THE PRESbyterians IN THE ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES

With Special Reference to That Part of
the Church Not in Contact with
New England Abolitionism

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Degree of Master of Arts

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the antislavery movement in the United States falls quite definitely into two distinct periods. The first begins with judicial abolition of slavery in Massachusetts in 1783 and ends about 1830. From then until the outbreak of the Civil War constitutes the second period. In each of the periods certain characteristics are noticeable. In the first period the greatest interest was manifest in the slave and border states, the northern states being scarcely aroused on the subject. The political philosophy of the early years of the Republic caused democrats everywhere to give a second thought to the natural and "unalienable rights" of man. One goal having been won in 1807 by the passage of the Slave-Trade Act opposition became for a time milder than it had been in the beginning. This period from 1808 to 1830 has been called by some historians\(^1\) the second of three periods of antislavery activity. What interest was shown in the North on the subject of slavery was of a religious character. That section hoped to persuade the slaveholders by the use of religious and moral arguments. This policy was far from vigorously prosecuted. In fact the greatest activity as well as

\(^1\) For example, Alice Dana Adams
the greatest interest was to be found in the slave states. It was they who recognized most fully the evils of the system. They were not yet apologizing for or justifying it. Southern interest was shown by activity in the colonization movement, and by the large number of antislavery societies in the section. With them, too, the religious sentiment against slavery was uppermost, and the influence of the church was pronounced.

During the second period the emphasis changed. The movement became almost exclusively a northern one. What had been an antislavery movement aiming at gradual emancipation in the first period came to be, for the most part, in the second period, an abolition movement demanding immediate action. Both the political\(^2\) and Garrisonian\(^3\) abolitionists criticized the work the church had done in the previous period, and called it a failure. A trend of abolitionism both in the South and the North turned attention from the true issue of slavery and hindered the antislavery movement. In the North many persons otherwise sympathetic to the antislavery movement eschewed the cause rather than be associated with the

\(^2\)Abolitionists who advocated immediate emancipation through legal or constitutional channels.

\(^3\)Abolitionists who advocated immediate, unconditional and uncompensated emancipation, so-called because of the acknowledged leadership of William Lloyd Garrison.
abolitionists whose violent measures they disapproved. No longer did the South take the initiative, but a comparatively small northern group. The South through fear, began to justify slavery as an economic necessity and as divinely sanctioned in the Bible. The South was on the defensive. It resented northern interference in what it considered its "political and civil rights."^4

The place and activity of the churches in American reform movements, particularly that of antislavery is being more and more recognized. The American church in the period preceding the Civil War was a powerful influence, able to dictate political and social policies. Interest in individual lives was by no means its sole preoccupation.

The present study considers mainly the relation to the antislavery movement of that portion of the Presbyterian Church not in contact with New England Abolitionism. This group was chosen in an effort to discover their place in a movement in which their Calvinist brothers, the New England Congregationalists and Yankee Presbyterians have been accorded so prominent a place. Presbyterians were not to be found in the North alone, nor exclusively in the South, but in all

^4Berian Green, Sketches of the Life and Writings of James Gillespie Birney, 95.
^5See Gilbert H. Barnes' admirable work entitled The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844.
sections. What relation, if any, did their location have to their antislavery activity? This paper proposes to discover.

The first representatives of Presbyterianism in America were the Scotch-Irish. "... Of all the races which had colonized the American colonies, they (the Scotch-Irish) were the only one with a uniform religion." The Scotch-Irish in America are descendants of the Scotchmen whom James VI settled in Ulster in 1609. When England began to inflict severe measures against religious non-conformity they came in large numbers to America. Philadelphia was their port of entry. In 1720 James Logan, secretary of the Province of Pennsylvania, wrote: "It looks as if Ireland is to send all its inhabitants hither, for last week not less than six ships arrived and every day two or three also." In 1728 of the 6,208 immigrants arriving in this country, 5,605 were Scotch-Irish.

They moved to the South and West, for they were late comers and the coastal plain was occupied. They ascended the eastward-flowing rivers and moved southward

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down the valleys between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghenies. Wherever these people went, which was everywhere, the Presbyterian Church went. Even the New England colonies, most inhospitable of all, were willing that they settle on the frontier as a protection to the older settlements. Few, however, took up their abode in that section. Nor were the Indian-loving Quakers loath to place the Scotch-Irish between themselves and the redmen. James Logan writing again in 1727 said:

About that time considerable numbers of good, sober, people came in from Ireland, who wanted to be settled. At the same time it also happened that we were under apprehension of ye Northern Indians ... I therefore thought it might be prudent to plant a settlement of such men as those ... as a frontier, in case of any disturbance.

Unlike the Germans who were localized in Pennsylvania and Maryland, the Scotch-Irish were to be found in every colony, and in sufficient numbers to be influential.

The Scotch-Irish remained a distinct national group until after the Civil War. Their religious unity, in the main made this possible. That they remained distinct was remarkable considering their widely scattered

10 Frederick Jackson Turner, The Significance of Sections in American History, 90.
11 Henry B. Funk, Influence of Presbyterian Church in Early American History, 49. (Quoted by).
settlements. It has been said that in the Revolutionary period they acted as an "amalgam" which bound "together all other racial elements in the population."\textsuperscript{12} It is certain that they fell short of cementing together the factions in the antislavery movement, yet the part of the Presbyterian Church was of moment and consequence. For by the time the antislavery movement was actively under way it had a reputation for learning, social and political prestige, and solid conservatism tempered with benevolent liberalism, unsurpassed by any other denomination.

PART I

THE PRESBYTERIANS IN THE EARLY PERIOD
OF THE ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT
1783–1830
I. Presbyterianism's First Contact with and Action on Slavery

As compared with the Anglicans and Congregationalists the Presbyterian Church was late in date of establishment in the colonies. The first Presbytery was organized in 1705 with six ministers. Thereafter, however, it grew rapidly. From the beginning the Presbyterians, composed almost entirely, in this period, of Scotch-Irish immigrants, were in contact with, and yet apart from the institution of slavery. The large numbers of Scotch-Irish who settled the upland back country of the South were able to observe the system without participating in it. The old country habits of these poor immigrants and the democratic frontier conditions under which they lived did not foster love for, nor even patience with, the system. The Presbyterians who established the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) about the year 1745 had no difficulty in mobilizing the Scotch-Irish of the southern upland in the cause of equal opportunity and freedom for all men, including the black man. Their religion taught them that the gospel set men free.

