

Theology

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Wrong About the Bible : A Response to Steve Wilkins
and Douglas Wilson's Doctrine of Slavery

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People who believe in the truthfulness and reliability of the Bible can be confused by its teaching on slavery. A recent example is found in *Southern Slavery as it Was*, by Steve Wilkins and Douglas Wilson, who argue that since the Bible regulates slavery, then "Christians who owned slaves in the [American] South were on firm scriptural ground."¹ According to these authors "[t]he Bible permits Christians to own slaves provided they are treated well,"² and slavery is a "wonderful issue upon which to practice"³ submission to the Bible.

Wilkins and Wilson's assessment of slavery is rejected below because it misinterprets the Bible, subjecting it to scorn for something it does not teach. Moreover, such an interpretation unwittingly silences any rational objection to the establishment of a contemporary slave state. The first section of this paper presents slavery as a distortion of labor and a result of man's fallen condition. Those who like Wilkins and Wilson think the Bible approves of slavery as long as slaves were treated well are mistaking its approbation of labor as an endorsement for mankind's perversion of labor into the form of slavery.⁴ Why do the Scriptures regulate slavery and yet simultaneously command us to love our neighbor as ourselves? Only when slavery is recognized as a perversion of labor is such a question satisfactorily answered.

The second section of this paper further discusses the New Testament's regulation of slavery, specifically Colossians 4:1. I argue that while a type of perpetual and/or racially based servitude like Southern slavery might be in view in the letter to the Colossians or other letters of the New Testament, it is not so exclusively. There were many kinds of slavery in the ancient world, and it is likely that certain kinds of servitude seemed more legitimate to the Apostles than others. Consequently, it is misleading to present the New Testament passages which regulate slavery as if any one of those forms were primarily in view or endorsed.

A final section suggests an evaluation of Southern slavery based on three principles. The positive evaluation of Southern slavery expressed in *Southern Slavery As It Was* assumes that since slavery is addressed by the New Testament and since the South had a social institution of the same name, then the latter should receive the same support as it is thought the former received by the Apostles. To the contrary, it is not unproven assumptions about the Apostles' attitudes toward slavery that should guide our thinking but clearly derived principles of Scripture. The final section suggests a method of evaluating any form of servitude utilizing three principles derived from Scripture - the dignity of man, a right to just compensation, and freedom from oppression.

1. Creation and Slavery

The failure to properly distinguish between the institution of labor, established and sanctioned by God in creation, and the perversion of that institution by fallen man into the form of slavery is the critical mistake Wilkins and Wilson have made. They believe that "in a fallen world, an institution like slavery will be accompanied by many attendant evils."⁵ Such an acknowledgment falls short of the truth. The circumstances attending slavery are indeed evil, but slavery itself is a result of a fallen world.

God created mankind without slavery. In Genesis 1:27- 28 we are told "God created man in His own image . . . male and female He created them." Adam and Eve are told to "fill the earth and subdue it." Before the fall procreation - "fill the earth" - and work - "subdue it" - were tandem privileges and responsibilities planted in the heart of mankind and in which they were to find physical pleasure, creative joy, intellectual satisfaction, and

overall purpose. The subjection of creation envisions dominion over all animal life ("the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground [1:28]") and all plant life ("work it and take care of it [2:15]"). Thus, as the image bearers of God, mankind is given mastery over all of life in creation, but not dominion over other men. Regarding the Genesis account one commentator has noted, ". . . the author's purpose seems not merely to mark man as different from the rest of the creatures; the narrative seems just as intent on showing that man is like God as well."⁶ Man is not given charge over his fellow man, only the lesser creatures. As such his life and labor is marked by a measure of freedom, self-sufficiency, and self-determination which ought not be encroached upon by others. Commenting upon the creation of mankind in his City of God, Augustine writes, ". . . he did not wish a rational creature, made in his own image, to have dominion save over irrational creatures; not man over man, but man over the beasts."⁷

After the fall in Genesis 3:17-24 mankind is cursed and labor takes on a new aspect. In particular, Adam is told, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Because of his sin, the submission of creation to him is reversed and frustrated (Rom.8:20-22). Labor thus becomes filled with strife and hardship.

