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ON THE

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DELIVERED AT PEACHAM, VERMONT,

DECEMBER 17, 1837.


BY REV. LEONARD WORCESTER.

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DISCOURSE.

LUKE, XXIII. 34.

THEN SAID JESUS, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM ; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT
THEY DO.

IN a preceding discourse from this very interesting portion of holy scripture, it was proposed to consider, I. The affecting circumstances in which the Lord Jesus was placed, when he uttered this prayer. II. The import of the prayer itself. And, III. The reason subjoined : " For, they know not what they do." Having attended, somewhat particularly, to these things respectively, attention was invited to several remarks, which seemed to be naturally presented. Particularly, 1. That we might learn from the subject the wonderful tenderness and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ for poor sinners. While suffering the dreadful tortures of crucifixion, and while he was treated with every mark of indignity and scorn, by his cruel and inhuman murderers, who hated him without a cause, his prayer for them was, " Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." 2. That the subject places all ingratitude and opposition to Christ in the most hateful and odious light. 3. That the subject furnishes reason to hope, even in respect to sinners who are doing most wickedly, that they are not yet given entirely over,—that the Savior has not yet ceased to intercede for them. And, 4. That we might learn from the subject the nature of that forgiveness, which we are required to exercise, towards those who do us injuries ; and how suitable it must be that we exercise this forgiveness. Since Christ prayed for the forgiveness of his very murderers, who shall withhold forgiveness from those who do them wrong ?

When your attention was invited to this interesting subject, it was intimated that it was my design, in the sequel, to make some use of it, with reference to a very awful and tragical scene of wickedness, which has recently been enacted in a distant part of our country, of which you have all heard, probably, with deep emotion ; and in respect to which it cannot but be desirable that all our feelings should be exactly right ; such as will be approved by him to whom ourselves, as well as the guilty perpetrators of this dreadful tragedy, must give account. The awful and alarming scene of wickedness, to which reference is had, it is scarcely necessary to say, is that which has recently been enacted in the young, and growing, and, but lately, very reputable city of Alton, in the State of Illinois, and which involved the deliberate and cruel murder of a highly respected and worthy minister of the gospel, the Rev. ELIJAH PARISH LOVEJOY, formerly

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editor of the St. Louis Observer, at St. Louis, Missouri, and more recently of the Alton Observer, at Alton; both very respectable religious newspapers; in the latter of which, especially, the cause of general emancipation was also advocated. With reference to this deplorable event, the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society have said, in a resolution by them adopted, "That the ministers of our holy religion, without distinction of sect, are called upon in the most impressive manner, to lift up their voice like a trumpet, on beholding one of their sacred profession, preëminent for his moral worth, deliberately murdered by public assassins; that into every meeting house the dead body of the Alton martyr should be carried, gory with blood, (in imagination, if not in form,) that all the people may look upon it, and be filled with indignation and horror."

Well, my friends, I am quite willing to do all that can be incumbent on me, to bring "the dead body of the Alton martyr, gory with blood," into this "meeting house, that all this people may look upon it." Were it convenient, I would not object to its being done even in form. You must allow me to say, however, that I could not consent to all this, just that you might "be filled with indignation and horror." For greatly do I fear that there are other feelings, of which it is all important that you, and myself, and others, should be possessed, on *such* an occasion, in which there is much more reason to apprehend that you, and myself, and a multitude of others, will be sadly deficient, than there is that there will be any great deficiency in the emotion of "indignation and horror." In introducing "the dead body of the Alton martyr" here, I would that you might all so look upon it, as to be led to feel just as it must become those to feel who profess to be disciples of, or to hope for salvation by, that glorious Savior who, when he was being nailed to the cross, prayed for his unrelenting, cruel murderers, "Father, forgive them." But, just to "be filled with indignation and horror" would do little, very little, towards bringing any one to such a state of feeling. Let us, however, look at the affecting case.

