

SLAVERY  
AND  
MARRIAGE.

A DIALOGUE.

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1850.



## SLAVERY AND MARRIAGE.

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Conversation between Judge North, Major South, and Mr. Free Church.

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SCENE,—*Newspaperdom.* MR. FREE CHURCH and other Gentlemen reading. MAJ. SOUTH and JUDGE NORTH in angry dispute about Slavery; threatening fight. MR. FREE CHURCH interposes.

*Mr. Free Church.*—Gentlemen, be calm; there is a more rational way of getting satisfaction than this. Let us have a fair discussion. We will hear your attack and defense, and help you to a more judicious conclusion than running each other through with the sword.

*Judge North.*—Very well: I am willing to debate the subject with Major South.

*Major South.*—Commence then, Judge N., as you are the assailant.

*Judge N.*—I am always ready in so good a cause. I affirm then, to begin with, that Slavery is an arbitrary institution, created by law, and contrary to natural liberty. All men are *created* free and equal.

*Major S.*—I affirm on the contrary, that the condition of master and servant is *natural*. Servitude, or the labor of one for another, exists everywhere ; and Slavery is only one form of this necessity.

*Judge N.*—It is a most cruel and oppressive form you must admit, one under which horrible wrong and outrage is committed. Look at the every-day accounts of slaves being *whipped to death*.

*Major S.*—There are instances of cruel treatment, it is true, but they are exceptions, not chargeable to the system, which is naturally one of protection and confidence.

*Judge N.*—It is a *vicious system* in itself, because it gives unlimited *power*, and such power in the present state of human nature is sure to be oppressive. Ownership of man by man is wrong, and prolific of wrong.

*Major S.*—But the *law* protects slaves from abusive masters.

*Judge N.*—You know, however, that the law is merely nominal, or, at most, applies only in extreme cases.

*Major S.*—The slaves are happy ; they do

not ask your pity. You could not persuade them to leave their masters, or exchange their condition with your own free laborers.

*Judge N.*—This is no argument in favor of Slavery; it only shows the degraded state of the slave. The noble instinct which chooses *liberty or death*, is all crushed out of him. His spirit is broken under the yoke. Then, he is treated as a brute in respect to his affections. Family ties are sundered without remorse, and the tenderest connections rudely broken. What can you say in defense of this cruelty?

*Major S.*—I affirm that Slavery is sanctioned by the Bible. Moses and Paul both recognized it, and gave regulations concerning it.

*Judge N.*—The Bible *permitted* Slavery on account of the barbarism of the times, but certainly does not sanction it with any thing like approval; on the contrary, its whole spirit is opposed to it, and fully carried out, would lead to its immediate abolition. Furthermore, Slavery is a system that recognizes no Bible. So far as the slave is concerned, that book might as well have never been given. You take away his right to read and enquire the way of life for himself; and if he ever gains a knowledge of his duty and a religious faith, your monstrous claim of ownership is still para-

mount. He has no liberty to follow the dictates of his own conscience. Thus, by your power to heathenize and coerce him, all spiritual as well as bodily freedom is taken away.

*Major S.*—The liberation of the slaves would be attended with pillage and bloodshed, and your tender mercy to them is murder to their masters.

*Judge N.*—I contend that *liberty breeds virtue*, and that the slaves, if liberated and treated justly, would be better citizens than they are now.

*Major S.*—They are not capable of taking care of themselves ; their masters would have to support them or they would starve.

*Judge N.*—This is a false assumption ; for it is universally proved that free labor is more profitable than slave labor. The slaves would do their work more cheerfully and better for wages, than they do from fear of the lash.

*Major S.*—Just compare our servants with the free negroes of the North, and say which class is the happiest ? You cannot deny that the lot of the slave is vastly preferable.

*Judge N.*—If this were so, it is because our free negroes suffer the disgrace and abasement of their brethren ; so that their wretchedness is owing to the existence of Slavery. Slavery is a curse to the whole African race.

*Major S.*—Well, be that as it may, it is

the corner-stone of our republican edifice. Your abolition principles strike at the very foundations of society. Besides, it is intermeddling with what does not concern you. The South have a right to their own domestic institutions, and this northern interference is intolerable; for one, I am ready to defend my rights at the point of the sword.