Yet even in the curse, mankind is assured of survival through labor as it remains a means by which he may still experience the goodness of God. Adam and Eve are told they will still be able to make it through life by the means of labor. John Calvin writes that "the asperity of this punishment . . . is mitigated by the clemency of God, because something of enjoyment is blended with the labors of"⁸ and offers this paraphrase of the curse: "Although the earth, which ought to be the mother of good fruits only, be covered with thorns and briers, still it shall yield to thee sustenance whereby thou mayest be fed."⁹

Thus, after the fall, labor is the means given by God from which sustenance for life is gained and by which man resists "the gravity of his fallen nature."¹⁰ The close association of man with his responsibility to labor as seen in the opening chapters of Genesis has prompted some to view labor as ". . . a matter of being, of character, of what makes man man."¹¹ Unless he works, his real identity is only "theoretical" because work manifests and externalizes who he is.¹² At the most fundamental level work can be understood as "basic social reality" and "a means of loving God by serving human needs."¹³

Slavery, on the other hand, such as practiced in antebellum America, has no part in God's order. It is a perversion of labor, a means by which man rejects the truth about identity and reality as established by God. According to an ancient father of the church, if mankind needed slavery God would have created a slave along with Adam and Eve. Since He didn't, slavery can only be the result of the fall.

God has made men sufficient to minister to themselves or rather to their neighbor also. . . . For to that end did God grant us both hands and feet, that we might not stand in need of servants. Since not at all for needs sake was the class of slaves introduced, else even along with Adam had a slave been formed; but it is the penalty of sin and the punishment of disobedience.¹⁴

If slavery is a perversion of the original idea of labor, then the texts of the Bible instructing masters and slaves deserve the highest level of interpretive caution. Regardless of how disfigured the form of labor is in slavery, it is still labor being addressed. Although it is a perversion of God's creational structure for work, slavery is still an embodiment of work, and the relationships therein are still work-like. In essence, the Bible would have taught what it teaches about labor even if slavery had never existed. For this reason instructions regarding "masters" and "slaves" are culturally relevant even in the absence of what we know as "slavery" because certain principles of labor are made clear, e.g., fair treatment of employees, working honestly and industriously, etc.

Moreover and for the sake of argument, even if the correspondence between Southern slavery and the slavery of the ancient world were exact, the New Testament instruction would only be evidence that masters and slaves were instructed by Christianity's redemptive message and teaching. The mere fact of instruction to masters and slaves is not "firm scriptural ground" for owning another human being, but only proof that the redemptive message of the Bible reaches labor and relationships in whatever forms they are found even if it is the worst form of slavery. It does not vindicate, legitimize, or permit any or every form in which labor might exist. Inferences beyond this burden the Bible with an endorsement it does not give. If the Bible's evaluation of slavery is sought one need only listen to what the Apostle Paul says to slaves themselves - ". . . if you can gain your freedom, do so."¹⁵ He never says that to a husband or a wife!

2. Colossians 4:1 and Slavery in the Ancient World

Certain passages from the New Testament¹⁶ have been recently cited which purport to make it clear that "nothing could be plainer than the fact that a Christian could simultaneously be a slave owner and a member in

good standing in a Christian church."17 As stated above, it is not plain that Southern slavery and the slavery being addressed by the New Testament precisely correspond. The degree to which they do must be determined before any application can be made. Slavery or servitude resists a single definition. Many forms of servitude existed in the ancient world. The Bible does not categorically condemn "slavery" per se, because it would condemn many forms of labor, some more legitimate than others, which existed throughout the ancient world, all semantically identified by the same term.

The Hebrew and Greek terms for "slave" or "servant" in the Bible describe many different arrangements and circumstances other than those of a slave in the Antebellum South. If we observe that the terms "slave" or "slavery" express many forms of servitude or employment in the ancient world,18 it is clear that certain forms unlike the slavery of the American experience are in view. In the ancient world and in the literature of the Bible, voluntary and involuntary servitude results for different reasons - war,19 poverty, debt, contractual,20 restitution,21 or birth.22 Most of these kinds of servitude were not perpetual.