[In delivering this discourse, the story of what was done at Alton, on the night of November 7, was here related, somewhat at length. But it cannot be needful to repeat it here, as the public are familiar with it already. Having related the story, the preacher proceeded:]

Thus, my friends, I have given you, somewhat in detail, the story of this dreadful deed; from which it appears that here, in this our boasted land of liberty, in which the Constitution of every State, not excepting the States of Missouri and Illinois, solemnly guarantees to every citizen the liberty of speech and of the press, responsible only to the laws of the State for any abuse of such liberty; a citizen,—so far as appears, a peaceable, unoffending citizen,—a christian, too,—yes, a christian minister even,—has been five times wantonly assailed by a lawless mob, exasperated against him without cause;—has been three times driven to suspend the publication of an able, and generally, at least, well conducted religious newspaper, by the destruction of his press;—and, in attempting to reëstablish it the fourth time, has fallen a victim to their relentless, malignant

rage, their cruel violence. Yes, has been made a "martyr, gory with blood,"—a martyr to the cause of liberty,—for all the freemen in our land to look upon; yes, and the vile mob triumphant. Not even an attempt is made to put it down, or to bring the perpetrators of this diabolical wickedness to justice. There is even reason to believe that many, whose oaths of office bind them, under penalty of the imprecated wrath of the Almighty, to sustain the authority of the laws, and the freedom of the press, do yet somewhat more than merely connive at these outrageous proceedings of a reckless and infuriated mob; and those who would gladly discountenance this atrocious wickedness dare not lift a finger in opposition. Thus, for the time, at least, the freedom of the press is there forcibly annihilated. The constitution and laws are prostrated, and trodden under foot. "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." Literally, "the sons of violence prevail."

As to the lamented victim of this outrageous violence, it does not appear,—so far as I have seen, it is not even pretended, that he was chargeable with any violation of the Constitution, or of any law of the State, or of his country. He barely asserted and defended his right, the right, too, and one of the dearest civil rights, of every freeman in the country, to write and publish his sentiments on whatever subject he pleased, the subjects of popery and slavery not excepted, responsible only for his abuse of the privilege. Even in taking arms in defence of his rights, and of his property, on the fatal night, he did only what he was sustained in doing, by the laws of the State, and by public opinion. He was only defending his undeniable rights, and his property, against unprovoked aggression and violence. The taking of his life by his infuriate assailants, therefore, was an outrageous and most aggravated murder, which must have involved every one of them in awful blood-guiltiness. Yes, against every one of them the voice of a brother's blood crieth unto heaven from the ground.

So far, my friends, I suppose you all agree with me. Yet there may be some things, pertaining to this most lamentable event, in which you may not all concur with me in opinion. Three times, already, once at St. Louis, and twice at Alton, had the press of this lamented victim of relentless persecution been destroyed by lawless violence. In each of these cases, the mob escaped with impunity, and was completely triumphant. These repeated successes must have increased its confidence in its own strength, and its contempt of the laws, and of public authority. Thus triumphant, and confident in its own strength, the ruling mob had declared its fixed determination to prevent, at all hazards, the reëstablishment of Mr. Lovejoy's press, and paper, in that city. It was manifest, too, that the civil authority was powerless, and either *could* not, or *would* not sustain him in asserting, and attempting to regain, his undeniably just rights. Of all this, too, he was himself fully convinced. For, in a letter to a friend, written some weeks before his death, he said, "There is no safety for me, and no defence in this place, either in

the laws, or in the ægis of public opinion." Now, though I am aware that I differ from many wiser and better men, and though I do it with great reluctance, yet I am constrained to say, for myself, that I cannot perceive that it was, or could be, required of our lamented brother, or that it could be either wise or prudent for him, under such circumstances, so to persist in his efforts to recover his violated rights, as to determine that he would reëstablish his paper at Alton, or perish in the attempt. It does certainly seem to me that, under such circumstances, he would have done more wisely, if he had listened to our Lord's direction, and appropriated it to himself, "If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another."

But, above all, I must say, that I cannot call to my remembrance any thing in the precepts, or the example, of our divine Master, or of his apostles, which could authorize, or justify, this lamented brother, in being found in arms, and being prepared to shed, if not actually shedding, the blood of his wicked assailants, in defence of his rights, and of his property. Do I mistake, now, or do I really hear one, and another, and another, here saying, Well, if *my* rights, and *my* property, should be thus assailed by such lawless miscreants, I am sure I would do just as Mr. Lovejoy did? Well, my beloved hearers, I cannot dispute this point with any of you. Indeed, very probably it is even so, that being assailed as Mr. Lovejoy was, you would do very much as Mr. Lovejoy did. But you must allow me to say that I am not quite sure that even *this* is any certain evidence that Mr. Lovejoy did just right. Possibly, being placed in his circumstances, some of you might err in judgment, and get out of the way.

