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REV. GEORGE BOURNE.

THE PIONEER OF AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY.

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BY THEODORE BOURNE.

[From "Methodist Quarterly Review," January, 1882.]

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ART. V.—GEORGE BOURNE, THE PIONEER OF AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY.

SEVERAL ably written accounts of the rise, progress, and history of the Antislavery conflict in America have been published, but for lack of data covering the earlier presentations of that form of Antislavery known as "abolition without compensation," or "immediate abolition," they have failed to account for its origin. They have not explained why there was so great a change from the spirit and method of the advocates of *emancipation* of the era following the Revolution. It is fully time, therefore, that the persistent advocate of the doctrine of "immediate abolition without compensation," the originator of the American Antislavery Society and conflict, should be duly noticed, more especially as it will relieve the Churches from the apprehension that the contest originated with opponents of Christianity.

As it has been so long taken for granted that Mr. Garrison was the originator and prime leader of the Antislavery conflict, I will, before giving a sketch of

THE PIONEER OF "ANTISLAVERY" IN AMERICA,

present to the public the copy of a letter addressed to the writer by Mr. Garrison in 1858. It was written *currente calamo*, in answer to one addressed to him giving an account of the formation by the writer of the African Civilization Society, "to promote the Christian civilization of Africa," and "the cultivation of cotton there by free labor." In this beautiful panegyric Mr. Garrison renders ample testimony to the friend and preceptor from whom he derived his doctrines, his enthu-

siasm, and who animated his courage for his life-long work of abolition :

Boston, Nov. 18. 1858.

MY DEAR FRIEND—It gave me the greatest gratification to receive and read your letter of the 8th instant. It seemed next to receiving an epistle from your venerated father, whose memory will ever be dear to me, and whose labors, sacrifices, and perils in the cause of the millions in our land who are "appointed to destruction" ought to be biographically chronicled and perpetuated. I confess my early and large indebtedness to him for enabling me to apprehend, with irresistible clearness, the inherent sinfulness of slavery under all circumstances, and its utter incompatibility with the spirit and precepts of Christianity. I felt and was inspired by the magnetism of his lion-hearted soul, which knew nothing of fear, and trampled upon all compromises with oppression, yet was full of womanly gentleness and susceptibility; and mightily did he aid the Antislavery cause in its earliest stages by his advocacy of the doctrine of immediate and unconditional emancipation, his exposure of the hypocrisy of the Colonization Scheme,\* and his reprobation of a "negro-hating, slaveholding religion." He was both a "son of thunder," and "a son of consolation." Never has slavery had a more indomitable foe or freedom a truer friend.

You inquire whether your father was not the author of the work entitled, "Slavery Illustrated in its Effects upon Woman," published in this city, in 1837, by Isaac Knapp. He was, as every line of it bears witness. I wish it could be republished and a million copies of it be distributed broadcast. . . . I thank you for sending me a copy of the Constitution of the African Civilization Society, and the pamphlet by Benjamin Coates, which I have briefly noticed in the "Liberator" of this week. I am not prepared to state my views of this new movement at length, but I heartily wish prosperity to every benevolent effort to increase the growth of free cotton, whether in Africa, India, or elsewhere, and thus to strike a heavy blow at slavery pecuniarily. I am in hopes, however, that we are nearer the jubilee than such a move-

\* Mr. Garrison's phrase, "hypocrisy of the Colonization scheme," would have been more accurate had he written "hypocrisy of some of the advocates of Colonization;" for while George Bourne had many conflicts with those Colonizationists who presented that scheme as a *cure for slavery*, his boundless love for the cause of Christian missions permitted him to look upon the work of Christian civilization in Africa with great favor. Had the published objects of the American Colonization Society been identical with those of the colored men now enlisting in the work of the Christian civilization of Africa, he could have had no controversy with its advocates. When Mr. Garrison penned the foregoing letter, recommending that the "life, labor, and sacrifices" of George Bourne in behalf of the enslaved "should be biographically chronicled and perpetuated," he did not know that his own life and labors would have been several times chronicled before even this brief sketch should be made public.

ment would seem to imply. Still, let every just instrumentality be used for the eternal overthrow of slavery. I will send a copy of the "Liberator" to your society with pleasure.

Yours to break every yoke,

WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

TO THEODORE BOURNE.

Mr. Garrison's account of the effect produced upon him from the teachings of George Bourne is not only an eloquent eulogy, but a positive declaration of the source from which he derived the peculiar doctrine of "abolition without compensation," that distinguished the modern *Abolitionists* from the *Emancipationists* of the former period. It also explains why George Bourne is called the Pioneer of Antislavery. He was the early and *persistent* advocate of the doctrine that no recompense should be made to slave-holders. Almost all opponents of slavery who had preceded him had recognized the propriety of compensating the slave-owners when a ransom was demanded. Mr. Bourne looked upon compensation as a compromise with oppression and sin, and labored with great energy to overthrow that as an error. Long before the earnest labors of Benjamin Lundy commenced in Western Virginia, George Bourne, as will be seen, had violently attacked the system in Central Virginia, by preaching, lecturing, and publishing tracts and books written with great earnestness and vigor. In order of sequence, of the three pioneers whose thoughts and whose labors gave tone to the modern Abolition movement, we may thus arrange them: George Bourne, 1805-1845; Benjamin Lundy, 1815-1838; William Lloyd Garrison, 1830-1865. To what extent Mr. Lundy may have been influenced by the labors of Mr. Bourne in Virginia does not appear, but he upheld the standard nobly until it was grasped by Mr. Garrison. The extensive acquirements, effective eloquence, and fearless courage of the earliest of these three pioneers had much to do with his success in starting the movement; yet without the conversion of Mr. Garrison to his views the doctrine of "immediate and unconditional emancipation" would not have attained as speedily its growth and its influence upon national affairs. As appears from the lucid and discriminative articles on Mr. Garrison by Dr. Dorchester, Benjamin Lundy had also made an impression upon him in favor of Antislavery principles; but, as we perceive from his



own testimony, he "felt and was inspired by the magnetism of that lion-hearted soul which knew nothing of fear," and which had for years faced danger and death in behalf of the oppressed.