For example, Colossians 4:1 cited as support for the legitimacy of Southern slavery23 calls for masters to "give your bondservants what is right and fair" but it probably meant something different for the slave owners of ancient Colossae than we might initially think. For a Southern master "just and fair" provision meant he provided his slaves with food, clothing, shelter, and/or maybe permission to leave the plantation for an evening out. For a Colossian master it generally meant basic humane treatment, but, depending on circumstances, it may have included the right to pursue freedom according to the well-established route of manumission practiced by the Roman world of the first century, something not allowed an American slave.

Between the years of 81-49 B.C. it is estimated on the basis of the five percent tax for all servants set free that over 500,000 slaves became freedmen through this process.24 It is likely that such a practice was known and common throughout all the cities and regions of the Roman empire addressed by the New Testament writers, including Colossae. If ancient forms of slavery included the possibility of liberty through manumission, then the right of a slave to seek his freedom could be in view when Paul calls upon the Colossian masters to be "just" and "fair." Admittedly, the command to be "just" and "fair" may be addressed to situations such as existed in the South, but we have shown above that it would at the same time have in view certain forms of servitude in which the pursuit of freedom was allowed and encouraged.

To summarize, one ought not to assume a one-to-one correspondence between Southern slavery and the slavery addressed by the New Testament or that any particular endorsement was given to the forms addressed. The Bible's teaching on government provides a helpful illustration. If the New Testament commands the Christian to "submit himself to the governing authorities (Rom.13:1)" it does not mean the Scripture endorses dictatorship or oppression. Just as slavery is a kind of work, corrupt government is still a form of the ideal instituted and ordained for our well-being. It is our attitude towards God's institution not an uncritical endorsement of government's distortion by us that is being addressed. Similarly the New Testament's instruction to the master/slave situation is not an endorsement of slavery but of right relationships within the field of labor.

Evaluating Southern Slavery

Since the Bible includes a variety of arrangements under the heading of servitude, and since it includes some forms more legitimate than others, this would explain why the writers of the Bible do not categorically condemn the institution of slavery. Instead, the Scriptures' attitude toward slavery is determined by evaluating practices and circumstances which invariably accompany particular forms of slavery, in the light of particular principles taught in Scripture. The following texts and examples offer a possible foundation for such a method, with attention given to three areas: the dignity of man; his right to just compensation; and the guarantee of freedom from oppression, all of which were systematically denied in American slavery.

1) Dignity of Man Exodus 21:16 forbids the foundation upon which American slavery rested. He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death. The laws given to Moses regarding servitude forbid kidnaping, the chief point of origin for slave trade in the ancient world and the singular source of American slavery. Notice the condemnation is two-fold: the one who kidnaps and sells the man is condemned but so is anyone found in possession of such a man. A man taken against his will could never be considered the rightful property of anyone. Someone found in possession of stolen property is never condemned outright to death in the Bible, but someone found in possession of a human soul is put to death. The sentence of death therefore indicates there are no circumstances under which a kidnapped man can ever rightfully become anyone's property. The unique nature of man is furthered emphasized by noticing the difference between Exodus 21:16 where the Hebrew term is "man," and Deuteronomy 24:7 where the Hebrew term for "soul." The variation demonstrates how different a kidnaped man is to be thought of than any kind of property. He is not property but a living soul. The penalty is death to anyone trying to possess him.

components of such an institution. To establish Southern slavery's legitimacy on the basis of superficial similarities in terminology shared with the circumstances of servitude in the ancient world ignores the principled opposition of the Bible; burdens Scripture beyond its intention; and blurs critical distinctions between God's institution of labor and man's perversion of it into slavery. No one can maintain he is treating his fellow man right while simultaneously holding him as a slave as practiced in the Southern system of slavery. Any attempt to persuade otherwise has no foundation in the Bible but only in a mindset that made the abolitionism of the 19th century so necessary.