It has already been admitted, yet it may not be amiss to say again, somewhat more fully, That, so far as human laws, and the rights of other men were concerned, our murdered brother had an indisputable right to remain at Alton, to reëstablish his press and his paper there, and there to speak, and write, and publish, whatever he pleased, even against slavery, against Popery, and against every other wicked thing, responsible only to the laws of the State, and of his country, is beyond all question. Nor is it, I suppose, any more to be doubted that, being threatened with a repeated destruction of his press, he had a perfectly *legal* right to arm himself, and to place himself in an attitude of defence, and even, when his assailants actually came upon him, to shoot them dead, if he could, one after another, from the first to the last of them. Nay, more—that he would have been sustained, and even applauded, in all this, by the common opinion of mankind, in all similar cases, is equally undeniable. Indeed, what is public opinion in such cases, has been very clearly expressed in the loud applause which has been bestowed on Mr. Lovejoy himself, for what he actually did. But, after all, one question remains; a question, too, of momentous interest to the whole christian community. Though our beloved brother was fully sustained in the course which he pursued, by the laws of all the kingdoms of this world, and by the opinions, and maxims, and customs of all the men of this world, it must not be forgotten that as a christian, and as a minister of the gospel of peace and love,

he had sworn allegiance to one Prince, whose kingdom is not of this world, and to whose precepts, and to whose own example, the laws of the kingdoms of this world, and the opinions, and maxims, and customs of the men of this world, are not always exactly conformed. The important question is, In taking up arms, to defend his rights and his property, in the trying circumstances in which he was placed, did this lamented brother act in conformity to the precepts, and to the example, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace? Among his precepts we find the following: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Now, without tarrying to ascertain the precise import of these precepts, or to show how nearly they should be understood literally, it must surely be admitted that they have *some* meaning—*some important* meaning. And I freely confess that I am utterly unable to assign to them any meaning whatever, with which I can make the course pursued by our departed brother appear consistent. Quite as little, too, does it appear to me consistent with the example of him who, though legions of angels were at his command, suffered himself to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and who, "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;" or with any example of his followers recorded in scripture. Indeed, I cannot help thinking how vastly more lovely this murdered brother would have appeared, lying here before us, "gory with blood,"—how much more like *his* divine Master, and *ours*,—and how much more honor he would have done to the cause in which he was so earnestly engaged, the cause of freedom, and the inalienable rights of man, if, instead of being slain with arms in his hands, shooting, or preparing to shoot, at his wicked assailants, he had been found unarmed, apart from the tumultuous scene, and, if he must have been slain, had been slain on his knees, praying for his cruel and miserable persecutors, in the language of the suffering Savior, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" or, in that of the first christian martyr, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

To guard against misapprehension, it may be proper for me to remark, here, that I would not be understood as maintaining that human life may never be lawfully taken away by fellow men. Civil government, I think, is plainly an ordinance of God, for the good of men. In ordaining it, too, God seems evidently to have entrusted it with the sword, and to have authorized the use of it, in maintaining its rightful authority, and the majesty of good and wholesome laws. It should be used, especially, to put down riots, and mobs, and all unlawful combinations against the peace and order of the community. And though I fully believe that very nearly, if not quite, all national wars would be certainly avoided, were either party disposed to do exactly right, I am not yet prepared to say that no case can possibly occur, in which a strictly defensive war would be justifiable. Nor am I quite prepared to say that, if suddenly and