#### HIS ANCESTRY AND BIRTHPLACE.

Rev. George Bourne was born on the 13th day of June, 1780, at Westbury, Wiltshire, England. It was his signal privilege to be descended from an ancestral line embracing some of the names illustrious as martyrs and confessors in the first annals of the Reformation and the era succeeding, and to be early placed under decided religious influences and among favorable religious associations. His father, Samuel Bourne, was for thirty years a deacon of the Congregational Church at Westbury. His mother's name was Mary Rogers, a lineal descendant of John Rogers, the Protomartyr in the reign of persecuting Queen Mary, and who was the gifted translator and editor of the Bible which he published under the *nom de plume* of "Thomas Mathews," supplementing and completing the work of Tindale and Coverdale. As a coincidence showing how different lines of early Reformation families united to give that remarkable development which fitted the pioneer for his work, it may be mentioned that his maternal grandmother was Mary Cotton, a descendant of Dr. Rowland Cotton, son of Rev. John Cotton, the first Puritan minister of Boston. On his father's side he reckoned the martyr James Johnston, who suffered death at the Cross of Glasgow, in 1684, in defense of "the Covenant and work of Reformation," at the time of the bloody Anglican persecution against the Presbyterians of Scotland. Here, then, were three lines of succession from men who loved the truth more than honor, or rewards, or life itself. No wonder that he stemmed the tide of slave-holders' opposition for seven years in Virginia without fear, and, sustained by Almighty power, denounced the Divine judgments upon the transgressors, which were so terribly fulfilled in the retributions of the late war. From his earliest years he manifested an aptitude for learning, and a strength of mind which gave ample promise of that power and force which enabled him to face all opposition and encounter all reproach in behalf of what he esteemed to be the truth of the Gospel. After pursuing academical studies,

in which he attained great proficiency, being foremost as a linguist and mathematician, he assisted his father in the management of his business, (cloth manufacture;) but not finding it congenial he entered upon a course of preparation for the ministry of the Gospel, and studied at the seminary at Homerton, London. Being a staunch Nonconformist, and inclined in favor of a republican form of government, he wrote articles which attracted attention, even of the cabinet ministry of that day. He took part in the growing discussions regarding slavery and the slave-trade, along with the Wilberforces, Clarksons, Buxtons, and their compeers.

In the year 1802 he paid a visit to the United States to ascertain for himself the propriety of making this the field for ministerial labors. He was so much gratified that he determined to return and settle here, believing that in this favored land greater freedom of conscience and liberty could be enjoyed than in England. At that time Dissenters were still compelled to use the clergy of the Church of England for certain services which can now be performed by Dissenting ministers. After his return to England, and determination to make the United States his home, he obtained the consent of a young lady of Bath, Somersetshire, to whom he was greatly attached, to cross the Atlantic with him and share his future lot. She was likeminded, an earnest, cheerful, devoted Christian, and possessed of the qualifications which are requisite in one who would share the minister's lot. She had been led to consecrate her life to Christ under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Hughes, and was privileged to belong to the congregation of the Rev. William Jay. She was one of the earliest teachers who engaged in Sabbath-school work in the city of Bath, and was also connected with families who were noted for their devotion to the missionary work just then enkindling the Christian Churches with renewed zeal for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. The Olands, Chaters, and Thomases, known in Baptist annals, were among her kindred. They were married in St. James' Church, in Bristol, September 6, 1804, and shortly after sailed for New York. While here in 1805 he met the notorious seoffer, Thomas Paine, at the house of a bookseller in Maiden Lane, in which interview he obtained from Paine the confession of his motives, and of his capacity



for writing his infamous attacks on Christianity, which was recently republished in the "Christian Advocate." Mr. Bourne's first settlement was at Baltimore, where also for some years he edited the Baltimore "Daily Gazette." About the year 1809 he removed to New Glasgow, Va., and thence to Port Republic, Va. The first Presbyterian church built in that town was erected partly through his instrumentality and for his occupancy. He afterward removed to Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Va., where he originated and became Secretary of the Religious Tract Society, and also performed regular ministerial duties. While in Rockingham County he came directly in contact and conflict with the system of American slavery as practiced in its palmy days, and his whole soul revolted at the injustice and iniquities which he constantly witnessed. Believing himself to be ordained to preach the truth, he failed not to denounce the evils of the system publicly and privately. He was not satisfied with denouncing the oppressors and the unjust judges of ancient Israel and Judah, but applied the divine oracles to the case of the oppressors in Virginia, and in Rockingham County, in the nineteenth century. This was a style of pungent application to which they were not accustomed, and it aroused bitter opposition in that vicinity. Some of the real Christians rallied round him, and quite a number were led to remove from Rockingham County and settle in the land of freedom in the new regions north of the Ohio River. But his steadfast opposition to the system of slavery was a constant offense to the slave-owners, who determined to get him away from Virginia; but he was equally determined to stay, and proclaim the truth. He was, of course, the object of persistent persecution from "fellows of the baser sort," as well as from professed disciples of Christ. One instance, which occurred in January, 1812, shows the trials to which he and his wife were continually subject. While he was absent on a preaching tour to some other station, a number of the ruffians went to his house, took out most of his goods from the lower story, and destroyed them in the road; they would have demolished all that was in the house, but were told that the lady was sick in the upper part, and some of them, with a little humanity, deterred the rest from going up-stairs to disturb her.