1 Lewis G. Vander Velde, The Presbyterian Churches and the Federal Union, 1861-1869, 8.
In the preceding century the question of whether "the gospel makes men free" had been a practical one. Following English legal precedent American colonists began to feel that a baptized slave might claim freedom. Conscientious slaveholders were troubled; if they refused opportunity for conversion and baptism to their Negroes they would be hindering the course of "true religion," but to encourage such baptism might mean the loss of their property. Several of the colonies, to avoid this difficulty, between 1664 and 1706 passed laws declaring that baptism did not alter the status of a slave. The Virginia Law of 1667 read: "That the conferring of baptism doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage of freedom, that divers masters, freed from this doubt, may more carefully endeavor the propagation of Christianity." The Princeton leaders protesting such beliefs had come too late to exert any influence in the formulation of these laws. This assumes an impossibility, such democratic and frontier dissenters would scarcely have been heard, and if heard, heeded, in 1667 in Virginia.

\[3\] John C. Hurd, The Law of Freedom and Bondage in the United States, I, 232. The Virginia statute of 1682 seemed to recognize the principle that a Christian slave could be held no longer as a chattel, but was to be considered as a servant bound for a period of years. Ibid., I, 210, f.n.
Samuel Davies of the Presbytery of Virginia was much interested in the welfare of the negroes. In 1756 he wrote in a letter that he had had the pleasure of seeing the communion table "adorned with about forty-four black faces." The next year he wrote that he had "five or six who have seen now a title in heaven." A special negro catechism, prepared by Henry Patillo, a Presbyterian minister at Granville, South Carolina, was often used by Presbyterians working among negroes. The following questions and answers illustrate the character of the catechetical instruction:

Ques. Do you know who made the negroes?
Ans. The same God that made all things.

Ques. Do you think white folks and negroes came from one father?
Ans. Yes, the book says, God hath made of one blood all nations of men, on all the face of the earth. Acts XVII:26. And I should think they were so myself.

Ques. What makes you think so?
Ans. Because, except for the black skin and the curled head, their bodies, I believe, are just alike, within and without.

4 Quoted in Wm. H. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical Biographical, 47.
5 Ibid., 55.
Quest. What should a poor negro do to get a share in the gospel of salvation?

Ans. They should learn to know God, and Christ; and their own dangerous and lost condition.

Quest. Which do you think the happiest person, the master or the slave?

Ans. When I rise on a cold morning to make a fire, and my master is in bed; or when I labour in the sun, on a hot day, and my master is in the shade, then I think him happier than I am.

Thus far only the relation of southern Presbyterians to the institution of slavery has been discussed. It has been variously estimated that the Scotch-Irish in Pennsylvania at the time of the Revolution constituted from a fourth to a third of the population. In that colony, too, they were the frontiersmen. Pennsylvania was the first among the colonies to pass a gradual abolition law. The law was passed in 1780; its author was George Bryan, a typical Scotch-Irish Presbyterian. It was the cooperation between antislavery Quakers and Scotch-Irish which produced this law. On its passage George Bryan wrote to John Adams of Massachusetts: "Our bill astonishes and pleases the Quakers; they looked for no such benevolent issue of our new government.

G. Funk, op. cit., 222.
exercised by Presbyterians."  

Action on the question of slavery in the Presbyterian Church judiciatories antedates the organization of the General Assembly. The first action was taken by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1787. At that time Synod recommended to its members "final abolition," but not without proper training in leading a free life. This recommendation was repeated the following year. The first act of General Assembly was in 1793 when it adopted a resolution in favor of "universal liberty." In 1794 it declared against the sin of "manstealing." The catechism of the same year included an explicit statement against slaveholders. The following year the question of excluding slaveholders from church membership was discussed, but no action was taken. The General Assembly, which was the national organization of the Presbyterian Church continued to retain the

8 Albert Barnes, The Church and Slavery, 54.  
9 Mary S. Locke, Anti-Slavery in America from the Introduction of African Slaves to the Prohibition of the Slave Trade (1619-1808), 45.  
10 James G. Birney, The American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery, 32.  
11 Parker Pillsbury, The Church As It Is: Or the Forlorn Hope of Slavery, 8.  
12 Locke, op. cit., 45.  
13 Ibid., 45.
slaveholder in Christian communion and when agitation on the subject of slavery occurred pointed to its past utterances as sufficient and final. The action of the Presbyterian Church was pronouncedly antislavery, but cautious. For example the "final abolition" recommended in 1789 was to be undertaken by "measures consistent with the interests of civil society."\(^{14}\)

The Presbytery of Transylvania which included the whole state of Kentucky was organized in 1786. In 1794 it resolved that the slaves of members of that Presbytery "should be taught to read the Scriptures," and should be prepared for freedom. Two years later it showed its good faith by "earnestly recommending" that its people "emancipate such of their slaves as they think fit subjects for liberty."\(^{15}\) This Presbytery was the first to agitate the question of communion with slaveholders. In 1795 such a considerable group in that presbytery protested against sitting at communion with slaveholders, and against the institution of slavery in general, that the matter was taken before General Assembly. The controversy must have been serious for the committee appointed by General Assembly called it a subject which seems to "threaten division." This same committee asked the presbytery to use "forbearance and


\(^{15}\) Ibid., 22.
moderation" until General Assembly could take some action. They were referred to the previous recommendation to educate the slaves for "final abolition." The next year the same group were agitating the same question before presbytery. At that time presbytery adopted a resolution to the effect that it did not think it had "sufficient authority from the word of God to make it a term of Christian communion."

Appeals for immediate emancipation were rare in the early period, particularly before 1800. One of the most significant appeals during that time was made in a novel, "Modern Chivalry," by Hugh H. Brackenridge. "Modern Chivalry," written in 1792, was a biting satire on the 1780 Pennsylvania law for the gradual abolition of slavery in the state. After the manner of Swift, Brackenridge put in the mouth of one of his characters many of the pro-slavery arguments current at that time. The passages were highly ironical and the whole constituted a forceful antislavery document.

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16 Ibid., 32.  
17 See page 5.  
18 Martin, op. cit., 23.  
19 It has been impossible to establish his Presbyterianism; as for his nationality, his name leaves little room for doubt.  
20 See page 5.  
21 Lorenzo D. Turner, Anti-Slavery Sentiment in American Literature Prior to 1865, 30.
Just before the meeting of the constitutional convention of 1792 to frame a constitution for Kentucky, David Rice published a pamphlet entitled, *Slavery, Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy*. He contended that the constitutional convention should unconditionally end slavery in Kentucky. Then he had himself elected a delegate to the convention.\(^\text{22}\) The arguments he set forth in the pamphlet were those he had been urging from the pulpit of his Presbyterian Church for several years. The pamphlet had considerable influence. It was re-published in 1812 and again in 1862.\(^\text{23}\)

In the convention he was the ablest opponent of the establishment of slavery in the new state. He declared that a slave was accountable to his Creator, yet the convention proposed to legally deprive him of his free agency. He sarcastically told the meeting that if the legislature intended to be consistent it would have to make the master legally accountable for his slaves in all things both here and hereafter. Although he would have preferred unconditional emancipation he saw that the conditions in the state and the state of the public mind would not follow him. He proposed,

\(^{22}\) *Martin, op. cit.*, 13.  
\(^{23}\) Alice Dana Adams, *The Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery in America (1808-1831)*, 17.
therefore, that the constitution declare against the principle of slavery and leave to the legislature the method of abolition. His suggestion to the legislature was that the importation of slaves be stopped immediately and that a date be set after which all Negroes would be born free. He proposed, too, that an educational system be set up for the freed slaves. In view of later plans it is significant that he did not consider colonization a necessary complement of emancipation. In that, he was a true precursor of the abolitionists of the later period.