violently assailed by a robber, or assassin, in a case where there is no opportunity to appeal to the constituted authorities for protection, a man may not stand in his own defence, and preserve his own life, or the life of his family, or of his neighbor, even at the expense of the life of the assailant, if the end can be no otherwise attained. It must be remembered, however, that it was no such sudden and unavoidable peril in which the victim of the Alton mob was placed. The evil which he resisted had long been threatened and foreseen. It was seen, too, that there was "no defence" for him in that "place, either in the laws, or in the ægis of public opinion." Besides, it seems at least probable that the evil might have been avoided, and it does seem to me that an effort should have been made to avoid it, by retiring from the scene of conflict, rather than have been met by opposing force to force, and violence to violence. To have thus avoided it, would only have been to imitate the example of our blessed Lord and his apostles. In repeated instances, when violence was threatened,—as, for one example, when the men of Nazareth, being "filled with wrath, rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong," our Lord retired from among them, and went his way. There was, also, a season when "he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." Paul, too, than whom no man was ever more intrepid in pleading the cause in which he was engaged, evidently imitated this example of his divine master. When threatened with violence at Damascus, he was let down by the wall of the city in a basket, and retired. To escape the violence of the mob at Thessalonia, he retired to Berea. When more than forty ruffians at Jerusalem conspired against him, and bound themselves under a great oath, that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed him, he sought the protection of a Roman captain, and was sent away by night under a strong guard, to Cesarea. And when, long afterwards, Festus, a new governor, desirous of ingratiating himself with the Jews, proposed to him to go again to Jerusalem, and there be judged, Paul, knowing the danger to which this would expose him, solemnly protested against it, and made his appeal to Cæsar, the Roman emperor. It is well worthy of remark, too, that this appeal was made to Cæsar at a time when the throne of Cæsar was occupied by Nero, a monster, who has been proverbial for his tyranny, oppressions and cruelty, from the time that he sat upon the throne, down to the present day, and must continue to be so until time shall be no longer. Yes, to this cruel tyrant Paul appealed, that before him he might have something like a legal trial on the groundless accusations against him, rather than to suffer himself to be exposed to the vengeance of an infatuated and infuriate mob of his own countrymen at Jerusalem. On the whole, I cannot but think it is very deeply to be regretted, that the lamented victim of the relentless mob at Alton, instead of imitating these examples, should have resisted his assailants, even unto blood, and actually received his mortal wound in the use of carnal weapons, which are not properly the weapons of the warfare of a christian, and especially of

a christian minister. It does seem to me, moreover, that this circumstance must counteract, and greatly diminish, whatever favorable influence his lamented death, if die he must by unholy, reckless violence, might otherwise have had upon any good cause with which it was in any wise connected.

I have dwelt the longer on this topic, my friends, because, at such a time as the present, it seems to me to be one of deep and momentous interest. It is a time when great excitements, and causes of great excitements, exist, and are multiplying, and when riots, and mobs, and violence, abound and prevail. Among other causes of great excitement, the horrid scene at Alton, and the civil commotions in the Canadas, have great influence. At such a time, it is all important that all classes of people, and especially that christians, should view things rightly; that they should form correct opinions, indulge none but right feelings, and be very careful that all they do be just right. Yet it is a time when people of all classes, even christians as well as others, are in great danger of viewing things through some wrong medium, of forming many erroneous opinions, of indulging many wrong feelings, and of actually doing many wrong things. For though, at such a time, it is of the utmost importance that men judge of things calmly, coolly, dispassionately, the truth is, their minds are disturbed, excited, agitated, ruffled. Often they become very indignant, and even angry, than which nothing is more unfavorable to judging right, to feeling right, or to doing right. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." When men become very indignant, or are angry, on account of great outrages committed against themselves or others, they very readily excuse, or justify, in those who suffer these wrongs, much which, in their more calm and dispassionate moments, they would scarcely fail to perceive must be greatly at variance with the precepts and example of Jesus Christ. Yet, under all circumstances, it must become us to recur to these precepts, and this lovely example, as our unerring rule, and to be careful that we obey the one, and imitate the other.

But, after all, how lamentably wicked, how dreadfully alarming, must be the state of any people, from among whom a faithful preacher of truth and righteousness, or the able and pious editor of a religious periodical, who does nothing to infringe upon the rights of others, nothing in violation of the laws of his country, must retire, and cease from his labors, just because he cannot remain, and proceed in his work, but at the hazard of losing his life by lawless violence? How wicked must the people of Nazareth have been, and how alarming their state, when the Lord Jesus himself, the most inoffensive, as well as the most excellent of all teachers, "who did no sin, in whose mouth was found no guile," who never did any thing which could even be called imprudent, must retire from among them, to save himself from being "cast headlong from the brow of the hill upon which their city was built." How wicked must the people of Judea have been, and how alarming their condition, when the same divine teacher retired from among them, and "would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him!" What, too, must have been the dreadful state of things at Jerusalem, when