Among many instances of his intrepidity in preaching against

slavery in the very seat of its power, is the following: Being requested by some of his people to preach on the sin of theft, particularly intended for the benefit of the slaves, who were guilty of all sorts of petty thefts, especially of poultry, he complied with the request. He preached a forcible sermon from the eighth commandment, giving the moral and social aspects of the sin in its various phases, not forgetting some wholesome advice to "servants against purloining." After which, and in his peroration, especially addressed to masters, he said, "But what do you think of the sin of kidnapping men and women (made in the image of God) from the coast of Africa, whose whole crime is their color, and stealing and selling them into slavery? What do you think of those who continue the robbery, and sell their children for slaves? If the theft of money, produce, poultry, and other values is so great a crime, what terrible turpitude and depravity does it not evince to sell the image of God, and keep men in bondage?" and more, to like effect. If a bombshell had suddenly exploded in the midst of that congregation, (as actually occurred in churches of Charleston years afterward,) it could not have produced greater alarm and consternation in that audience. When service was over the fierce looks and stern visages of the bulk of the hearers who crowded around him, and their angry remonstrances, showed that indeed a spiritual thunderbolt had fallen upon them from that pulpit, and the lightning flashes gleaming upon them from the sacred page served to light up the moral darkness induced by slavery.

Mr. Bourne was so determined on "carrying the war into Virginia," and maintaining it, that he acquired the art of setting type, and printed his diatribes against American slavery right there. While at Harrisonburg, Va., about 1812, he wrote and published a book called "The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable." It abounded in that style of invective which secured the attention of, if it did not always convert, the slave-owners, and made them more anxious than ever to ostracise and banish him from Virginia. He was a Micaiah to them, constantly prophesying evil to the covetous slave-holders; an Elijah, continually denouncing the judgments of Jehovah upon those who oppressed the poor and needy, "whose own shepherds pitied them not," and "did not feed the flock of the slaughter." In that

book he developed his theory of "immediate abolition without compensation," and, while forcible in argument, it was also terrible in its denunciations. Its invectives are so keen and so pungent as to have formed the model for that style of denouncing the evils of slavery which became afterward so noted in the armory of Garrison, and his friend Wendell Phillips, and others. It was a continuous miracle that his enemies did not kill him. His life was in continual danger, so much so that his wife, the faithful sharer of his toils and sacrifices, lived for years in a state of dread that at any time he might be brought to her lifeless; but he was preserved to ring the alarm-bell at the North; to teach those who would train others "to shout the battle-cry of freedom."

He was compared to Luther, to John Knox, and to Elijah the Tishbite in his zeal against the worshippers of Baal. His denunciations of judgment upon the South and the nation, if they persevered in upholding slavery, were as severe as any of those of the ancient prophets, and read almost like inspired predictions, so literally and accurately have they been fulfilled in the terrible carnage and desolations which attended the tremendous conflict between the forces of slavery and freedom. His opponents among his ecclesiastical brethren of the Presbyterian Church determined to silence him, and drive him from the sacred soil of the "Old Dominion." They followed him with ecclesiastical persecution; the Presbytery of Lexington, Va., suspended him, and presented him to the General Assembly as a setter forth of strange and unacceptable doctrines, offensive to the Churches of that region. Not heeding their "godly admonition," nor paying regard to their suspension, he with greater vigor and boldness denounced the iniquities which he beheld around him. He used his knowledge of the art of printing to publish and scatter his animadversions and denunciations against slavery, and gave himself and his adversaries no rest. Like the apostle, he asked those modern "rulers, elders, and scribes," "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for I cannot but speak the things which I have seen and heard." In obedience, however, to the rules of the Presbytery, he appeared in due form before the General Assembly. There his presence and his arguments forced the question of slavery upon the rep-

representatives of the Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Dr. Campbell, of Pittsburg, described the scene presented at one of his encounters with the magnates of that venerable judicature as one of exceeding interest. It took place in the city of Philadelphia. Dr. Campbell stated that he could only compare it to the appearance of Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms. On the side of the modern reformer, burning with zeal for the purification of the Church from the pollutions of slavery, were a few sympathizing friends; on the other were almost all the dignitaries of the Presbyterian Church, South and North; the occupants of the places of trust and power, clerical and lay, determined to silence this Antislavery advocate who would turn the Church and nation right side up. The scene was, indeed, one of transcendent interest, for there, in the consciousness of truth and right, and with the keen argument, wit, invective, and eloquence which distinguished him, the intrepid advocate of freedom proclaimed the truth as he held it, showing the modern Israel their sin in harboring slavery within the bosom of the Church. He drew from the armory of the Scriptures "the smooth stones from the brook," and with the sling of his transcendent logical and argumentative power he smote the Goliath of modern slavery some powerful blows. He so far convinced the Assembly by his able vindication of his course, that he was relieved from the ecclesiastical censures, and the suspension was removed. But as he still continued to preach against the system, he was again presented before the bar of the General Assembly, and again the vexed question was brought to the notice of the entire Church. For four successive sessions of the General Assembly, 1815, 1816, 1817, 1818, he compelled their attention, and as the result of these debates the resolutions known as the "Resolutions concerning Slavery of 1818" were passed. Meantime he had been compelled to quit Virginia, whence he removed to Germantown, near Philadelphia. The Minutes of the Presbyterian Church of those years present the case, of course, as favorably as they could for the slave-holding prosecutors of George Bourne, who by Jesuitical cunning endeavored to turn aside the force of his denunciation. The terrible results of the endeavor of that Church to compromise between the truths of the Gospel and the evils of slavery demonstrate the necessity

for promptness in resisting the beginnings of evil policy in the Churches.