Appendix A

Presbyterians And Slavery

The rejection of slavery by the church is presented by Wilkins and Wilson as a recent development coming from "[o]ur humanistic and democratic culture . . .",³⁵ an inflammatory issue which obscured the true meaning of the war through a campaign of "abolitionist propaganda,"³⁷ giving "an issue to radical revolutionaries by which they could provoke animosity against the South."³⁸ From this viewpoint, the injustice of slavery was manufactured by "radical and Unitarian"³⁹ forces born of the Enlightenment and "driven by a zealous hatred of the Word of God."⁴⁰ Such opinions focus too much attention on a thin band of intellectual history developing during the late 17th century such as "the capture of Harvard by the Unitarians in 1805"⁴¹ and ignore the antagonism toward slavery stretching back to the ancient church.

The time previous to the rise of abolitionism in America was riddled with deep conflict over slavery. As early as 1820 luminaries of the Republic such as John Quincy Adams believed slavery "the great and foul stain upon the North American Union."⁴² Adams envisioned the "dissolution of the Union for the cause of slavery and a war between the two severed portions of the Union" resulting in the "extirpation of slavery from this whole continent."⁴³ The abolition of slavery was, in his mind, a "contemplation worthy of the most exalted soul."⁴⁴ The maturing of America's seminal commitment to human dignity as reflected in the convictions of Adams intersected with theological turmoil throughout the churches of America. In this appendix the roles and views of some Presbyterian denominations and their ministers provide a sample of a national conscience deeply agitated by the slavery issue, hoping for a gradual end of the institution and attempting interim compromises, but ultimately drawn into the war prophesied by Adams.

1801 Declaration of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America

The harbinger of American religious conflict over slavery within presbyterianism might be the events of 1800 when the Reverend Alexander McLeod, a Presbyterian minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America, serving in New York, refused to accept a call to become the minister of a congregation because slaveholders were in the congregation.⁴⁵ The record states further, "The Presbytery now having the subject regularly before them, resolved to purge the Church of this dreadful evil. They enacted that no slaveholder should be retained in their communion."⁴⁶ In 1801 the same denomination declared,

The holding of human beings, of whatever race or colour, as slaves, being in every aspect opposed to the word of God, and inconsistent with the principles of the gospel of Christ, a gross infringement upon the rights of man, and so a sin against God, should be held and treated by national authorities as a crime. Nor can any constitution of government be just or moral which does not provide against the commission of such a crime within its jurisdiction (Exod 21:16, 1 Tim 1:9-10, 1 Cor 7:21, Rom 13:4, Isa 58:6).⁴⁷ In 1802 McLeod published a treatise denouncing slavery as "a manifest violation of four precepts of the decalogue"⁴⁸ and arguing by inference "the whole decalogue is violated."⁴⁹ His answer to those objecting that slavery was tolerated in the early Church, bears repeating:

. . . [I]f such practices are not formally mentioned and condemned in the New Testament, the principles from which they proceed are reprobated in the strongest terms. The whole system of slavery is opposite to the spirit of that religion which is righteousness and peace.⁵⁰ For those who could not afford to simply release their slaves because of their investment, McLeod wrote, "Do justice, however. Deal mercifully with your servant. When the wages which might have annually earned shall have amounted to the purchase money, and lawful interest, set immediately at liberty from your control."

1818 Declaration of the Presbyterian Church

McLeod's reaction to slavery is echoed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1818. When the assembly dealt with the issue of slavery in America, they issued the following declaration:

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, having taken into consideration the subject of SLAVERY, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it to the churches and people under care. We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoin that 'all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system; it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others whether they receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery - consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence. The evils to which the slave is always exposed often take place in fact and in their very worst degree and form; and where all of them do not take place, as we rejoice to say that in many instances, through the influence of the principles of humanity and religion on the minds of the masters, they do not, still, the slave is deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries which inhumanity and avarice may suggest.⁵¹ The Assembly's declaration is thorough, calling for "the unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world" and "exertions to EFFECT A TOTAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY."⁵² Presbyterian writers and subsequent assemblies debated the precise meaning and implications of the 1818 declaration,⁵³ but it stands as typical of the sentiments expressed among Presbyterians.