*Judge N.*—‘Justice must be done if the heavens fall.’ A state of society founded on unrighteous principles ought to be subverted, and I shall not cease agitation against Slavery if it stirs up war.

*Mr. Free Church.*—Before you proceed to such extremities, allow me a few words with Judge North. Perhaps I shall be able to divert your mutual wrath. Will you be moderator, Major South?

*Major S.*—O certainly—proceed.

*Mr. F.*—Judge North, I hold the same opinion about Marriage that you do of Slavery, that it is an arbitrary institution, and contrary to natural liberty. What do you say to this opinion?

*Judge N.*—I say that it is manifestly false—nature every where dictates Marriage.

*Mr. F.*—It dictates sexual union, I will allow; but this marriage in pairs is only one form or method of bringing about sexual union, and I believe that this method is as arbitrary



as the slaveholder's method of securing natural service; and it is very extensively, if not universally, a cruel and oppressive method of uniting the sexes, especially to woman, the weaker party. The catalogue of woman's abuses under the tyranny of matrimony, compare very well with the cruel lot of the slaves. Let me read, for instance, an account of a conjugal mauling and murder, which I cut from a late paper:—

“OUTRAGE AND PROBABLE MURDER.—An examination has been going on at Albion, during the past week, of Mr. Lowder, residing in the town of Yates, about fifteen miles north of that village, for the supposed murder of his wife. The facts brought to light on the testimony of the neighbors and daughter of the prisoner show a degree of depravity--of relentlessness, fiend-like cruelty, which it is seldom our lot to record. It appeared in evidence that he had been in the habit, for several weeks previous to her death, of treating his wife with the most wanton cruelty as a pastime--had knocked her down on several occasions with an ax-helve; would place her repeatedly on the bed, jerk it from the headstead to the floor, and after beating her without mercy, would replace the bed and repeat the act. On one occasion it was said that after repeating the transaction described above several times, he raised the cellar-door, threw her into the cellar and kept her there till morning. The circumstances of her death were that she went to bed in usual health, and was found dead in the morning. When the coroner's inquest was held, Dr. Huff of Albion, took the stomach to his residence, in which was detected, on examination, a considerable quantity of oxalic acid. It appeared that Mr. Lowder had purchased poison a



short time previous to this event, and that a paper of white powder, admitted to be poison by him, had been found in the bed by the daughter. [Lockport (N. Y.) Courier, 15th.]

*Judge N.*—This is an extreme case. You will find such abuses only among the lowest classes, and they cannot be charged to the Marriage system.

*Major S.*—But I said the same, you will recollect, of bad treatment of the slaves.

*Mr. F.*—The truth is, Marriage gives man the power of ownership over woman, and such power is as wrong and prolific of wrong in the case of Marriage, as in that of Slavery.

*Major S.*—You must see the force of this argument, I am sure, Judge North.

*Judge N.*—The law protects woman from the violence of her husband.

*Mr. F.*—Nominally, I admit; but as in the case of Slavery, this protection applies only in extreme cases.

*Judge N.*—Woman is devotedly attached to marriage. You will make yourself perfectly odious to her, by advocating its abolition.

*Mr. F.*—The fact that the victims of marriage are attached to it, and could not be induced to abandon their situation, only proves their degradation. The Hindoo woman chooses to be burned with the body of her husband, because she knows no other way, and

prefers death to the odium of unfashionable behavior. Marriage separates and breaks up families. In every instance union at the altar, as it is justly called, (considering the cruelty of the sacrifice,) mutilates two family circles. Weddings are frequently as woeful to the parent families as funerals. Examples of the rending of family ties are at hand. My father's family saw one of its daughter's exiled to the south, and another to the west, and both hurried to their graves by uncongenial climates and hardships. My friend here, Mr. M., has brought up a large family of children, and yet now in his old age he and his wife have been obliged to go 50 or 60 miles to meet an 'Orphan's Friend Society' for the purpose of getting a child of strangers to live with them. Marriage has taken all their children away.

*Judge N.*—But the Bible sanctions Marriage, and you must admit it is a divine institution. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' is one of the ten commandments.