After a few years' service in Germantown he was called to preside over the Academy at Sing Sing, Mount Pleasant, Westchester County, N. Y., and also to take pastoral charge over the Presbyterian Church there. In 1823, while at Mount Pleasant, he published a work called, "Lectures on the Progress and Perfection of the Church of Christ." In this book he concentrated the history of the Church, and in a very lucid manner portrayed its passage into the "Wilderness:" the heresies, persecutions, wickedness, and worldliness of the Anti-Church and Antichrist, which persecuted the true Church; unfolding also its gradual emergence out of the Wilderness, and with prophetic eye bringing to view the coming glory of the millennial kingdom.

About the year 1824 he was called from Mount Pleasant to take charge of the Congregational Church just commenced at Quebec, Canada, of which he was the first pastor. Here he beheld in full array "the Woman sitting upon the scarlet-colored Beast, and arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls." In Quebec, at the time, Romanism was dominant, the Romish hierarchy had complete control over the entire province, and Mr. Bourne was now placed where he could observe with his penetrating eye the actual workings of a system to which he had given much attention and study. He now witnessed the evils of the system when it exercised unlimited power over its votaries. The slight check upon it from the nominal control of the British Government did not extend to social life, and Romanism had full sway. At that time, whenever the processions of the "Fête Dieu," "Corpus Christi," or other festivals of the Papacy, passed by, every one was compelled to kneel, or take his hat off, before the "Host" and the hierarchs accompanying. The few Protestants who then resided at Quebec chafed under the yoke, but George Bourne set them an example which animated their courage to resist compliance with the custom of "bowing down to idols." He passed, whenever necessary, with no recognition, made no obeisance, and yielded no homage to Rome's mandates. The priests and hierarchs were angry and alarmed when they saw that his example was



followed by the Protestants, and that, in so far, their prestige was being injured; but he cared for neither their frowns nor their threats. On the contrary, he began preaching against the errors of Rome with all the intrepidity which had marked his course in Virginia against slavery. Very soon he originated, and became Secretary of, the Quebec Bible Society, auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society. He was also interested in the formation of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. He devoted much of his time to the study of Romanism from its authorized books, and from the practical exhibition of its results, as witnessed at that time in Quebec and in Canada generally. A good story is told of the manner in which he foiled a Romish priest and made him afraid to destroy Protestant Bibles. Mr. Bourne would loan copies of the Scriptures to any Roman Catholic who could be induced to read them. On one occasion a priest discovered a Romanist reading the Bible, and, demanding it from him, he carried it away to his own house so that the man "should not be injured by reading a heretic's Bible." The Romanist soon informed Mr. Bourne what had occurred; he at once put on his hat, and, taking his walking stick in hand, he proceeded to the priest's house, asked for him, and demanded the book. The priest at first refused, alleging that he had a right to take any heretical book away from his parishioners. But Mr. Bourne was too sharp for him; he told the priest that the book was the property of the Bible Society, and that if he did not return it to him before twelve o'clock next day he would have him arrested on the charge of robbery. The priest returned the book before that hour, and did not have the pleasure of making an *auto-da-fé* with it.

It required great courage to compel the priest to return the book, as the bigotry and hatred of heretics belonging to that sect was rampant at that time in Quebec, and his life was there at all seasons in danger in consequence of his fearless attacks upon the Papacy. He maintained the conflict, however, with great vigor, and became not only the champion of Protestant Christianity, but the emancipator of Protestants from the subserviency which had induced them to wink at compliance with Romish exactions. While other champions have arisen who have done valiantly for the Church of Christ against Rome, to



him belongs the credit of taking the early lead in the conflict against the Papacy in the United States. Having thoroughly investigated the system in Canada, he beheld with alarm the prospect of its growth in the United States, from the European immigration which commenced to increase in volume about the year 1828. He perceived that American Protestants knew but little of the dangers to be apprehended, and that few of the ministers knew much about the Papacy from actual experience of its power. He determined to return to New York and make it his special duty to withstand the inroads of Romanism, and arouse the attention of American Christians to the true character and design of the Papacy, and to the dangers which would environ the Republic should Popism gain ascendancy. With this design he removed to New York in October, 1829, and on the first day of January, 1830, he commenced the publication of the "Protestant," the first journal published in America devoted to the Antipapal controversy. Its prospectus was commended by scores of the leading ministers of the various branches of the Church.

His trumpet blasts awoke the sleeping genius of Protestantism, and although many thought that his solicitude for the safety of the Republic, and of the Churches, was greater than necessary, and that his style of attack lacked in the *suaviter in modo*, yet none questioned his great ability to conduct the controversy which he originated against Romanism. Subsequent events have shown the guiding hand of Divine Wisdom in sending him to Canada to acquire that insight into the Papal system which fitted him afterward to arouse the Christian Churches to the conflict against its errors. When he raised the standard of Protestantism, in 1830, in New York, there was no "Protestant Society," no "Christian Alliance" or "Christian Union," to stand behind and encourage him. As with his work against slavery in Virginia, he had to commence single-handed, unsupported by any association. Having for years confronted the devotees of Rome in one of its chief strongholds, and waged bitter contest against them, and possessing an exhaustive knowledge of the rise, progress, and continued apostasies of the "Antichrist," the pseudo-Church "which persecuted the saints," he was not particular in his choice of epithets wherewith to characterize its hierarchs, its priest-