Albert Barnes, Robert L. Dabney, and James

H. Thornwell

The centrality of the Bible to the debate over slavery is aptly demonstrated in the remark of Northern theologian Albert Barnes that "there is not a judge on any bench who would pronounce a decision that would be clearly contrary to a principle laid down in the Sacred Scriptures; there is not a department of government that would not admit that if the Bible has settled a question, it is final."⁵⁴ Barnes wrote *An Inquiry into the Scriptural View of Slavery* as a challenge to the prevailing attitude toward slavery exhibited in the opinions of Southern Presbyterian theologians such as Robert Dabney and James Thornwell. For Dabney and Thornwell slavery was necessary because a human being responsible enough to act as a slave was still not responsible enough to be a free man. The relationship was construed paternally. A slave is like a minor child in his mental capacity, but unlike a child, he never matures. He is "deemed by the law unfitted for his own safe control" and placed "in the hands of a citizen supposed by the law to be more competent."⁵⁵ Even though the arrangement was involuntary, to attack such an institution was tantamount to overthrowing the hierarchy of relationships taught by the Bible, not unlike an attack on "the righteousness of the parental authority over minors, and indeed every form of governmental restraint of magistrates over individuals not grounded in conviction of crime."⁵⁶ Slavery was "[a] social element in all states, from the dawn of history until the present period" and "the slightest caution" against it could not be found in the Bible.⁵⁷

Against the arguments of Dabney and Thornwell, Barnes' three hundred and eighty four page treatment stands as the superior exegetical and ethical treatment of slavery during his era, arguing cogently that the slavery of the South not be confused with conditions of apprenticeship or serfdom.⁵⁸ Rejecting Dabney's assertion that questioning slavery was an attack on the hierarchy of the family, Barnes remarked "the relation of parent and child is a natural relation, that of master and slave is not. . . . Nature not force, has made the condition of a minor. . . ."⁵⁹

George Armstrong and Cortland Van Rensselaer

The Southern reaction to Barnes is exemplified in George Armstrong's *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery*. Armstrong, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Norfolk, Virginia, presents an argument typical of many works of the era,⁶⁰ stating ". . . it appears to us too clear to admit of either denial or doubt, that the Scriptures do sanction slave-holding."⁶¹ Armstrong argued that slave-holding in the Old Testament was "expressly permitted by divine command, and under the New Testament . . . nowhere forbidden or denounced, but on the contrary, acknowledged to be consistent with the Christian character and profession."⁶² Like Dabney and others, he agreed the slave trade was wrong because it involved the crime of kidnaping,⁶³ but considered any condemnation of owning slaves to be "a direct impeachment of the Word of God."⁶⁴

Armstrong's work was critically reviewed by Cortland Van Rensselaer, editor of *Presbyterian Magazine* provoking an exchange of letters between the two men. What began as a critical review of his work, quickly

escalated into the exposure of serious differences regarding slavery lying beneath the veneer of consensus among Northern and Southern Old School Presbyterians. In response to Armstrong's insistence that "the word of God contains no deliverance, express of clearly implied, respecting emancipation" Van Rensselaer objected that a hermeneutic or interpretive guideline for situations not expressly envisioned in Scripture was necessary for dealing with American slavery and he wrote,

The Church has a right to expound, and to apply, the word of God, in reference to all the relations of life, and to all the changing aspects of society. The exposition and application must, of course, be consistent with the spirit and principles of the Bible, but they are not limited to the mere word of its letter, nor to any general or universal formula of expression. From the nature of the case, exposition requires enlargement of scriptural statement, and application implies a regard to providential developments and to the varying circumstances of social and public life. . . . The Church has, in every age, the right to expound the sacred Scriptures according to the light granted by the Holy Spirit, and to apply its interpretation to all cases, judged to be within its spiritual jurisdiction.⁶⁵ Van Rensselaer reasoned that "Christians, whose minds and hearts are imbued with the spirit of their Lord, cannot regard with complacency an institution whose origin is wrong, and whose continuance depends upon the inferior condition of a large class of their fellow-men."⁶⁶ At the outset of the exchange spanning over the months of 1858, Van Rensselaer offered to "cordially acquit" Armstrong "of any intention to contribute to the propagation of extreme opinions"⁶⁷ but in the end he complained, "I fear that, without intending it, you have lowered the tone of public sentiment wherever your influence extends, and have impaired the obligations of conscientious Christians on this great subject."⁶⁸