At the opening of the 19th century the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was, doubtless, the most important and powerful ecclesiastical body in America, despite its late start. Conservatism is a logical corollary of power and influence. It was beginning to be felt in the Presbyterian Church at the opening of the century. It appeared first at that same Princeton where the founders had held that "the gospel makes men free." The spirit of conservatism had, however, by no means yet conquered Princeton. The Literary Society of the College held many debates between 1808 and 1810 on the slavery question; a fact which would tend to show

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24 Martin, op. cit., 17.
25 Adams, op. cit., 96.
that it was an issue of interest, and probably dissenion.\textsuperscript{26}

In this period the voice of General Assembly was authoritative and final among synods and presbyteries. The highly organized system of the Presbyterian Church was probably a significant factor in its growth in influence and power between 1700 and 1800. The action of West Lexington (Kentucky) Presbytery in 1800 showed the characteristic reliance on General Assembly of lower church bodies. In that year the West Lexington Presbytery wrote to the Synod of Virginia expressing the opinion that slavery was a subject "likely to occasion much trouble and division in the churches of this country."

The letter went on to say that although many members of presbytery believed that slaveholding should exclude from church privileges it hesitated to act until directed by General Assembly. In 1802 this presbytery had to prohibit church sessions (which were apparently becoming impatient and taking the matter in their own hands) from excluding slaveholders from communion until such exclusion could be sanctioned by higher authorities, that is Synod and General Assembly.\textsuperscript{27}

West Lexington Presbytery had to wait for several years before getting any action on the question of slavery in General Assembly. When it came it was

\textsuperscript{26} Wm. Birney, \textit{James G. Birney and His Times}, 27-28.
\textsuperscript{27} Martin, \textit{op. cit.}, 23.
extremely mild. In 1815 General Assembly, in connection
with a case which had come up, declared:

A serious and conscientious person, a
member of a Presbyterian Congregation,
who views the slavery of the negroes as
a moral evil, highly offensive to God,
and injurious to the interests of the
Gospel, lives under the ministry of a
person, or amongst a society of people,
who concur with him in sentiment on
the subject in general principles, yet
for particular reasons, hold slaves, and
tolerate the practice in others.
Ought the former of these persons, under the
impressions and circumstances above de-
scribed, to hold Christian communion with
the latter?

Thereupon, after due deliberation, it
was resolved, that as the same difference of
opinion with respect to slavery takes place
in sundry other parts of the Presbyterian
Church, notwithstanding which they live in
peace and charity, according to the doctrines
and practice of the apostles, it is hereby
recommended to all conscientious persons,
and especially to those whom it immediately
respects, to do the same.28

At this same meeting of General Assembly

George Bourne, a representative from Lexington (Virginia)
Presbytery,29 charged unnamed Virginia ministers with
the mistreatment of slaves. For this action in General
Assembly he was arraigned and tried before his presbytery.

There were two accusation, first, his charge in General
Assembly against the ministers in regard to their

28 Isaac V. Brown, White Diamonds Better than "Black
Diamonds," 125.
29 Not to be confused with West Lexington Presbytery in
Kentucky.
treatment of slaves tended to bring reproach on the character of all the Virginia clergy, and second, he had since his return from General Assembly made unchristian charges against several members of the Presbyterian Church respecting slavery. The breach having been made Bourne was outspoken in his denunciation of slavery and slaveholders. He held that a slaveholding church member was a contradiction in terms, and that slaveholding in the ministry was "no common sin." One occasion he declared that the "Devil can make better pretensions to be a Christian than a slaveholder—the one is the father of all evil, but he is no hypocrit; but a Christian slaveholder is an everlasting liar, and thief, and deceiver." 30 Lexington Presbytery decided to depose him from the ministry. It would seem that his defiant manner and "unbecoming conduct" were more responsible for the action than any sensitiveness on the subject of slavery. Mr. Bourne, the next year, appealed his case to General Assembly. In 1817 the committee reported thus:

While the Assembly do not mean to express an opinion on the conduct of Mr. Bourne, yet they judge that the charges were not fully substantiated, and if they had been, the sentence was too severe, therefore resolved that the sentence be reversed. 31.

30 Foote, op. cit., 362.
31 Ibid., 365.
Lexington Presbytery was ordered to give him a new trial. This was done. Presbytery determined, however, to defeat the leniency of General Assembly toward Bourne. No doubt it was also somewhat provoked by the rebuke it had received at the hand of General Assembly. Bourne was thereupon arraigned on other charges, notably that he had "had a horse bought for him on the Sabbath." He was again deposed. In 1816 Bourne published *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*. It was generally known that he urged without delay the total abolition of slavery, yet General Assembly decided the case in his favor. This action was indicative of the course General Assembly was to take in the next few years.

32 Ibid., 363-364.
33 Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom*, 303
II. The Action of Organized Presbyterian Bodies on Slavery, 1818-1830.

Northern states either abolished slavery or provided for gradual emancipation early in the nineteenth century. Most southern states had prohibited the slave trade by the time the federal constitution was adopted.\(^1\) In these years antislavery sentiment was common in all parts of the country. The majority of those who opposed slavery advocated gradual emancipation. The Rev. David Barrow, a Presbyterian minister in Kentucky in 1808, said that among all the anti-slavery workers in Kentucky he knew of none who believed in immediate general emancipation.\(^2\) Nevertheless it seems that a minority advocated immediate abolition of slavery, but their numbers were not large.\(^3\) The gradual emancipationists were to be found in all parts of the Union particularly in the border and upper slave states. In April of 1818 a resolution was offered in the House of Representatives to amend the constitution. It read: "No person shall be held to service or labor

\(^1\)Wm. W. Sweet, Methodism in American History, 232-233.
\(^2\)Martin, op. cit., 47.
\(^3\)Adams, op. cit., 16.
as a slave, nor shall slavery be tolerated in any state hereafter admitted into the Union, or made one of the United States of America. *4 The consideration was negatived, for Congress was not ready to go that far.