hood, and its false doctrines. Being profoundly versed in scriptural and prophetic lore, the strong terms and trenchant language used by the apostles concerning the predicted apostasy seemed to come first to his hand and tongue. Hence his writings abound with the epithets of the Apostles John, Paul, and Peter, concerning the "Man of Sin;" "Son of Perdition;" "Babylon the Great;" "the Scarlet Beast;" "the great Harlot;" "deceivers;" "false teachers;" "lying wonders;" "strong delusions," etc. He used the words Babylon and Babylonians interchangeably for Rome and Romanists. As he did not believe Romish baptism to be valid; Romish priests to be ordained ministers of the Gospel; the Romish mass a Divine ordinance; or Mariolatry and Papaey to be true Christianity, he conformed his language to his belief. The Romish house of worship to him was a "mass-house;" priests, "mass-mummers;" and convents and monasteries, "cages of unclean and hateful birds."

This style of language, so common among the Reformers, and among the sturdy Covenanters and the Irish Protestants of that day, while it served to stir up Protestants, did little toward the conversion of Romanists, who, being unaccustomed to the scriptural language of the apostles, supposed that they were the objects of a tirade of abuse, and, shutting their ears, failed to understand the force of his arguments and demonstrations drawn from Scripture, history, and reason. He frequently met the fierce opposition of men influenced by prejudice and passion, who could not bear in patience his exposition of the doctrinal errors and "pernicious ways" of their priestly leaders; but he braved all the storms which he raised, and accomplished his purpose of arousing Protestant Christians against the insidious designs of the Jesuits and other emissaries of Rome in the United States. He had the satisfaction of being at last supported by a goodly array of the ministry and the wise-hearted among the laity who influenced public opinion. He was the originator of the "Protestant Reformation Society," which led to other associations, the Christian Alliance being one of them; these after a time united, and were merged into the "American and Foreign Christian Union," a society which for many years maintained a good conflict against the Papacy.

He continued the publication of the "Protestant" for three years, and a constant controversy against the hierarchy of Rome; preaching and lecturing incessantly against Romanism, and pointing out the political dangers which have been so lamentably verified since the control of the Tammany Hall organization passed into the hands of the hierarchy, by the connivance of ambitious and designing political demagogues. Dr. W. C. Brownlee became his principal coadjutor, and the "Protestant Vindicator" succeeded to the "Protestant," which maintained the controversy for some years longer. But he did not forget his ancient foe, slavery: he was equally devoted to the destruction of that iniquitous system, and as a result of his labors, coupled with those of Mr. Garrison, who had established the "Liberator" in Boston, in 1831, the "American Antislavery Society" was formed. Thereafter his attention was divided between the two foes of the Republic and of a pure Christianity. He traversed the Eastern and Middle States extensively, lecturing and preaching against either of them or both, as seemed necessary. It was said of him and of his associates, as of the apostles at Thessalonica, "Here come those who turn the world upside down." Besides his constant labor of editing, preaching, and lecturing, he wrote miscellaneous articles chiefly against the "twin systems of error," and several books intended to arouse the sympathies of the North against slavery.

Under the title of "Picture of Slavery in the United States," he published his former work, originally printed in Virginia, "The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable," adding largely to it from his personal recollections of the system and its evils, and illustrated with pictures of scenes that had occurred under his notice there. He also published "Slavery Illustrated in its Effects upon Woman," depicting the terrible social evils resulting from the complex features of Southern society, and the laws regulating slavery. These publications drew upon him a storm of censure and abuse from the South, and denunciations from the proslavery press and ministry of the day, but opened the eyes of the lovers of freedom, and nerved them to greater boldness. These books contain the system of "abolition without compensation" which became the shibboleth of the Garrison wing of Abolitionists.

## PICTURE OF SLAVERY.

To those who have not seen the volume it may be well to present a few extracts from Bourne's "Picture of Slavery in the United States," the first portion of which embodied much of the text of the book published by him in Harrisonburg, Va., about the year 1812. In one of the paragraphs of the introductory chapter the following appears:

Will subsequent ages credit so monstrous a statement—that *preachers of the Gospel* eighteen hundred years after angels had sung "On earth peace, good-will to men!" were proverbially devoted participants in all the enormities and iniquity of man-stealing?—P. 9.

That any person should have effrontery sufficient to commence and persist in an infernal trade with the bodies and souls of men, where the illumination of the Gospel determines our duties, responsibility, and destiny, is proof, more than ample, of the innate tendency of the human race to every moral obliquity. What apology shall be patiently heard at the present era for upholding a traffic which necessarily includes every species of iniquity, and which is the offspring of an unhallowed avarice that conducts to hell?—P. 9.

The conduct of religious professors and rulers loudly demands the severest castigation.—P. 10.

Slavery originated in avarice, indolence, treachery, evil conscience, and barbarity; and its constant fruits have been robbery, disease, FAITHLESSNESS, profligacy of every species, and murder. Crimes of every degree, and blood-stained with all hues of *atrocious and cruelty*, have incessantly marked its course, until, after three hundred years of infernal desolations, the long-suffering of God and the patience of man are almost exhausted.—P. 81.

## EFFECTS OF SLAVERY ON THE SLAVE-HOLDERS.

1. The first effect of slavery. It inflames them with haughty self-conceit.
2. A marble-hearted insensibility.—P. 86.
3. They become sensual, and lose that instinctive pudicity which God, for the wisest and holiest purposes, has implanted in the hearts of mankind.—P. 87.
4. Slave-holders are always irascible and turbulent.—P. 98.
5. It destroys every correct view of equity, and fills the practitioner of the system with all injustice and knavery.—P. 104.
6. It renders men violent in cruelty.—P. 122.
7. It is the prolific source of all infidelity and irreligion.—P. 131.