Paul, having given no offence in any thing, only by preaching the gospel of the grace of God, the truth as it is in Jesus, was constrained to appeal to one of the most cruel tyrants who ever sat upon a throne, that he might avoid being exposed to the unrelenting rage and malice of its inhabitants! And, alas! what must be the condition,—O how wicked and how alarming the state of that young but growing city of our beloved country, where, as we have seen, those scenes have been recently enacted, which have trampled the constitution and laws of the State in the dust; which have triumphantly proclaimed that there the privilege of free discussion, on any unpopular subject,—the freedom of speech and of the press, shall no longer be enjoyed; which have demolished the press, arrested the pen, and silenced the tongue of an able and worthy minister and editor, whose only offence was a fearless and uncompromising defence of what he believed to be the cause of truth and righteousness, and opposition to what he believed to be contrary to the truth and will of God; and which have at last, with unrelenting and cruel violence, consigned him to an untimely grave! And here let it be observed, and carefully remembered, that, though we deeply lament that this murdered brother was found in arms, when the bloody deed was perpetrated, yet this cannot diminish aught from the atrocity of the crime of his inhuman murderers. To *them*, under all the provocations and injuries they were heaping upon him, his being found in arms could be no wrong. If he could even have shot one half of them dead, it could have furnished no excuse to the survivors for putting him to death. The wrong must still have been found in them. The question whether he was warranted in taking up arms, under the circumstances in which he was placed, by their unprovoked and relentless persecutions, could be no question between *him* and *them*; but only between him and his God, and his Savior. Hence, the atrocious guilt of his vile murderers remains undiminished, in all its malignity, in all its enormity. Yes, it is a deed of darkness,—a deed of horror,—a deed which all good men, all friends of religion, all friends of law and order, all friends of the rights of man, must look upon with utter abhorrence. By it, the city, the state, the land even, is polluted with blood. “For blood,” innocent blood, “it defileth the land.” Yes, it is a crime the deep, damning guilt of which the waters of a deluge could not wash away; and which must expose the guilty city where it was perpetrated to most awful calamities. Besides that the dreadful wrath of an offended God must abide upon all who were actors in, or who approve of, this most atrocious scene of wickedness, who or what can be safe where an infuriate mob is triumphant, and does all its pleasure, without fear, without restraint, without hindrance from any lawful authority?

O yes, you all say, it is indeed a crime of most awful malignity. It may well fill every mind with alarm and horror. Yes, and scores of presses, and many ten thousands of voices respond, “We have here an exhibition of the true spirit of slavery carried out to its legitimate results.” And so we have. Beyond all doubt the real spirit of slavery, the disposition to hold fellow human beings in bondage, reducing them to the condition of mere goods and chat-

tels, for the benefit of those to whom they are subjected, and thus to deprive them of inherent and inalienable rights, the gift of their beneficent Creator, is a wicked spirit. It is a disposition to appropriate to one's self what of right belongs to another. It is, therefore, in its nature, contrary to that paramount law of love, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." For, surely, no man would that another should do so to him. It is very evident, too, that this spirit had much to do, pretty directly, with the Alton persecution, and riot, and murder. Of this it must justly bear the blame. It is, beyond all question, moreover, that the same spirit has instigated to, and actually produced, ten thousand other scenes of cruelty, oppression and blood, many of which have been even far more appalling than this heart-rending scene at Alton. Yes, scenes over which humanity, and benevolence, and religion, may well weep tears of blood! And hard must be the heart which does not feel for these accumulated wrongs and woes, and ardently desire that such scenes of horror may soon cease from among men; that every yoke may be broken, and that all the oppressed may go free. O who, in whose heart a single spark of pure benevolence has been kindled, who possesses an iota of the spirit of Jesus Christ, would not willingly open his hand wide, and contribute freely of what the Lord has given him, to accomplish such a work of love, and to wipe the foul stain of slavery from our guilty land,—from our guilty world!