In the same year that this resolution came before Congress the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church declared that slavery was "a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God ... and as totally irreconcileable with the spirit of the gospel of Christ ..." *5

... We earnestly exhort them (slaveholding church members) to increase, their exertions To Effect A Total Abolition of Slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay in this most interesting concern than a regard to the public welfare truly and indispensably demands. The manifest violation or disregard of the injunction here given, in its true spirit and intention, ought to be considered as just ground for the discipline and censures of the church. And if it shall ever happen that a Christian shall sell a slave who is also in communion and good standing with our church, contrary to his or her will and inclination, it ought immediately to claim the particular attention of the proper church judiciary; and unless there be such peculiar circumstances attending the case as can but seldom happen it ought to be followed, without delay, by a suspension of the offender from all the privileges of the church till he repent and make all the reparation in his power to the injured party. *6

*4 Annals of Congress, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1675
*5 Adams, op. cit., 98.
This action by so powerful a body was not without influence. At the time these resolutions were passed no other ecclesiastical body with the exception of the Society of Friends had made a more favorable public declaration for the antislavery cause.\textsuperscript{7} At the time the resolutions were passed no synod, presbytery or church took action against them. They represented the sentiment of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of slavery. True, they did not advocate "immediate and unconditional emancipation," but neither did the majority of antislavery people at that time. General Assembly's action was in keeping with the gradual emancipation sentiment prevalent in the early period. Colonization was a very popular plan for the gradual emancipation of slaves. The 1818 resolutions recommended that Presbyterians "patronize and encourage" this society.\textsuperscript{8} The church continued to support the work of colonization for a good many years. General Assembly passed resolutions recommending the Society in 1829, 1824, 1830, 1831, 1833 and again in 1839.\textsuperscript{9} At the 1823 meeting of General Assembly the committee declared in regard to a communication

\textsuperscript{7}A. Barnes, op. cit., 58.
\textsuperscript{8}John Robinson, The Testimony and Practice of the Presbyterian Church in Reference to American Slavery, 27. For further discussion of the Colonization Society see pages 39 et seq.
\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 31.
from the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society that it believed "important benefit would result to our own country from conveying to the land of their fathers, such of our free people of colour as are willing and prepared to go."10

Soon after the 1818 resolutions were passed there were some who felt that the denunciation of slavery had not been strong enough. One group desired particularly to exclude from communion all slaveholders and slave-traders. In 1823 and again in 1824 unsuccessful attempts to pass such a resolution were made.11 While the church was willing in 1818 to advise her members to promote emancipation as speedily as "a regard of the public welfare" allowed and to threaten discipline to any master who would sell a slave belonging to his own church, she was unwilling in 1823 and 1824 to exclude slaveholders from communion. And yet this might logically have been expected to follow the 1818 action. There are probably two reasons why General Assembly was not willing to pass such a measure. By the middle of the third decade the sentiment on slavery was not what it had been, even in 1818, so rapidly had opinion changed in those years.

10 Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1823. Hereafter this reference will read, Minutes.
11 Adams, op. cit., 98.
Already that cleavage between sections, later so pronounced, was beginning to appear. A second reason may be found in the church's unwillingness to take a practical step. She even failed to administer discipline in those cases explicitly specified in the 1818 resolutions. In spite of this lapse the 1818 resolutions remained perhaps the most important public declaration against slavery and in favor of emancipation to that time. The resolutions during the entire first period were not changed and although they were not enforced they were not repudiated.

In order to find action in the Presbyterian Church so favorable to the antislavery cause that it anticipated the entire movement, it is necessary to consider several of the individual synods and presbyteries and three of the lesser Presbyterian Churches.\textsuperscript{12} Their smaller numbers and territory provided greater unity with less chance for diversity of opinion than a body so large and representing so extensive a territory as General Assembly. On the other hand they were not bodies of so great consequence.

In 1823 the Synod of Kentucky recommended that the Colonization Society be supported. In 1830 it asked its churches to raise money for the work in Liberia. The

\textsuperscript{12}Reformed Presbyterian Church, or Covenanter Church, Associate Presbyterian Church, and Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.
attitude of this synod during the entire early period was one of sympathy with antislavery movements. In various ways it tried to make bondage less irksome or freedom possible. In 1825 the ministers of the churches under its care were instructed to give more attention to the religious education of slaves. With what success the instructions were carried out may be judged by the fifteen schools for colored children\(^{13}\) which were operating within the bounds of the synod by 1826.\(^{14}\)

The Synod of Ohio declared that the "holding of slaves" was "manstealing" in 1826. Again in 1827 it held that slavery "can no longer be tolerated within the jurisdiction of this Synod."\(^{15}\) This synod was influenced by a large number of ministers and laymen who had been educated and lived in the South, but had moved to Ohio to escape the system of slavery.\(^{16}\)

The Synod of Indiana was likewise not silent on the subject of slavery. In 1826 it sent a memorial to General Assembly asking that measures be taken toward "speeding (though gradual) emancipation."\(^{17}\)

Union Presbytery of East Tennessee "opposed

\(^{13}\)In the later period it was impossible to conduct such schools.
\(^{14}\)Adams, op. cit., 99.
\(^{15}\)Ibid., 99-100.
\(^{16}\)See pages 50-52.
\(^{17}\)Adams, op. cit., 99.
slavery not in word only, but also in deed.\textsuperscript{18} This presbytery was located in a section strongly antislavery in sentiment. John Rankin,\textsuperscript{19} himself a native of East Tennessee, said that "a majority of the people of eastern Tennessee were abolitionists" in his boyhood and "it was safer to make an anti-slavery speech in the South than it became during the thirties to make the same speech in the North."\textsuperscript{20} Union Presbytery purchased two colored men and their families and set them free. Both negroes were educated for the ministry by the presbytery and both became successful in their work.\textsuperscript{21}

The Chillicothe Presbytery was very decided in its antislavery views and actions. To this Presbytery belonged a large proportion of the southern Ohio anti-slavery advocates.\textsuperscript{22} In 1829 it declared that slaveholding and the buying and selling of slaves were "sinful and scandalous" and required the discipline of the church.\textsuperscript{23}

With the exception of these individual synods and presbyteries the most decided antislavery action taken by any organized Presbyterian body was taken by the Associate Presbyterian Church and the Reformed or Covenant Church. As early as 1800 the Associate Church

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{19} Famous Ohio abolitionist, cf. pages 157 et seq.
\textsuperscript{21} John Rankin, Letters on Slavery, 50-54.
\textsuperscript{22} See Pages 153 et seq.
\textsuperscript{23} Adams, op. cit., 100.
declared slavery a "moral evil." The Presbytery of Kentucky had made substantially the same declaration in 1800. In 1811 the resolution besides declaring slavery a "moral evil" instructed all members to emancipate slaves, unless prohibited by state laws. Any member failing or refusing to follow that rule was to be denied fellowship. In 1821 Synod, the highest organization of the church, noticed that the resolutions of 1811 had been neglected. A new set of resolutions was passed. Slaveholding members were given until the next year, 1822, to free themselves of their slaves, those holding slaves on April 1, 1822 were to be automatically suspended; elders were given an extra year. This was drastic action, comparable in Presbyterian circles only to the action of southern Ohio Presbyterians and the Covenanters. In 1830 at the very end of the early period when many churches as well as people generally were beginning to speak in hushed tones of slavery this church again pronounced the slaveholder excluded from Church communion. Synod suggested ways by which slaveholding members could emancipate their slaves. It provided that masters should make provision for aged and incompetent slaves, and that the emancipated slaves be sent either into a free state or to Liberia.