The illustrations used in connection with the foregoing propositions were so startling as to arouse that intense aversion to slavery at the North that marked the controversy. In his prelude to this portion of his book he says :

Time and labor are too precious to be wasted in boyish fencing with a blunt lash, and shooting, children-like, with pop-guns.

THE PRESENT CONTEST IS A WAR FOR THE EXTERMINATION OF  
SLAVERY !

The period has arrived when slavery must be entirely abolished. To tolerate its abominations for an hour extends a pestilence through the Union, adds fuel to the volcano which is ready to burst forth with all its devastating fury upon the Republic, increases a mass of moral corruption which now is mortifying in the body politic, and with the most open, provoking effrontery calls for the vengeance of Heaven, and the retributive curse of God upon our guilty country. What citizen with a sane mind can possibly suppose that the righteous Arbiter of Providence will much longer permit a horde of oppressors, haughty, presumptuous, "past feeling, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful," profligate, unrighteous, turbulent, persecutors, cruel, impious in principle and filled with all practical ungodliness, to doom two millions of our fellow-immortals, American citizens, to every contrivance of misery and vice here, (and to hell hereafter,) only to gratify their atrocious hardheartedness and lusts, and to glut their insatiate thirst for despotism and blood ?

The only effectual and Christian method to remove the danger and curse of kidnapping, with all its ferocity, anguish, and crimes, is evident : instantly, universally, and altogether, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to break every yoke, and to let the oppressed go free.—P. 136.

It was from these and other like statements in regard to slavery and the slave-holders, that the early abolitionists drew their "inspiration" in their attacks upon that system. Accepting these views and principles, Mr. Garrison received and held aloft the abolition standard on which these legends were inscribed : "Abolition without compensation ;" "No compromises with slave-holders ;" "No communion with men-stealers ;" "The contest is a war for the *extermination of slavery.*"

The results of their efforts have become historical, terminating only after the moral warfare became first political, then sectional, and finally an armed strife involving the loss of over a million of lives, five thousand millions of dollars, and a legacy



of two thousand millions of war debt, and hundreds of thousands of widows and orphans. Had the energies of the three Pioneers been devoted to the work of insuring the passage of laws securing to the slave-owners one thousand millions of dollars in bonds, payable from proceeds of revenues and lands, it is possible that the terrible price paid for the freedom of the slaves might have been saved. But "what might have been" cannot be known until the last scene in the grand displays of divine Omnipotence shall have been enacted, the great books of God's Omniscience shall be opened, and the universe shall resound with glad hosannas and hallelujahs to Him "who doeth all things well."

As a corroboration of the fact that the opposition to slavery sprang from within the pale of the Churches, and not merely from the benevolent impulses of humanitarians, the following extracts will be timely. At the close of the "Picture of Slavery" is an article entitled

#### MANSTEALING AND SLAVERY DENOUNCED BY THE PRESBYTERIAN AND METHODIST CHURCHES.

At a meeting of delegates to form a National Antislavery Society, convened at Philadelphia, December 4, 1833, it was

*Resolved*, That George Bourne, William Lloyd Garrison, and Charles W. Dennison, be a committee to prepare a synopsis of Wesley's Thoughts on Slavery, and of the Antislavery items in the note formerly existing in the Catechism of the Presbyterian Church of the United States; and of such other similar testimony as they can obtain, to be addressed to Methodists, Presbyterians, and all professed Christians in this country, and published under the sanction of this convention.

In conformity with that appointment the committee selected from the records of the Presbyterian Church every article of general interest which adverts to this momentous subject. This they published under the title of "Presbyterianism and Slavery." They also published, under the title of "Methodism and Slavery," all that is admitted as obligatory in the Methodist Discipline, with every thing material in the tract of John Wesley respecting slavery.

These, with other valuable articles, appeared as an Appendix to the "Picture of Slavery," and afford important aid to those who seek for information upon those topics.

Many of the old citizens of New York remember the bitterness of the contest, the stormy meetings, the continual uproar,



and the frequent mobs and riots which the Antislavery controversy occasioned in New York as well as in numerous other localities. Some have thought that, if the doctrine of "compensated emancipation" had been presented instead of Abolition, the result would have been achieved without the terrible expenditure of life and treasure which eventuated. Others believe that no moral suasion or offered compensation could have removed the curse of slavery, and that it is useless in this case to speculate on "what might have been"—we know what was, and what has been—and that perhaps Divine Justice required the awful retribution of blood for blood. In this view it would seem that this eminent servant of God was *conscious of a mission*, that he could not avoid the duty allotted to him, and that his courage, fidelity, and intrepidity were bestowed upon him to enable him to discharge the task. A striking instance of his courage was admirably related by the late Thomas Downing and by Dr. Henry Highland Garnet, as occurring during the Antislavery riots in New York about the year 1834.