But, after all, will you bear with me, my friends, if I venture to ask whether there may not possibly be some self-deception among some of those who so readily and so indignantly impute this great wickedness to the spirit of slavery? It is said, "we have here an exhibition of the spirit of slavery carried out to its legitimate results." And this, it is admitted, is true. Yet, when this is said, the truth is only half—ah, yes, very far less than half told. Yes, and the half which remains untold may be of far deeper, and more affecting interest to yourselves, than the less than half which is told, and which, it may be, has excited in your breasts the deepest horror, while this greater untold half is almost entirely overlooked or disregarded. Yes, my friends, the real spirit of slavery is very wickedness. And here, in the awful scene at Alton, we have, indeed, an exhibition of the spirit of wickedness carried out to some, at least, of its legitimate results. But let it be observed, and well remembered, for surely, it should neither be overlooked nor forgotten, that slavery, wicked as it is, by no means comprises all the wickedness existing among men. If, then, when it is said that the atrocious wickedness at Alton is only the legitimate result of the spirit of slavery, it is intended to be suggested that, had it not been for slavery no such enormous wickedness could have been committed, it is, alas, a sad mistake. If any individual, being deeply affected, and filled with something like horror in view of the sin of slavery, and being himself not chargeable with that particular sin, indulges an apprehension that he is not chargeable with any thing of equal enormity, he may be dreadfully deceived. Some of you, my friends, it may be, feel almost indignant at these suggestions. But just cast your eye upon the dark catalogue of human crimes, from the apos-

tacy of the first human pair down to the present day, and tell me, what had slavery to do with a thousandth part of them? What had slavery to do with the murder of Abel, the first victim of human wickedness, slain by the hand of his own brother? What, so far as we know, had slavery to do with all the wickedness which brought the deluge upon the old world, fire from heaven upon guilty Sodom, and all the judgments of God upon the ancient kingdoms of the earth? What with the murder of the Son of God himself, only as being among the innumerable sins, to atone for which he shed his precious blood? What with the persecution and murder of his apostles, and of the multitude of martyrs for his cause? What with all the impurity, and blood, and guilt, which now fill the dark places of the earth with the habitations of cruelty, and with filthy abominations, of which it would be a shame to speak in any decent christian assembly? And what with all the profaneness, and profligacy, and lewdness, and slanders, and revilings, and oppression, and fraud, and theft, and robbery, and murder, and wars, and fightings, by which those parts even of the christian world where slavery does not exist, as it exists in so large a portion of our own country, have been deluged with wickedness and drenched in blood? Ah, and what has slavery to do with all the wickedness so prevalent among ourselves; and, especially, with all the ungrateful abuse of precious gospel privileges, and rejection of the great salvation, which, there is reason to apprehend, in a multitude of instances, amounts to little less than treading under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace?

Shall I ask you, too, my friends, From whence comes slavery itself, this hateful and hated sin, the prolific cause of so many other dreadful evils? Even slavery is not a self-existent sin. Like other kinds of wickedness, it flows from some evil fountain. Yes, from the same evil fountain from whence come evil speaking, and profaneness, and blasphemy, and lewdness, and theft, and robbery, and murder, and wars, and fightings, and all the other kinds of wickedness which make up the long black catalogue of human crimes. It comes "from within, out of the heart." O yes, my beloved hearers, (for the affecting truth must not be concealed,) the dreadful sin of slavery itself, with all its attendant evils, comes from just such human hearts as *have been* yours and mine;—and, I must add, from just such hearts as, there is great reason to fear, there are many among us still. You are unwilling to believe it now. But is it not certainly so? You know who has said, "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." You know, too, that the same infallible witness has testified of man, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

We are very apt to forget, or to be unmindful of, how much mankind are the creatures of circumstances; how much their external characters and conduct, at least, are affected by different circumstances, or situations, in which different persons are placed, or in which the same persons are placed at different times. We are too apt scarcely to realize at all how very differently we ourselves might, and almost certainly should, have conducted, had we only been plac-