*Mr. F.*—The Bible sanctions Marriage only as it sanctions Slavery—i.e. temporarily, and because the world, by reason of sin, has not hitherto been prepared for better institutions; for it expressly declares in Matt. 22: 30, that in the final state of mankind, Marriage will be abolished; and that state all look for, and at

least pray for, as often as they use the Lord's prayer—'thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.' If the decalogue sanctions Marriage by the commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'—it also sanctions Slavery by the commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass;'—and in the New Testament, the same discourse which enjoins love and obedience on husbands and wives, also enjoins forbearance on masters, and faithfulness and submission on slaves. Eph. 5 and 6. Col. 3 and 4.

—But perhaps the worst feature of Marriage, like that of Slavery, is, that while it claims the sanction of the Bible, its actual operation in innumerable instances is, to *subvert* the Bible, and prohibit its influence. It is a huge Bastille of *spritual* tyranny; where men and women have the power to debar each other from their rights of conscience, and the enjoyment of their religious faith. Abundant, every-day facts prove this: and as you showed in the case of Slavery, it is inherent in the system. Marriage commits a man and woman to each other in such a way, that selfishness stands sentinel over the religious convictions of both.—In the first place, to preserve the fictitious union with which they commence, it is for their interest to shut their eyes to truth. But if

subsequently an attraction for God and religious improvement is awakened in one, then jealousy takes fire in the other, and marriage despotism is the order of the day. Either party has power to embarrass, persecute, and often to crush the other in the exercise of their conscientious duties; and in how many cases is this power used! Men and women arrogate every day under the privileges of Marriage, the right to veto God, and exclude each other from his service. Under circumstances where most of the religion is merely fashionable and formal, the inquisitorial oppression which belongs to Marriage is not so apparent; but in any case where novel or unfashionable doctrines are involved, it shows its bolts and shackles and instruments of torture. I assert that in the married community, there is not one woman in fifty who could become a *heretic* in the manner of primitive believers without braving oppression; and but seldom a man, who would not have to fight for the liberty of devoting himself and his property to an unpopular cause.

*Judge N.*—But the abolition of Marriage would lead to unbridled licentiousness and social ruin.

*Mr. F.*—I reply in your own words, that “Liberty breeds virtue;” and I maintain that free-love, or complex marriage, combined

with community of property, would annihilate the very sources of adultery, whoredom, and all sexual abuse. It is the poverty and compulsory abstinence of the Marriage system, that genders these crimes in society. The feeling of plenty would directly stimulate to chastity and self-control.

*Major S.*—Good. *Liberty breeds virtue,* Judge.

*Judge N.*—What would become of women and children, if it was not for the system of maintenance and care that Marriage provides? They cannot take care of themselves, and they would fare hard if there were no responsible husbands.

*Mr. F.*—They would certainly fare better under a system of free-labor and free-love in Association, than they do under the Marriage system, where each family is at the mercy of one man. A responsible association of men, is the protection secured to every woman and child, in the system I advocate.

*Judge N.*—Look at the forlorn condition of old maids and old bachelors, and especially the class of abandoned women. What a contrast with the happy family relations of married life.

*Mr. F.*—These outsiders, my friend, are the “free negroes” of the marriage system—that is, their position and degradation result from



the existence of Marriage, just as the degradation of the free blacks results from the existence of Slavery. You can see for yourself that the abolition of Marriage would have the same effect upon their condition that the abolition of Slavery would have upon the negroes of the north. Their reproach would be taken away, and the genial influence of equality and restored self-respect would be greatly for their improvement.

*Major S.*—You have furnished your opponent with every argument so far, Judge.

*Judge N.*—Well, this is interfering with private rights, which no man of spirit will consent to. It strikes at the foundations of the social structure.

*Major S.*—“*Fiat justitia, ruat coelum,*” Judge North. Remember the story of the Farmer and the Lawyer in the old spelling-book, and abide by your own decision in our dispute.

*Judge N.*—I see I am trapped. Well, this must be taken into consideration. I must either let Slavery alone, or go for a revolution of society at the north as well as the south.

*Mr. F.*—I should advise both parties to go for the kingdom of God, in which neither Slavery or Marriage covers wrong, but love works righteousness in *freedom*.

[EXEUNT OMNES.]