24 Ibid., 99.
25 R. E. Thompson, op. cit., 91.
further suggested that church members buy slaves from unkind masters and manumit them.\textsuperscript{26}

In 1830 the Synod of the West\textsuperscript{27} of the Associate Reformed Church resolved that slaveholders should liberate their slaves, unless state regulations prevented it. The Synod also advised its people to patronize the Colonization Society.\textsuperscript{28}

The Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanter Church, the most orthodox of all the Presbyterian family, did not admit anyone who held slaves or advocated the "chattel principle" of slavery. This had been the practice since 1800, and in this church discipline was not relaxed.\textsuperscript{29} The 1800 resolutions had been passed under the influence of Dr. Alexander McLeod, who, being called to a church in New York, refused to go when he learned there were slaveholders in the church, until the presbytery condemned the practice.\textsuperscript{30} It is told that a minister of the Covenanter Church in administering the Lord's Supper said, "I debar from this holy table of the Lord, all slave-holders and horse-thieves, and other dishonest

\textsuperscript{26} Robinson, op. cit., 91
\textsuperscript{27} This church had three parts, Synods of the West, South, and North.
\textsuperscript{28} Robinson, op. cit., 232-233.
\textsuperscript{29} Jane G. Swisshelm, \textit{Half A Century}, 34
\textsuperscript{30} Locke, op. cit., 45, fn.
persons." The 1825 action of the Southern Presbytery of the Reformed Church in addition to the conditions for membership imposed by Synod added that "no wife of a slave-holding husband shall hereafter be admitted to the communion of the church, except by a public renunciation of the principles and practices of slavery."  

31 Swisshelm, op. cit., 19.
III. Presbyterian Participation in the General Antislavery Movement, 1816–1830.

The preceding chapter dealt with the resolutions and declarations of organized Presbyterian bodies concerning slavery. In other words it attempted to answer the question, "What did they say?" But there is another side to the picture, which may be seen by answering the question, "What did they do?" This chapter will, therefore, deal with Presbyterian participation in the antislavery movement; the societies they organized, and supported, the slaves they freed, and their removal from slave to free territory.

In 1826 an American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery was held in Baltimore. Eighty-one antislavery societies were represented; seventy-one of them were located in slave states.¹ The next year the number of societies had increased to one hundred and thirty. One hundred and six of them were in the slave states. Four of the twenty-four in the free states were in New England.² There can be no doubt that the greatest antislavery interest and activity in the period before

²Adams, op. cit., 37.
1830 was in the South. The antislavery sections in the South were well known. The western parts of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, the northern parts of Georgia and the eastern parts of Kentucky and Tennessee contained most of the people active in the antislavery movement. These were the regions that had been populated by the late-coming Scotch-Irish and German immigrants. In North Carolina there were considerable numbers of Quakers, whose work in antislavery was by no means inconsiderable. In 1760 the Rev. James Reed had written that great numbers of dissenters had "settled amongst us," that is in North Carolina. He labelled the Anabaptists, "obstinate, illiterate and grossly ignorant;" the Methodists, "ignorant, censorious and uncharitable," the Quakers, "rigid, but the Presbyterians are pretty moderate, except here and there a bigot or rigid Calvinist." These people came there poor, their soil was not so productive as that nearer the coast and they frequently remained poor. There was no place in their agricultural economy which was more nearly like that of the northern states than the southern seaboard, for the slave system. Their church teachings, and European habits did not incline them toward the institution of

\[^{3}\text{North Carolina Colonial Records, VI, 265, quoted by Stephen B. Weeks, Church and State in North Carolina, 56.}\]
slavery. Among these people many antislavery societies were organized in the early period. Antislavery societies among non-slaveholding southerners was by no means the whole story, however. The enthusiasm for the Colonization Society, probably strongest among slaveholders, would indicate that slaveholders as well as non-slaveholders participated in the movement.

The largest numbers of antislavery societies in the South were in the two states of North Carolina and Tennessee. In 1823 the Manumission Society of Tennessee reported it had twenty branches with a membership in excess of six hundred. In 1826 twenty-three societies in North Carolina reported approximately one thousand members. In this year the membership was reported to have grown from one to two thousand. The Anti-Slavery Society near the Yadkin River in North Carolina reported a meeting in 1826 with an attendance of three hundred; sixty-three new members were added. There was no opposition to the proceedings, it was reported, "and not a Quaker among them."5

In 1824 the Moral, Religious Manumission Society of West Tennessee was formed. Judging from the names of the list of directors it must have been composed

4See pages 40 et seq.
5Adams, op. cit., 121.
mostly of people with Scotch names. This was an organization of non-slaveholders, for its constitution provided "none that own or hold slaves can be admitted as members of this society." It had distinctively religious tenets: "we think that the Gospel of Christ, if believed, would remove personal slavery at once by destroying the will in the tyrant to enslave;" also "we are convinced that nothing but the moral or religious principle can make men unwilling to tyrannize, we therefore deem it unnecessary to make use of any other means but argument."7

Maryville Seminary, later Maryville College, in East Tennessee, was one of the great antislavery centers in the country. It was to the early period what Oberlin was to the later. In spite of the strict laws of Tennessee, Maryville discussed the relative merits of colonization and abolition. The most ardent defender of the merits of abolition was T. S. Kendall, pastor of the Seeder Church in Blount County. For a time these people did not organize themselves into an antislavery society preferring, as they said, "to work in an unorganized manner a while yet, before we set ourselves up as a target."

6 Wm. Birney, op. cit., 77.
7 Ibid., 77.
The *Emancipator* (New York) wrote of the work of this seminary and community:

We are rejoiced to know that in East Tennessee and directly in the very center of the slave-holding country, among the fastnesses of the American Alps, God has secured a little Spartan band of devoted abolitionists of the best stamp. Whom neither death nor danger can turn.

Dr. Rice, a Presbyterian minister complained in 1827 in a letter to Dr. Alexander, another Presbyterian clergyman, that a church or minister could not touch the subject of slavery without tampering with "what are called the rights of property." He said the church cannot carry any decision into effect because "church members are three-fourths women and minors, persons not acknowledged by law." The wife of Dr. Rice owned several slaves whom they planned to free, but when Dr. Rice died the executors tried to sell them to pay off the debts. She objected, and with the aid of her church friends was able to purchase the husband of one of her slaves and send them, twelve in all, to Liberia.