In course of debate it was argued that the provenance of anti-slavery sentiment was found in a movement within Christianity itself. One Presbyterian churchman wrote as follows:

That slavery has been an incubus, crushing out the manliness of master and servant, and has prostituted the moral tone in our Church, is a truth acknowledged in some form by nearly every man of note in her communion. The moral sense of the world being at variance with oppression, has often forced this admission from those who upheld slavery. And the genius of Christian civilization undermining this institution throughout the world, the untrammelled utterances of good men in all parts of our Church, have, at various times, united in its strong condemnation.⁶⁹

While it is true that no monolithic movement against slavery existed within the early church⁷⁰ and the church frequently offered justification for servitude,⁷¹ nevertheless, the incompatibility of slavery with the Scriptures was felt by an impressive few whose opinions eventually triumphed. As early as the first century Clement of Rome reminded the church "that many among ourselves have delivered themselves to bondage, that they might ransom others"⁷² indicating that some early Christians actually sold themselves into slavery in order to free slaves. The preaching of Gregory of Nyssa has been described by one writer as "the most energetic and absolute reprobation of slavery."⁷³ Other early church writers speak of Christians purchasing slaves in order to free them ⁷⁴ or of St. Melania, a millionaire Roman of the fifth century, who exhausted her fortune purchasing liberty for thousands of slaves.⁷⁵ John Chrysostom arguably "the most prominent doctor of the Greek Church and the greatest preacher ever heard in a Christian pulpit,"⁷⁶ claimed that "Christ came He put an end to this. . . . So that it is not necessary to have a slave: or if it be at all necessary, let it be about one only . . . if you collect many, you do it not for humanity's sake but in self-indulgence. Since if it be in care for them, I bid you occupy none of them in ministering to yourself, but when you have purchased them and have taught them trades whereby to support themselves, let them go free."⁷⁷

Conclusion

The abolitionism of the nineteenth century has been recently represented by authors Steve Wilkins and Doug Wilson as an evil born of humanistic error which brought America into further error. They ask, ". . . who cannot lament the damage done to both white and black that occurred as a consequence of the way it was abolished?"⁷⁸ The answer of a 19th century Presbyterian churchman bears repeating.

It is often objected to the present course taken to destroy slavery, that it is not the one we desired and thought best. It is true that many philanthropists have devised schemes which they thought best adapted for its final destruction. It is but fair to acknowledge that those States where it existed had the clearest knowledge of the system and had any scheme devised by man been effectual, doubtless theirs would have been the one. But it is not the doing of man; the hand of the Lord is evidently at work It seems very proper that man's wisdom should not have the honor of this work, because we delayed it so long, and threw so many obstacles in the way of its accomplishment, that we proved ourselves unworthy to be the instruments of its destruction. . . . when there seemed the least human probability of the thing being done, then the Lord led us by a way we knew not. In this we have only another illustration of the common course of God's providence. Seldom are we led by the way we expect, even to the gratification of our wishes; and it is well-nigh never by the means and methods anticipated. But so the result is attained, let us be content even though our