ed in some different circumstances ; and how much cause we have for thankfulness, if we have been preserved from some great wickedness, of which others have been guilty. We, away here at the north, educated, from our infancy, to contemplate slavery with utter abhorrence, can hardly realize at all, perhaps can hardly even be made to believe, that if we had only been born and educated at the south, we might ourselves have contemplated this great evil not only without abhorrence, but with the same complacency that many of our southern brethren do. Yet, surely, this cannot be other than altogether probable. Why, my friends, it surely cannot carry me beyond the bounds of *possibility*—perhaps, indeed, scarcely beyond the bounds of *probability*—to say, that if all our northern zealous lecturers on slavery had only been born and educated in South-Carolina, some of them, at least, might have been very John C. Calhouns, or George McDuffies in zeal in defence of what, to avoid using the unwelcome term, *slavery*, they might have designated by the soft name of *southern institutions*. Nay, more, it surely would not carry me beyond the bounds of *possibility*, if it would even beyond the bounds of *probability*, to say, that among the multitude whose hearts have been pained, and whose anger has been kindled by the recent atrocious scenes at Alton, there may be many individuals, who, if they had only been born and educated in the slaveholding region, and then located for the last few months at Alton, might actually have been found among the foremost actors in that bloody tragedy. You are almost ready to shudder at the thought. Yet, can any of you doubt whether it be even so? Why, my friends, the very individual, poor wicked Bishop, who was shot down among the guilty rioters at Alton, was not even a southern man. He was born and educated, like ourselves, at the north. Yet it is said he was heard, on the preceding day, boasting of what he would do in the intended scene of riot on that fatal night. Yes, and it was seen what he would do ; and O how dreadful to be shot down, and sent away to his final account, so doing !

Do not imagine, now, that the subject is presented in this light, with a design to cast reproach upon any body. Far from it. If I know myself, no such thought, or feeling, has any place in my heart. But, aware how much easier it is to excite feelings of resentment, and even of abhorrence, on account of the wickedness of others, than it is to induce men to realize their own wickedness ; and believing, too, that no one can feel just as it would become us all to feel, in respect to the wickedness of others, who has not some just sense of his own wickedness, and some real penitence for it, I would make use of passing scenes, which arrest our attention, and justly excite our indignation, to some benefit to ourselves. You remember how indignantly Hazeal, when he was only captain of the host of the king of Syria, received the prediction of the prophet Elisha, respecting the evils which he would do to Israel. "But what ! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing ?" The prophet answered, "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." Hazeal went his way, murdered his sovereign, ascended the throne, and verified the prediction. You also remember what generation of the Jews it was, that builded the

tombs of the prophets, and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous, and said, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." Yet even they became the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God, "the Lord of glory." So deceitful were their hearts. Just so, it may be now, many, from whose breasts a burst of indignation has been called forth, and whose anger has been kindled against the guilty rioters and murderers at Alton, may themselves be in a state scarcely less offensive in the sight of God, than that of the perpetrators of that bloody tragedy. They may not only be living in impenitence and unbelief, in an ungrateful rejection of the salvation of the gospel, but they may allow themselves in awful profaneness, in lewdness, in intemperance, in oppression, in fraud, or in other flagrant iniquities. Yes, they may be treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and even "crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame." To what purpose, then,—O tell me, to what valuable purpose is their indignation called forth, and their anger kindled, against those bloody men, while all their own wickedness is unrepented of, and still persisted in? From whom will this turn away the fierce anger of the Lord? Upon whom will it draw down blessings from the throne of love? Will it secure for themselves an interest in the great salvation? Or will it turn away the wrath of the Almighty from a land polluted with blood, and whose multiplied oppressions, and other flagrant iniquities, have grown unto the heavens? Ah, my friends, the sacrifice of a single broken heart, and contrite spirit,—the effectual fervent prayer of a single Abraham, or Moses, or Samuel, or Elijah, would do inconceivably more for all this, than would the being filled with indignation, and excited to anger, on account of the wickedness of others, of the many ten thousands who compose the population of our whole country. Yes, and what humble minister of the Lord Jesus will not do more, ah, infinitely more, for the eternal salvation of precious souls, and for the temporal salvation of his country, if, by showing to his beloved hearers *their* transgressions, and *their* sins, and testifying to them the gospel of the grace of God, he should be instrumental only of bringing a few sinners to the feet of Jesus, with a truly broken and contrite heart, than he could by any efforts to excite abhorrence, and anger, on account of any atrocious wickedness of other men, of whatever nature, and with whatever success such efforts might be crowned?