The first religious newspaper in the Southwest was the *Western Luminary*, established in 1823. It was a Presbyterian journal edited by Thomas T. Skillman. Under his direction this paper, from the beginning, fearlessly attacked the system of slavery. In an April

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1850, number of the Genius of Universal Emancipation
Benjamin Lundy praised the antislavery record of the
Western Luminary. Ninety-one articles on colonization
and antislavery appeared between 1828 and 1833. 10
William Lloyd Garrison in his December 3, 1831, issue of
The Liberator spoke of the fearless attacks on slavery
which the Western Luminary had made. 11 The August 5,
1826, issue of the Genius has an article by a Presby-
terian minister advocating immediate abolition, rather
unusual in 1826. He called slavery a crime, and then
asked, "what has God told you about crime, or sin?"
"To desist from it."
"When?"
"Now! Now! If we are required todo right we
are required to do it immediately." 12

The antislavery newspapers played an interesting
and important part in the movement. In 1826 a petition
was sent from the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky to the
state legislature asking that the importation of slaves
be stopped except in cases of immigrants moving into
the state. The bill in 1826 was defeated by a small
majority, the next year it was defeated in the Senate

10 Martin, op. cit., 64.
11 Ibid., 64, f.n.
12 Julian, loc. cit., 443.
by six votes. Agitation on the subject continued for several years, and the Western Luminary was instrumental in continuing the agitation. There were, during the controversy, three series of articles worthy of note. The Western Luminary published two of the three series. The first, signed "Philo C," consisting of five letters written by Judge John Green, appeared in the October 6, 1830, and following issues. The second series, signed "C," were written by George Clark. His articles appeared in the September 30, 1830, and succeeding issues. The third set of letters are of interest here not because they appeared in a Presbyterian paper, but because they were written by Robert J. Breckinridge, Kentucky's then foremost minister. He was a Presbyterian widely known for his views on colonization.\(^{13}\) His articles were published in the Kentucky Reporter under the title, "Hints on Slavery." All the letters advocated gradual emancipation, to be preceded by a legislative prohibition of the importation of slaves into the state. The letters were copied by other newspapers all over the state. Mr. Breckinridge was forced to resign his seat in the state legislature as a consequence of publishing the letters.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\)See pages 43 et seq.

\(^{14}\)Martin, op. cit., 92.
Kentucky made noble efforts to rid herself of slavery. She persisted until the very end of the first period, in fact, until she was forced to turn from Garrisonian abolition, as she believed, in self-defense. In the year 1830 a group of Kentucky slaveholders, most of them Presbyterians,\(^{15}\) published their intention of forming a Gradual Emancipation Society. These men proposed to adopt some plan for the gradual freeing of their own slaves. Their plan was to serve as an example to others and might in time, they hoped, become "the law of the land."\(^{16}\) The society never materialized for want of a leader, but it indicated that there was desire for gradual emancipation among Presbyterian slaveholders. Asa Earl Martin lists eight persons "of reputation" interested in the movement: Rev. John C. Young, Rev. John D. Paxton, William Armstrong, James McDowell, Thomas T. Skillman, Judge John Green, Daniel Yieserm and Robert J. Breckinridge.\(^{17}\) Of the eight, five are well known to Presbyterian records, John C. Young was President of Centre College in Kentucky, Paxton and Breckinridge were important clergymen, Thomas Skillman was editor of

\(^{15}\) At least six of them were slaveholding Presbyterian ministers, Robert J. Breckinridge, John C. Young, and John D. Paxton among them.

\(^{16}\) Wm. Birney, *op. cit.*, 99-100.

\(^{17}\) *The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850*, 69, f.n.
the *Western Luminar y* and Judge Green wrote one of the above-mentioned series of articles which appeared in the *Luminar y*. As for Armstrong and McDowell, their names would tend to throw them in the company of those listed. Only Daniel Yissar remains unaccounted for among the men "of reputation" in the society.

This thesis thus far has considered only Presbyterian participation in the antislavery movement in the slave states. As a matter of fact it was concentrated in that region, in other words Presbyterian activity tended to conform to the general pattern.

In 1825, through the efforts of the Rev. John Walker, a minister of the Secession Church, Franklin College in Harrison County, Ohio, was chartered. Walker was a man who believed that the principle of equal rights was a practical one. He entered into the anti-slavery contest with ardor and impetuosity, and the college he had fostered was soon regarded a "hot-bed of abolitionism."

Walker and his "hard-headed, auster Seceders" would tolerate no compromise with slavery. They looked upon Benjamin Lundy's colonization schemes with suspicion and disrespect. These Presbyterians cooperated with the Quakers, however, in operating an

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18 See page 35.
19 Chas. A. Hanna, *Historical Collections of Harrison County, in the State of Ohio*, 133-134.
underground railroad in Jefferson County. Benjamin Ladd, the well-known Quaker Philanthropist, kept the station at Smithfield, while Walker had one at Unity.²¹

Of all the antislavery movements in the early period the one with the most universal appeal was that of the Colonization Society. The founder of this organization was a Presbyterian minister, Dr. Robert Finley, graduate of Princeton and later President of the University of Georgia. Finley told his Princeton friends of his plan for a "colony of free blacks on the western coast of Africa."²² He called the first meeting at the Presbyterian Church in Princeton. The group, mainly Seminary and College professors, was small but friendly.²³ After that meeting he went to Washington, D. C., where he succeeded in making many converts to the cause. The society was formally established at a meeting in Washington in 1816. Bushrod Washington was elected the first president. Finley closed the meeting with an address on colonization.²⁴

He was by no means the first to conceive a

²²Archibald Alexander, A History of Colonization on the Western Coast of Africa, 76-79.
²³Ibid., 80.
²⁴The Philanthropist (Hamilton, Ohio), Jan. 31, 1817.
colonization plan. At one time the State Legislature of Virginia considered a proposition to settle the "Virginia Blacks" in the Old Northwest. In 1816 before the Colonization Society was organized the Tennessee Manumission Society sent a memorial to the churches of the United States advocating that a colony be laid off for the reception of negroes as they became free. Acting on this memorial the Presbyterian Synod of Tennessee in 1817 adopted resolutions favoring colonization and congratulated the Tennessee Society on its efforts.

In 1821 Liberia, on the west coast of Africa was purchased by the American Colonization Society. The Society grew rapidly; by 1832 it had organizations in every state except Rhode Island and South Carolina. The number of branches however, was always greater in the South than in the North. The Society had agents in all parts of the country and collected large sums of money for its work. Oftentimes its agents were

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26 The American Colonization Society had by that time been organized.

27 Patterson, op. cit., 93.

28 Adams, op. cit., 104-105.

29 Ibid., 104-105.

30 Between 1820 and 1830 the Society spent $100,000. and yet transported only 1,162 negroes.—Robert E. Chaddock, *Ohio Before 1850*, 93.
ministers. The man who formed the branch in Richmond, Virginia, in 1823 was a Presbyterian minister, R. R. Gurley.31 James G. Birney, a Kentucky Presbyterian, and later important in the abolition movement, was an agent for the Society in the Southwestern states.32 The essays he wrote for the African Repository, on accepting the agency, were among the best statements of the colonization movement.

