived the cases are not parallel. If the statement made above is just, the African

by their own principles & actions have
forfeited their right to freedom in their
own country, and have their situation bet-
tered by being brought here & held as Slaves,
when used as the Scriptures direct. The bless-
ing therefore, bestowed on those who re-
experience converting grace among us, does
not appear always to come in the way of
over ruling great wickedness, to effect it,
in respect of their servitude; though in
some cases it may, and I believe, does. No-
ther argument was used in connexion with
this, at the Association; which I suppose
you have forgotten - It is this - That the
blessing of God has been bestowed abun-
dantly by effusions of Grace, on both mas-
ters & servants, in our churches. This could
hardly be expected to be bestowed on per-
sons living in the unrepented sin of
stealing, any other theft or gross unno-

rality.

The objection you made to the argument taken from the state of the Israelites, as proof that holding slaves is not against the moral law, has been already shewn to be an evasion. To support the objection, it is necessary for you to prove that the permission to hold slaves was peculiar to the Jewish ritual, or polity. I suppose it will hardly be contended, that their dwelling in houses, holding lands, sowing & reaping their fields, were peculiar articles of the dispensation under which they lived.

The arguments which stated that many who are called free are really in a more ⁿ ~~distressing~~ ^{ed} ~~situation~~ than a great part of the Slaves in this country, was intended to shew two things. 1st That such

is to - order of providence. There is a general
portion of the human race which accustoms
itself in a humbler sphere, and he goes through
the disposal of his fellow-men; and second-
ly, that people are often excited to discontent,
^{negligent} ~~refractory~~, & or compulsion, more by names, im-
aginations, & circumstances than by the reality
of things, or their essential qualities. The case
you have stated to do away this argument
is certainly a very pointed one; and it may
be very true, that Dr. H. is extremely tenacious
of his interesty imperious, vindictive, & also
in wealth; yet it is presumed the argu-
ment it affords does not well apply to the
general subject, though it may be particu-
lar cases. To the enslaving of a free man
who has not forfeited his liberty, it is hard
to apply with force; especially if he has
means and means for his own comfortable
support and for the improvement of his
so valuable purposes. Then there may
be instances of a situation in which
that of all the other about of 5000 \$.

opposed in his claim to reparation, by the
the master, with the argument "that ^{it} F. was still
better off than many of his ^{fellow} citizens." But will
you now permit me to state a case which
I apprehend to be more ^{or} ~~or~~ point, on the gene-
ral principle - I will suppose that Dr. F. and
10 of his neighbours have each of them obliga-
tions due to them to the amount of 1000 dollars,
this being their whole property, or dependence
for support. Dr. F. by his misconduct, or extra-
vagant disposition, has rendered himself liable
to lose the whole; and the obligation is taken
from him in a course of law, or by public autho-
rity, and placed in the hands of another person,
as a security for Dr. F.'s good behaviour. The
Rev. Mr. M. being quite the reverse to F. in
character of disposition, - being generous, with-
out compassion, & knowing F.'s situation
feels for him a generous tenderness; purcha-
ses his right to the bond for 200 £, and in
consequence of his engaging for F.'s good be-
haviour, & that neither he nor his family

shall come upon the parish for support, & be bond given up to him; if he recovers the amount. By his prudent & successful ~~use~~^{disposal} of the money, he so improves it, that, besides obtaining something for himself as a compensation for his trouble, he obtains for ¹⁶ his family a tolerable support, free from the care & trouble to him, of managing the fund; and which amounts to more than the usual interest on £1000; while by virtue of his accountability to the public for F.'s conduct, he has a control over his person, so that he restrains him from those vices & irregular actions, which would have occasioned his losing the whole of his property, and ^{had} made him a nuisance to society: And F. neither affluent, nor dignified in his circumstances, has by these means, a moderate competency with decency & contentment, tho under restraint. — The 10 neighbours of F. received their money as soon as it became due, and put it out at interest; but found they could not support themselves & families

by it without breaking in upon the principal, or living in wretched indigence; some of them limited themselves to this little, with what they could get by favour from their wealthy neighbours; which made them submit to a thousand indignities, kept them in a state of restless anxiety, reduced them to a state of dependence, & held them in a state of real want. The others who broke in upon their capital, fared a little better for a short time; but their stock continually decreasing, in a few years it was quite exhausted; their wants became extreme, and they were finally reduced to the necessity of begging, stealing, or perishing in hunger & nakedness.