Well, my friends, this is just what *your* minister would aim to do. He would not bring before you the horrid scene at Alton,—nor the hateful system of slavery in our country, with all its attendant evils, nor the shameful riots and mobs, which so frequently disgrace our country, and which have resulted in such great evil, and threaten vastly more,—nor the manifold impurities, and robberies, and murders, and all the black catalogue of iniquities, which so much abound,—nor the wars and fightings which prevail in the earth, and pour out rivers of blood,—I say, he would not bring forward all these things, and place them before you, just that you may behold, and be filled with indignation, or excited to anger. But he would that you might all behold the transgressors, and be grieved, because they keep not

God's law; that you might mourn, with godly mourning, over all this wickedness, and over all the evils which this wickedness has introduced into our world; and that, seeing what desolations the Lord hath made in the earth,—what dreadful calamities he has brought on guilty nations, to manifest his abhorrence of this wickedness, you may be afraid of his judgments. He would, too, that, in all this great wickedness, which has prevailed, and which still prevails, in our guilty world, you might all be led to realize how deep is the fountain of iniquity in the human heart,—how great is the sum of your own wickedness,—how certain and how great is your need of an interest in the salvation of the gospel; and that, looking to the cross of a bleeding and dying Savior, you may become truly penitent for all your sins, and, being washed in the blood of the Lamb, become prepared for the blessedness of heaven. He would, moreover, that, seeing all this great wickedness, and to what dreadful evils it exposes those who are guilty of it, instead of indulging in any unholy resentment, or other unholy feelings, you might be melted into pity, into tender compassion, for fellow creatures so vile, so ill-deserving, so certainly and so justly exposed to that awful displeasure of a holy God, which, unless they can be brought to repent and turn to God, must sink them to the lowest hell. He would that, even for the flagitious murderers at Alton, you should all feel this pity, this tender compassion. Let them suffer the full penalty of the law, if they can be brought to justice. They have most wickedly shed the blood of man, and by man let their blood be shed. This, the support of the authority of the government and the law, and the public welfare, may require. Yet, who should not feel grieved at the heart; who should not weep, that they have brought such deep disgrace, such deserved punishment, on themselves? And, above all, who shall not feel the tenderest compassion for them, in view of that *eternal ruin* to which they are no less justly exposed, and from which, unless they deeply repent of this wickedness, there can be no escape? Ah, who shall pursue them with indignation, with anger, with the spirit of revenge, to the prison of eternal wo? Rather, my friends, who shall not be possessed, even in respect to these atrocious criminals, of that pure and fervent love, of that ardent desire for the penitence and salvation even of the most guilty and ill-deserving, which glowed in the heart of the persecuted and suffering Savior, and under the influence of which he prayed for his cruel murderers, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do?” O, should not this be the spirit, this the fervent prayer, of the poor broken-hearted widow of the murdered Lovejoy, of his aged mother, and of all his bereaved relatives and friends, for his guilty murderers? Should it not be *your* spirit, and *your* prayer?

My friends, there is one solemn and affecting reason, in the present case, and in all similar cases, where this forgiving spirit, and this prayer, are demanded of us, and of our fellow men, which *did* not, which *could* not exist, in the case of the suffering Savior. All, of whom this spirit and this prayer are now demanded, have, themselves, offended much, and to them much, very much, must be forgiven, or they, too, as well as the guilty offenders for whom they

should pray, must perish forever; whereas the Savior was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He had done nothing to be forgiven. Yes, my beloved hearers, even you, every one of you, have run in debt ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; and all this great debt must be freely and graciously forgiven, or you, too, must perish, with the bloody murderers at Alton; unless, indeed, they should come to repentance, and obtain forgiveness, and so you perish, while they escape. Remember, also, the solemn declaration of the Savior of sinners, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Who, then, shall refuse to pray, even for the most guilty, "Father, forgive them." My dear brethren and friends, do you *all* thus pray? Do not put the question far from you. You perceive your own forgiveness, your very salvation even, is at stake. Do you, then, I repeat the question, do you *all* thus pray? Did it ever occur to you that thus you *should* pray, even for those whom you consider most guilty of that great wickedness, an exhibition of the true spirit of which you say has been carried out to its legitimate results, in the atrocious scene at Alton? For these sinners,—perhaps in the estimation of some of you, sinners almost above all other men,—did you ever truly pray? You have, it may be, often thought of them with no little indignation. Perhaps you have even felt your anger burn against them. You may have often spoken of them in the language of asperity, of unkindness, of reproach. But did you ever take them,—I ask you now very kindly and tenderly,—did you ever take them in the arms of christian kindness and love, bear them to the throne of divine grace, and there, from the very bottom of a truly broken and contrite heart, while praying for yourselves, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," have you pleaded, also, for them, "Father, forgive them?"