Dr. Philip Lindsey, Presbyterian minister and President of the University of Nashville, was President of the Tennessee Colonization Society, organized in 1830.33 Dr. Lindsey was a good example of the outstanding man who were enlisted in the cause of colonization. The University of Nashville at that time was the leading educational institution of the state, and Lindsey's identification with the movement gave it considerable prestige. The Society was important in Georgia for much the same reason; Robert Finley, the founder, was also President of the University of Georgia.34 Robert Finley, son of the founder, was an agent for the Society. He helped to organize the Maryland State Colonization Society in 1831,35

31 Foote, op. cit., 333-334.
32 He later repudiated the colonization cause, See page 144.
33 Patterson, op. cit., 183.
34 Ruth Scarborouh, The Opposition to Slavery in Georgia Prior to 1860, 196.
which branch later made a separate settlement of its freed negroes in Liberia.

The Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Ross, Samuel Rhea, Hon. Seth. J. W. Lucky, Ebenezer Mathes, and Valentine Sevier, all Presbyterians, emancipated and sent to Liberia about fifty slaves before 1830.

Robert J. Breckinridge and J. C. Young were both active in the colonization movement. Breckinridge in his "Hints on Slavery" expressed his confidence in colonization. He believed that the real objective of the Society was Freedom for the slaves. J. C. Young believed the movement would end in escape from the system of slavery. Eleven of the ninety-six slaves sent to Liberia from Kentucky in 1833 had been the slaves of Robert J. Breckinridge. He emancipated them and turned them over to the Colonization Society with enough money for their transportation and maintenance after they were in Africa.

All colonizationists did not, like Robert J. Breckinridge, believe that the ultimate purpose of the

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36 Probably the only one who could lay no claim to Scotch-Irish ancestry.
37 Oliver P. Temple, East Tennessee and the Civil War, 107.
38 See page 38.
39 See page 37.
40 Martin, op. cit., 100, f.n.
41 Ibid., 54-55.
42 Ibid., 59, f.n.
movement was the freedom of the slaves. Robert Wickliffe, also of Kentucky, and also a member of the Society, looked upon it as merely an agency for removing the troublesome free negro element from the state. In a speech before the Female Colonization Society of Lexington (Ky.) he declared that the Society did not aim to interfere in any way with the relation between master and slave. Breckinridge, who was present, arose and flatly contradicted him. He declared that if the aim of the Colonization Society was what Wickliffe claimed he would wash his hands of it.\textsuperscript{43}

Archibald Alexander, early historian of the colonization movement and professor in Princeton Theological Seminary, in his \textit{History of African Colonization}, holds that Breckinridge was "too indiscriminate in denouncing the present holders of slaves, as though they had it in their power at once to relieve themselves from the curse." He said no man was morally bound to liberate his slaves unless he could place them in a better situation by doing so. He did not deny the obligation of masters to prepare their slaves for liberty, "but gradually.\textsuperscript{44} Alexander saw the colonization scheme as a "method of disposing of the free people of colour, so as to promote the highest

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 56.
\textsuperscript{44}Alexander, \textit{op. cit.}, 359.
interests both of them and the citizens of this country, among whom they dwell." He considered colonization a boon to emancipation in that it provided a "comfortable asylum" for the free slaves of "conscientious and benevolent slaveholders" who were before prevented from emancipating for want of locating the free negroes advantageously. Thus, he said, while the Colonization Society never advocated emancipation as its avowed object it had done more along that line, incidentally, than "all the abolition societies in the country."

Had all colonizationists taken the stand of Robert J. Breckinridge the opponents of the movement would have made less complaint. As it was Alexander was probably more nearly representative of the colonizationists, certainly of the southern colonizationists, than he. After the Missouri controversy in 1820 the Colonization Society was censured by some of the more radical anti-slavery proponents as a "pro-slavery agency" which had since 1817 lulled the "consciences of thousands" to sleep. In this time it was declared slavery had become

46 Ibid., 11.
47 Ibid., Alexander's book was written well in the second period of the antislavery movement, that is in the period of abolitionism.
a political power and the churches the bulwarks of slavery. In fact "the church and state joined hands with it (colonization) as the new trinity of the Nation's faith," said one critic. 48

John Rankin, famous Ohio abolitionist and founder of the Free Presbyterian Church, was one of the severest of the early critics of colonization. He declared that race prejudice was at the bottom of the colonizationists' aims. "Why colonize Africans more than Europeans, if there be no prejudice against color?" He deplored the fact that prejudice denied colored Americans a "comfortable home in their native land," and compelled them to go to Liberia, where very few would go if they were permitted to enjoy their rights in this country. Rankin charitably admitted the benevolent intention of many of the founders and of many still connected with the colonization movement. He exploded the colonizationists' argument that the returned negroes would Christianize Africa. He cited the instance of "Elder Swan" who examined several adult slaves on their way to Liberia when he was at Pittsburgh. He said that five of the six questioned could not tell him who made them. "These," he said, "are some of the missionaries who are to

48 Julian, loc. cit., 535-537.
enlighten Africa.**49**

As already pointed out slavery did not flourish in the back counties in the South. As a matter of fact slavery was introduced slowly, but it was introduced. The invention and perfection of the cotton gin had made cotton growing profitable in the upland regions and slavery was the logical consequence. The growth of wealth and added comforts changed what had been formerly antislavery communities into protagonists of the slave system. The changing economic status was reflected in the churches. A poor and simple church in and before 1800 was by 1830 pleased to be considered well-to-do, a bulwark of conservatism. In the decade between 1820 and 1830 the leadership of the entire South fell to John C. Calhoun, Calhoun who was the very embodiment of southern thought and practice. The Calhoun family was of Scotch-Irish stock and had occupied the uplands of the South. They illustrate the transformation that went on, between the colonial or early Republican period and 1830, among many who remained in the South.