An Antislavery meeting was held at Broadway Hall, in Broadway above Howard Street, next to the famous Tattersalls. That large, quaint building stood gable end to the street, and its sloping roof descended just below the side windows of the hall of meeting. Among other noted speakers Mr. Garrison was present; while the exercises were progressing, an onslaught was made upon the meeting by the "plug-uglies," "butt-enders," "subterraneans," and other ruffians, sworn to exterminate the Abolition fanatics. Armed with sticks and clubs, and with a furious noise, they rushed upon the terrified audience, aiming particularly, however, at the rostrum and the speakers. Mr. Garrison was safely got away through one of the side windows. George Bourne stood forth to receive the "Tanmany Braves," and placing his cane before him with hands extended he said, "Stand back, ye villains! what do you want here? Stand back, I say!" The leaders and the advancing band stood still for a moment in astonishment and mute admiration of the courage of the burly looking "dominie," whose splendid physique and fearless eye showed them an undaunted foe. At last one of them swung his hat, and cried out "Three cheers for the dominie!" which they gave with a

will, and, leaving him unmolested, they chased out the remainder of the audience, who were glad to escape without personal violence. Garrison, the special object of their venom, escaped unharmed. The *Pioneer of Antislavery* and "Antipopery" had so frequently faced excited crowds and angry mobs as to be quite prepared for such demonstrations. But the limits of this sketch permit only a glance at his persistent labors in his busy ministerial life of over forty years, during which he originated and took large share in the arduous work of the great controversies mentioned, in their preliminary stages. Shortly after his return to New York from Canada, he united with the Reformed (Dutch) classis of New York, of which he continued a member until his death. His first pastoral charge in New York was in Provost-street, (now Franklin,) afterward at Houston and Forsyth Streets, and subsequently at West Farms, but most of his time was devoted to the controversy against Popism and slavery.

In addition to his labors of preaching, lecturing, and journeying in forming Antislavery and Reformation societies, he edited and had republished many of the controversial works of the sixteenth and following centuries. Among others Fulke's "Confutation of the Rhemish Testament Notes, and the Rhemish Testament;" Baxter's "Key for Catholics, or Jesuit Juggling;" Scipio De Ricci's "Female Convents;" "Secreta Monita," of the Jesuits; "Taxatio Papalis;" "History of the Waldenses;" "Middleton's Letters from Rome;" "Luther, on the Galatians;" "Davenant on Colossians;" Bower's "History of the Popes," etc.

Mr. Bourne was one of the most indefatigable students and workers of his day. He was scarcely ever without pen and paper, or book, in hand, even at his meals. In addition to the constant demand upon him for matter for his paper, he was incessantly preparing articles for magazines, editing and indexing books; reading, revising, and preparing books for the press, for the Harpers, the Appletons, and other publishers. To avoid "rusting out" he was also engaged lecturing and preaching, Sabbaths and week-days. Very few men surpassed him in the variety and extent of his literary acquirements. To great mathematical knowledge he added large attainments in philological lore, and as a linguist he ranked high.

His proficiency in the Hebrew language was shown in his preparation of the English-Hebrew portion of Roy's Hebrew Lexicon. His memory was exceedingly retentive, and was stored with treasures culled from the richest sources. It was said of him that he was a living concordance, gazetteer, Bible dictionary, etc. His general style of preaching was extempore and incisive. He was a fluent speaker, forcible, convincing, eloquent, and at times terrible in his denunciations of the giant evils and iniquities of this era. Multitudes thronged to hear him wherever he was announced to speak upon these topics. Rev. Dr. W. C. Brownlee was wont to say, "There were two men to whose preaching he *always* listened with delight—Rev. Dr. Alexander and George Bourne." Among the books of which he was the author are the following, in addition to those referred to: "Picture of Quebec," "Old Friends," "The Reformers," "Lorette, the History of a Canadian Nun;" also, his masterly analysis of the history, doctrines, and practices of the Church of Rome, published under the title of "American Text-Book of Popery," and "Illustrations of Popery." This was pronounced by Rev. Dr. Dowling, compiler of the "Pictorial History of Romanism," the best compendium on Popism, especially for ministers and students, that has ever appeared. It was the result of forty years of study and thorough acquaintance with every phase of the controversy. It is the concentrated information derived from over seven hundred volumes of writings of the most noted doctors, bishops, deans, cardinals, saints, and popes of the Romish Antichurch, and of the Greek, Oriental, and English Churches, and of the "Fathers" and historians of the first four centuries. It is a picture of Romanism drawn from its own records, chapter and verse being given for every quotation. It contains also a chronological table of the date of every corruption and innovation upon the apostolic simplicity and primitive usages of the Churches of Christ. The argument from history which he has thus presented is a very strong one against the pretensions of the Papal hierarchy to be "the Church of Christ founded by the Apostle Peter." He has therein demonstrated it to be the mystical Babylon, begun in apostasy from the faith, amplified by succeeding teachers of errors during centuries of increasing corruption, and fully displayed as the Antichrist by the Council of Trent.

Mr. Bourne possessed a cheerful disposition, and the fruits of pure and active religion were manifested in his daily walk and conversation. His faith was ardent; no doubts of the sovereignty of God or of the final accomplishment of his designs ever entered into his mind. His discriminating eye beheld in the events of the passing period the glimmering of the dawn which precedes the rising of the millennial day. He recognized the approach of the Sun of Righteousness who will dispel the moral darkness of pagan and papal superstitions, and believed that the predictions of the Divine oracles in regard to the "Mystery of Iniquity" are in process of fulfillment; and in the expositions of those prophecies he constantly delighted. Religion was the medium through which he viewed all sublunary things, and to which all his labors were made subservient. His love of the truth was so strong, and his zeal in its defense so great, that sometimes he appeared to transcend the limits of gentleness in his controversial writings. This was partly the result of an ardent temperament, and partly because of his own keen perception of the truth; owing to this he did not so well realize the position of some of those in mental darkness, who, from wrong education, powerful discipline, evil habits, innate proclivities, and selfish bias, were impervious to the light, and yet might be better approached by gentle arguments than by open denunciation. Some have supposed that, at times, more of the *suaviter in modo*, combined with his *fortiter in re*, would have rendered his labors still more extensively useful in the conversion of the devotees of Rome and of slavery; but no one doubted his whole-souled devotedness and sincerity in his life-work of the destruction of those evil systems. With regard to other matters, and in the social relations of life, Mr. Bourne manifested cheerfulness, kindly interest, and sympathy toward all. In personal appearance he was agreeable and prepossessing; of a vigorous frame and robust constitution; affable in manner, ready in conversation, and beloved by those who knew him best. He seemed to be in most respects eminently qualified to be the leader in developing one of those momentous changes in society which mark the onward progress of the race.