wisdom was not consulted in its achievement. We can have but little faith in the sincerity of those friends of emancipation who perpetually prate about the wrongs done us in taking away our negroes (emphasis mine).⁷⁹ The use of the Bible to defend Southern slavery by Presbyterians such as Thornwell, Dabney, and Armstrong eventually exasperated the patience of America, setting into motion the only means by which emancipation could be won. On the other hand, Presbyterians like McLeod, Van Rensselaer, and Barnes also reasoned from the Scriptures. Their arguments resonated with the conscience of a nation and helped to deliver a faltering republic out of slavery. Wilkins and Wilsons' complaints about the manner of such a deliverance seem to underestimate the sheer strength of slavery's tyranny, a tyranny defended by a cadre of theologians to whose opinions their own bear resemblance.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Steve Wilkins and Douglas Wilson, *Southern Slavery As It Was* (Moscow: Canon P, 1996)17.
- 2 Wilkins et al. 12.
- 3 Wilkins, et al. 12.
- 4 Guenther Hass "The Kingdom and Slavery: A Test Case For Social Ethics" *Calvin Theological Journal*, 28 (1993) 74-89.
- 5 Wilkins, et al. 10.
- 6 John Sailhammer *Genesis Expositor's Bible Commentary* Frank E. Gaeblein ed. v.2 p.37 Zondervan P. Grand Rapids 1990.
- 7 Book 19:15-16 Loeb Classical Library trans. W.C. Greene. *Augustine City of God VI* no.416 Harvard University P. Cambridge mcmxix p.187 (my emphasis).
- 8 p.174.
- 9 Calvin's Commentaries v.1 p.175 Baker Book House Grand Rapids reprinted 1989.
- 10 "Labor" C.W. Carter *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* v.3 1975 p.847.
- 11 Udo Middelman *Pro-Existence: The Place of Man in the Circle of Reality* Intervarsity P. Downers Grove 1974 p.35.
- 12 Middlemann.
- 13 James. F. Childress and John Macquarrie ed. *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westminster p. 1986) Ronald Preston "Doctrine of Work" p.686.
- 14 John Chrysostom "Homily XL 1Cor.15.29" ed. Philip Schaff *A Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers "Homilies on First Corinthians"*(Peabody: Hendrickson P. 1994) v.12 p.248.
- 15 1Corinthians 7:21.
- 16 Wilkins, et al. 17-18 1Timothy 6:1-4a, Eph.6:5-9.
- 17 Wilkins, et al. 18.
- 18 Employees (Gen.27:40; 29:15; 29:20; 30:26; 1Sam.4:9); royal servants (Gen.40:20; 41:10; 50:7, Ex.5:21, 7:10, 10:7, 2Sam.16:19); soldiers (2Sam.2:12; 3:22; 8:7); ambassadors (2Sam.10:2-4); worshippers of God or idols (Ex.3:12, 9:1; Deut.4:19; 8:19).
- 19 2Chron.28:5-15.
- 20 Ex.21:2, Lev.25:39.
- 21 Ex.22:3.
- 22 Ex.21:4.
- 23 Wilkins, et al. 18.
- 24 Tenney Frank "The Sacred Treasury and the Rate of Manumission" *American Journal of Philology* 53 (1932).
- 25 Deut.26:6-8 c.f. Exodus 1:6-15; 6:5; Ps.102:20.
- 26 Amos 1:6, 9.
- 27 Lev.19:34, Ex.22:21, Ex.23:9, Deut. 1:16, 10:17,19, 27:19.
- 28 Ex.21:3-4, 7-11.
- 29 Lev. 25:44-46.
- 30 2 Chron.28:8-15.
- 31 Wilkins, Wilson 11.
- 32 Wilkins, Wilson 39.
- 33 c.f Appendix B.
- 34 James H. Thornwell, "The Rights and the Duties of Masters" *God Ordained This War* ed. David Chesebrough (University of South Carolina P: Columbia, 1991)177-192.
- 35 Wilkins et al. 12.
- 36 Wilkins, Wilson 11.
- 37 Wilkins, Wilson 23.
- 38 Wilkins, Wilson 36.
- 39 Wilkins, Wilson 12.
- 40 Wilkins, Wilson 13.
- 41 Wilkins et al. 12.

