

TO THE REV. RALPH EMERSON, D. D.

*Professor in the Theological Seminary at
Andover.*

Dear Brother,—I suppose you will rejoice, and probably many of the readers of the Recorder also, that I now send my last letter. But if we have been the instruments of persuading some to look at this important subject in a calm and dispassionate manner, we shall have conferred some benefit upon the community. I am satisfied that it is a subject which ought to engage the attention of Christians much more than it now does. That it is a difficult and an exciting subject, is no reason why it should not be considered and discussed. It certainly claims the prayers of every servant of Christ in the world. I fully believe that there are many, in all the non-slaveholding States, who are deeply interested in the discussion of slavery, who do not belong to any society. They are perplexed in their minds to decide on any course. Some there are, who like yourself, "do not wish any new plan, but think the old one better." But should not all those who profess to feel that slavery is an "evil," a sin, "the monstrous offspring and curse of sin," seriously consider whether the subject does not demand of them some action; some discussion, either in the public papers, or by pamphlets, or in public meetings? Did not Clarkson and Wilberforce and their associates confer a benefit upon society by their labors? They found the whole world at ease upon the subject of the slave trade, and multitudes in Europe actively prosecuting this nefarious traffic. It was a long time before their stirring appeals produced any effect upon the public mind. Fourteen times did Mr. Wilberforce endeavor to bring this subject before the British Parliament, before they would listen to it with any serious attention. But the zeal of those who embarked in the cause of bleeding humanity, never flagged, until it had accomplished its object. A similar course was pursued in reference to colonial emancipation, and it has been crowned with signal success. I know that you and many others, who oppose the measures of the abolitionists, tell us that there is no parallel in the condition of the two countries, &c. But we are not convinced by your arguments.— We feel that slavery is the same evil, all the world over, and that the power which estab-

lished it, can easily abolish it. We know that there is some difference between the political relations, but still we believe that it is in the power of Congress to abolish Slavery in the Districts and Territories, and to prevent the traffic between the States. We fully believe that such action would give the death blow to the monster, and that it would soon be followed by an act of emancipation in most of the slave states. The abolitionists will never rest until such action is effected. To accomplish this object they will expend not only \$40,000 a year, as you say, but three times the amount, if it can be obtained. And such is the spirit which now pervades the bosoms of abolitionists, that I verily believe money will not be wanting to accomplish any plan for which it is needed. The Convention in the State of New York, raised ten thousand dollars, and the friends of the slave are ready "to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods;" if necessary, to effect his emancipation. Some of the pro-slavery papers in the city of New York, would persuade their southern friends that "abolition is on the wane," and that soon "not a single grease spot will be found to mark the place where it has set." I cannot say that they are not "sincere" in their opinions, but I am certain that they deceive themselves. The recent elections in Ohio and New York shows, that many abolitionists are true to the cause of the slave, and that they will sacrifice even their strong party feelings for his benefit. And, if I do not greatly mistake the spirit by which sound abolitionists are actuated, this will be more and more the fact, until a set of men are elected to Congress who will be disposed "to do justly, and to love mercy." And now, dear brother, will you allow me to ask what you, and such as feel as you do on this important subject, calculate to do? You have intimated that you do not desire anything more to be done than you are now doing. But I hope you will not cease to consider upon the subject until you change your views. Many who once felt as you do, have changed. Thousands of the most ardent colonizationists have come over to the Abolition Society. Those who gave most liberally of their substance to this society, because they panted for the freedom of the slave, have withdrawn from it, since they have become convinced that its action cannot have any extensive bearing upon the removal of slavery. Colonization has lost its hold upon New England. Mr. Gurley recently remarked in this town, in my hearing, that "he found he must give up New England,

though he deeply regretted it." If any man can give interest to the colonization cause, it is Mr. G. But I apprehend it is having an interest in the extreme south as well as in the north. A distinguished clergyman in Georgia remarked to an agent of the society, "we shall do nothing more for colonization, until abolition is put down." I am more and more satisfied that slaveholders in general, have patronized the society because they hoped it would take away from them the free colored population, and render the slave more quiet; I am strengthened in this opinion, from their own declarations and their own conduct. And are we to expect much from the "American Union?" I honor the men who originated the society. I have no doubt that their motives were pure, though they were called in question by some zealous abolitionists, and the measures adopted by the society were ridiculed most unsparingly. They wished to do something for the slave. They could not go with the abolitionists, and therefore they "struck out a new plan." But some, who favored their action, when they saw that but little was accomplished, and but little to be expected from any further action, have come over to our society. A gentleman of Boston informed me last winter, that one of the executive committee of that society told him that he had made several attempts to get the committee together, and that he had not been able to get a quorum for business. He may have been more successful since. But this does not look like emancipating the slaves. Perhaps the abolitionists will be accused of putting back this society as they are of putting back the cause of emancipation fifty or a hundred years. The Anti-Slavery Society is the only organization from which I can at present expect any efficient action, bearing upon Slavery, and I must therefore

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feel it to be my duty to continue with it, and lend it what aid I can. I do not say that all its measures, or the measures of all its auxiliaries, are unexceptionable. But I feel that I can go along with the society in its pursuit of the great object. And I honestly believe it will accomplish its object, notwithstanding the opposition it meets with both in the south and in the north. It would effect its object the sooner, if you and those who think as you do, would lend it your aid. But I will not join in the taunts which are thrown at you, if we never see you in our ranks. I will still believe that you hate Slavery until I have conclusive evidence to the contrary; better evidence than is to be derived from your neutrality. I will say to you, what I have often said to my brethren who think as you do—"if you can pray over this subject and do nothing to bring slavery to an end, I am not disposed to judge you. You are accountable to your own Master; continue to pray, and the Lord will show you the path of duty." And now, Sir, I must take leave of you in this discussion, unless I hear from you again.—I am not conscious of having given a distorted view of any thing you have written. If I have, and it is pointed out, and I am convinced of the fact, I will correct the error. I do not know in what light the community regard our correspondence. Perhaps they will think it harmless, and of but little use. In some things we certainly think alike, and I believe we shall neither of us be accused of abusing our opponents. I know not *how* Slavery will be disposed of in this country; but I feel very certain that it cannot exist in its present form, for many years. The world is against it. I sincerely wish that our brethren at the south would consent to meet us at the north, in a kind and friendly manner, and discuss the subject with reference to emancipation. They would find a much better spirit among the abolitionists than they imagine. The persons in whom they have placed confidence have deceived them. The pro-slavery papers, such as the Journal of Commerce, the Commercial Advertiser, and others who are of their opinion, have sent out an evil report of us, which has misled the best portion of the south and embittered their feelings against us. They will by and by perceive the perfidy of these editors, and will return upon them the execrations they have heaped upon us. I can only say of such editors, the Lord forgive them the wrong they have done us; but I cannot in charity add, "they

know not what they do." The ways of Providence are in this matter inscrutable.— I hope the abolitionists will earnestly pray for wisdom to direct them, and that they will act with discretion, and be influenced by a good spirit. I know not that I shall live to see the peaceable emancipation of the millions that are held in bondage in this happy country. I will daily pray that their freedom may not take place by their own violence. Clouds and darkness surround this subject, I know; but God can cause the clouds to disperse, and give us all the light that we need to direct our steps. I believe that a large body of the abolitionists look to him for guidance. The same united prayers which are offered every month for a blessing upon missionary operations are presented for this cause. The Lord will hear, and will answer in his own time.

Yours affectionately, S. Osgood.