In all the great movements in human affairs and events which have changed the current of history, or of reforms which have turned human activities into new channels, one in-



dividual has been usually selected or permitted by Divine Providence to "blow the trumpet," to "sound the alarm," and marshal the forces to the conflict. The cause and the individual at the outset are almost identical, and the "trumpeter," usually also the standard-bearer, has frequently had to advance to moral battle-fields almost alone, depending upon the aid of an Almighty arm, (invisible to others.) While thus beginning to attack the strongholds of error, responsive minds and sympathetic hearts gather round the messenger; the cause is extended by agitation and strengthened by accessions, until, after much conflict, often "*vi et armis*," the victory is accomplished.

It was thus with the originator of the "Antislavery conflict." Believing that all other preceding modes and plans of opposing slavery were futile and incompetent for the mighty task, he felt called upon to institute a new form—that of

#### IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL EMANCIPATION.

He looked upon slavery not merely as an evil, but as a sin, and consequently his message was "to stop sinning!" "For that there is no excuse or allowance." Other plans had regarded slavery as an evil to be mitigated or removed by pliant means and remedial measures; his method viewed slave-holding as the giant sin of the country, to be destroyed root and branch without remedy. With that view of the subject he entered into the moral conflict, with nothing but the sling of argument, and the smooth stones of God's word, at a time when the leaders of the American "Israel" were either quiescent or terrified by the "giant" of slavery. The testimony of John Wesley against slavery as "the sum of all villainies" was already hateful to Southern Methodists, and Northern Methodists were learning to whisper the adage with bated breath, for fear of offending "their Southern brethren," and the testimony of the Book of Discipline against the system was practically ignored. George Bourne arraigned not only the Presbyterian Churches for their complicity with the system, but notably the Southern Methodist and Baptist Churches as well. By his "Picture of Slavery," and by his labors among the Methodist Churches, North, he aroused many of the Northern preachers to that enthusiasm for liberty which culminated in the division of the M. E. Church.

The Southern Churches regarded George Bourne as an "agitator," a "firebrand," a "disturber of their peace," and the Northern proslavery ministers and presses opposed and calumniated him with much vigor. Religious newspapers, which then bespattered him with reproaches and ridicule, have, since the edict of Emancipation, been loud in praise of those who carried out his plans and methods. Some have had the candor to admit that his estimate of slavery and his prescience far excelled their own.

The limits of this sketch will permit no further extended notice of his busy life. Toward its close he gave his principal attention to the contest against the papal hierarchy, leaving that against slavery to the abolitionists under Mr. Garrison, and the antislavery men under their various names and leaders. He was for some years acting editor of the "Christian Intelligencer," the organ of the Reformed Dutch Church, in whose office, then situated in Fulton-street, the present site of the Fulton-street Union Prayer-Meeting, he received the heavenly message to "come up higher." On the afternoon of November 20, 1845, while seated in his usual place reading his letters, he was seized with an attack resembling apoplexy. Physicians were sent for, but in less than forty minutes, and before their arrival, he had calmly breathed his life away. The attack was pronounced one of heart disease. So far as mortal judgment can decide, he was ready for the glorious change, and "made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light," having long enjoyed "the peace of God, which passeth understanding," through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus ended, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, the life of the intrepid pioneer of antislavery. The funeral services were held in the Middle Dutch Church, corner of Lafayette Place and Fourth-street, on the Sabbath following, the 23d of November. Rev. Thomas De Witt, in the course of his remarks, said of him, that, like as was said of John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, "There lies one who never feared the face of man." To use the language of another, who ardently loved him—Lewis Tappan:—

Thus has fallen an intrepid advocate of human rights, with his harness on, in a vigorous old age, after a life of singular health, activity, and usefulness. His death is a severe loss to the Anti-



slavery cause, the cause of Protestant Christianity, and the Republic of Letters. Throughout his whole life he was an example of laborious efforts for the intellectual, moral, and physical good of his race. He was the vindicator of oppressed humanity, and labored incessantly for the deliverance of men from political, ecclesiastical, and physical bondage. He was as bold and uncompromising as John Knox, and dealt hard blows, but not with an unamiable temper, upon the foes of truth, freedom, and Christianity. He was a man of wit, keen in his invectives, and terrible in his rebukes. He was honest, sincere, frank, intrepid, self-denying, laborious, "fearing neither wicked men nor the devil."

This concise and eloquent analysis of his character and labors was from one of his coadjutors, who knew him long and intimately, and rendered him much aid in doing his life-work. His opponents, who received the hard blows which he dealt at the false systems which he attacked, perceived only the sterner side of his character, and supposed him to be severe and harsh in temper, but he was only so against systems and those who supported error knowingly; to others he was affable, genial, and tender, always ready to sympathize and side with the oppressed of every nation.

It would appear, as has been said, as if he were "conscious of a mission," and could not rest while the American Churches tolerated slavery. Like the ancient prophet, applying the words to our American Israel, he could say, with burdened feeling:

"For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace,  
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
Until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness,  
And the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