Two questions arise on this case, "Has the neighbours of F. any reason to think their situation any better than his, when he was in

the Rev^d Mr^r M^r Wh^r? Or had he any just reason
to find fault with Mr^r M^r's conduct in getting
the money into his own hands; or in assessing
and exercising a controlling power over him
in these circumstances? It is presumed both
questions must be answered in the negative.

I have already stated my sentiments
concerning the neglects of duty respecting slaves
and the cruelties practised on them; which I
believe do extend to the manner of carrying
the Slave Trade, as well as to the usage of
slaves, in too many instances, among us.
It is unnecessary to repeat these things, or
what appear to me to be the best methods
to be pursued for obtaining reformation.
Had the Slave Trade no existence, and
was it proposed, de novo, I believe, from
the disagreeable nature of the business
and from the opportunity of affording

exercise of cruelty, I should oppose its being
engaged in; unless indeed it clearly appear-
ed necessary, as a mean of preserving the
lives of the poor heathen, and as the only
probable mean of bringing them at present
to an acquaintance with the Gospel. — But
the Slave Trade may be said to be in a
manner at an end. Our concern is to con-
duct ourselves aright toward the Slaves
in our country. And you will here per-
mit me to say, that it appears strange
to me, when I hear people professing
the most serious, conscientious sentiments
say, that they consider the Slave Trade,
and the holding of slaves to be sin; and
yet ~~do~~ not profess that they are not for
immediate emancipation. What can
it be right to continue in sin, that good
may come of it? Shall it be said of the

chief, the murderer, the adulterer & the hypo-
crite, that the time is not come for him to
desist from his wicked practices; he must con-
tinue his course in these vices, a little lon-
ger, at least till it is more convenient
for him to forsake them? We know in our
language a certain denomination of profes-
sing Christians spoke some years ago:
that they considered the holding of slaves
to be contrary to the golden law of God,
which hangs all the law and the prophets;
and that they considered it as their most
bounden duty, to take immediate mea-
sures for extirpating this abomination
among them³. This was speaking like one
in earnest. But what was their sub-
sequent conduct & profession — Among
persons generally possessing slaves, they
were silent on the subject, and did not

attempt to enforce their rules: And when called upon to explain this mysterious business, they said — "These rules did not suit ~~the~~ this country"; and "That they ^{had} agreed to suspend their operation" for the present.

That is, to suspend ^{in effect,} the operation ~~of~~ of the law of God, on which hang all the law & the prophets! I wish my friends, & the friends of truth, to avoid running on such rocks & quicksands. Their respectability, comfort, and usefulness require it; but especially the interests ^{require it} & honor of God's cause. The statement I have made of the subject, which I believe is according to the truth, if properly regarded, will assist the humane, conscientious man, to oppose cruelty & oppression in the case of slaves, with advantage, to one-

biorate their condition, by impressing both them & their masters (to their mutual advantage) with a just sense of their respective duties; and, instead of convulsing our country with domestic commotion by these measures, to promote its peace & security: and all this with consistency & dignity of character.

I hope I shall not be called again to write on this subject. Writing, destroys my health, & unfits me greatly for other duties; of which, I have so many to engage my attention, that writing, the most trying, to one of the whole, must commonly be performed when people — in general ^{are} asleep. I hope it may please God to give us both a right view of ~~the~~ his truth, with grace to do ¹⁵ ~~the~~ & continue in it with firmness,

Freeman

Dear Sir,

Your Friend & Servt.

Wm. F.