- 42qtd. in William Lee Miller *Arguing About Slavery* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996) 187.
- 43qtd. in William Lee Miller 193.
- 44qtd. in William Lee Miller 187.
- 45Wilkins and Wilson's suggestion on page 10 of their booklet that slavery is vindicated if one merely steps back in time is slightly ironic in light of McCleod's account.
- 46Reformation Principles Exhibited by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America (1806), "Part One, A Brief Historical View of the Church, II, iii, last paragraph.
- 47Reformation Principles Exhibited by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America Part Two, Declaration and Testimony, 29.4 emphasis mine.
- 48Alexander McLeod Negro Slavery Unjustifiable, A Discourse (New York: T&J Swords 1802) 5.
- McLeod's entire work, 28 pages long, is available online- <http://covenanter.org/McLeod/negro.htm>.
- 49McLeod 5.
- 50McLeod 17.
- 51Record of General Assembly.
- 52Record of General Assembly.
- 53c.f. "Slavery in the Church Courts" *The Danville Quarterly Journal*, 4 (Dec. 1864 516-556).
- 54Albert Barnes *An Inquiry into the Scriptural View of Slavery* (Parry & McMillan, Philadelphia, 1855 reprinted by Negro History P Detroit, 1969) 21.
- 55R.L. Dabney *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney v 3 332 c.f. James H. Thornwell, "The Rights and the Duties of Masters" God Ordained This War* ed. David Chesebrough (University of South Carolina P: Columbia, 1991)177-192.
- 56R.L. Dabney *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney v 3 332.*
- 57qtd. in Charles A. Anderson "Presbyterians Meet the Slavery Problem" (*Journal of Presbyterian History March, 1951*) 9.
- 58Barnes 44.
- 59Barnes 42.
- 60C.f. Josiah Priest *Bible Defence of Slavery* Bible Defence of Slavery Josiah Priest (Rev. W.S. Brown, Glasgow, Ky, 1853 republished by Negro History Press, Detroit, 1969); James H. Thornwell, "The Rights and the Duties of Masters" *God Ordained This War* ed. David Chesebrough (University of South Carolina P: Columbia, 1991)177-192.
- 61George D. Armstrong *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery* (Charles Scribner, 1857 reprinted by Negro Universities Press, 1969) 145.
- 62Armstrong 145.
- 63Steve Wilkins and Douglas Wilson give contemporary expression to the convictions of Armstrong condemning the slave trade but insisting that [o]wning slaves is not an abomination. The Bible does not condemn it, and those who believe the Bible are bound to refrain in the same way (*Southern Slavery As It Was* p.21).
- 64Armstrong 16.
- 65Armstrong 145.
- 66Dr. Van Rensselaer's Reply to Dr. Armstrong (*Presbyterian Magazine. Feb.1858* 65-85)
- 77.
- 67Dr. Van Rensselaer's Reply to Dr. Armstrong 24.
- 68Dr. Van Rensselaer's Reply to Dr. Armstrong 26.
- 69Dr. Van Rensselaer's Second Rejoinder. .
- 70"Slavery in the Church Courts" 517.
- 71c.f.. James Moorhead *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War* 1860-1869 (New Haven: Yale University P, 1978) 82-128.
- 72c.f. David Davis *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University P, 1966) 62-90.
- 73 Letter to the Corinthians 55 ed. J.B.Lightfoot and J.R.Harmer *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House P, 1984) 80.
- 74Allard 37.
- 75Constitutions of the Holy Apostles Bk.2.
- 76Paul Allard, "Slavery" *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol.14(New York: Encyclopedia P, 1913) 36-39.
- 77C. Baur, "John Chrysostom" *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol.8 (New York: Encyclopedia P, 1913) 452. c.f Philip Shaff "The Life and Work St. John Chrysostom" intro. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Commenting on the devotion of those who have compiled Chrysostom's sermons a compiler's "wife was so jealous of his devotion to Chrysostom that she threatened to burn his manuscripts.!"
- 78John Chrysostom "Homily XL 1Cor.15.29" ed. Philip Schaff *A Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers "Homilies on First Corinthians"*(Peabody: Hendrickson P. 1994) v.12 p.248.
- 79Wilkins and Wilson 39.
- 80"Slavery in the Church Courts" 548 (Regrettably, the positive identification of the author is unknown).

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