But not all were thus transformed. Many resisted the encroaching system of slavery, but in the end they often moved to free territory to be away from the

institution they hated. Between 1820 and 1860 more than a million people from the slave states came to the North- west. Two regions were more numerously represented than the rest, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Great numbers of Quakers left North Carolina largely to be free of slavery; from South Carolina came the Scotoh-Irish Presbyterians.\footnote{Woodburn, loc. cit., 451.} It is unreasonable to suppose that all these Quakers and Presbyterians left the South for conscience's sake. It is as certain that some did. With others it, together with the falling price of cotton,\footnote{In 1816 the average price of Carolina upland cotton was thirty cents; in 1820 it was seventeen cents, in 1824 it was only fourteen and three-fourths cents, and by 1827 it had fallen to nine cents.---Frederick J. Turner, \textit{Rise of the New West}, 325.} perhaps, was a motive. After 1831 another cause of departure from South Carolina was hatred of the nullification movement. This, of course, had been brought on by the big cotton growers in the lowlands who were dissatisfied with the falling cotton prices.\footnote{Evidence of this anti-nullification spirit is to (over)
night to avoid danger... but the scripture was verified where it says, "the wicked flee when no man pursueth." 53

This same person noted the change that had come over his community. He said his neighbors had ceased to be of "his kind." "They were," he said, "singular and outlandish people," and "the church is all gone down the hill, our clergy are set of dull conceited hashes, who flash their brains in college classes, they gang in sticks and come out asses. Plain truth to speak. They know how to make a bow, play the flute, shake you by the hand, or argue metaphysics, but knows no more about the bible than the Emperor Nicholas knows about the rights

52 cont. be found in letters written by Samuel MacCalla from Chester County, South Carolina to Dorrance Woodburn, in Indiana, between 1831 and 1834. He described the vigilance committee meetings of his neighborhood and then adds: "If the Nullies don't go back we will fight. If they once begin it, it will be short and bloody. You won't hear of it until it will be over. I command the Rifle Company, and, you may depend, we will clean the coasts of our enemies. We have not only the best rifles but the best marksmen in the State. We have been training two years, and they can blow the ball of an otter's eye out at his other end. You may communicate this information to your friends and you and them (sic) lay your heads together to put in Clay or a man of his politics for President. I am sick and tired of this wicked old savage now in office."
---Woodburn, op. cit., 452, f.n.

53 Ibid., 452, f.n.
of man. 54 Here was one who had experienced no transformation. And because he hadn't he was out of place. 55 The case of this man, representative of many, no doubt, explains one side of the later antislavery movement. The center of antislavery activity shifted from the South to the North not altogether because of the rise of abolitionism, but in part because the ideas of many southern people had undergone a change and because many, perhaps more than is often supposed, of those whose opinions had not changed (at least on antislavery) had left the South for free soil.

Removal from the slave to free states was certainly about the most decisive action a man or group of men could take against the institution of slavery. Many Presbyterians expressed their disapproval of the system in this way. Despite conventional antislavery history the antislavery societies and press were not the only means of protest.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century most of the churches of the Reformed Presbyterian denomination were in the South. Slave holders had not been admitted to communion in this church since 1800. 56 This ruling led those who held slaves, at least those who remained in that church, to emancipate their slaves.

54 Ibid., 453, f.n.
55 Ibid., 453, f.n.
56 See page 29.
In a single day slaves valued at fifteen thousand dollars were liberated by Covenanters.\^57 The emancipation did not cause a "social convulsion," for following the suggestion of the Associate Synod's resolutions,\^58 they provided that the aged and the incompetent be cared for.\^59 Once the church was free of slaveholding most of the Covenanters eventually located in the North where they were out of sight of it.\^60

One entire Reformed Presbyterian congregation left South Carolina under the leadership of its pastor, the Rev. Hugh McMillan. It came to Greene County, Ohio, and settled near Xenia.\^61 Another congregation left South Carolina about the same time and settled near Princeton, Indiana.\^62 In the winter of 1830 and 1831 a large colony of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from Rocky Creek, Chester District, South Carolina settled in Monroe County, Indiana.\^63 These people had left a state whose United States Senator\^64 a few years later declared in the Senate, "if an abolitionist came within the borders of South Carolina ... notwithstanding all the interference

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\^57 *Liberty Standard*, Apr. 30, 1846.
\^58 See page 29.
\^59 Robinson, op. cit., 248.
\^60 Ibid., 248.
\^61 Woodburn, loc. cit., 470
\^62 Ibid., 470.
\^63 Ibid., 470.
\^64 Senator Preston.
of all the governments of the earth, including this
Federal government, we will hang him."65

Although the Associate Presbyterian Church had
declared slavery a "moral evil" in 1811,66 many of its
antislavery men in Kentucky were not satisfied with the
lack of progress and began moving north of the Ohio. In
1815 Mr. Fulton took his congregation to Jefferson County
Indiana, while a little later Mr. Armstrong and his fol-
lowers moved to Greene County, Ohio.67

Thomas Morris moved to Ohio from Virginia in
1795 in order to live away from slavery and to express
his disapproval of it.68 In 1796 William Dunlop came
to Brown County, Ohio, with his slaves. These he freed
and settled near Ripley. Alexander Campbell came from
Kentucky to Ohio and emancipated his slaves. He con-
tinued in the antislavery work and was in 1835 one of
the vice-presidents of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.69
In 1805 James Gilliland left his church in South Carolina,

65Woodburn, loc. cit., 511.
66See page 28.
67James B. Scouller, History of the United Presbyterian
Church of North American, 177-178.
68The Scotch-Irish in America, Proceedings and Addresses
of the Fourth Congress at Atlanta, Ga., April 28 to
May 1, 1892, 78.
69C. B. Galbraith, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Columbiana
County," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publi-
cations, XXX, 355 (Oct., 1921).
and came to Ohio where he could be free to preach immediate emancipation. He became and remained for thirty-nine years pastor of the Red Oak Church in Brown County. Practically his entire congregation was composed of ex-slaveholders from the South.\textsuperscript{70} The Ripley Church, important in antislavery and Presbyterianism, was an offshoot of the Red Oak Church.\textsuperscript{71} These southern Presbyterians were the leaders in the early Ohio abolition movement. They knew the institution of slavery from contact with it; they trained a younger, and in many ways more active, group of Ohio abolitionists. The abolitionism of these men, who had protested against slavery by removing from its presence was before 1830 not outside the church, but drew support from it.

\textsuperscript{70} Wm. Birney, \textit{op. cit.}, 433.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 433.
PART II

THE PRESBYTERIANS IN THE LATER PERIOD
OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT
1830-1861
I. The Presbyterian Church and Abolitionism, 1830-1837

The power of the American Church, once so great, is now materially diminished. She no longer exercises the controlling influence on this subject she once did on the public mind. She is the creature more than the creator of public sentiment.

By 1830 the center of action in the antislavery movement, which once the church held, was shifting to other agencies. Abolitionism was the force that arose to shape the course of the movement and to supplant the influence of the church. Some there were who deplored the situation as witness the author who wrote: "Abolitionism has done" much "to render hopeless all plans of emancipation. It has divided churches, which as bodies, were decidedly favorable to the cause."2 Others believed the church deserved her loss of power, especially when she exerted what influence she had against abolitionism. The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society charged that the church had used her power to slight advantage in the past, and in the later period was checking "the progress of abolitionism," and procrastinating "the day of the slave's redemption."3

The church was further charged with being "the most efficient of all supports of the [slave] system."\(^4\)

Whether the situation into which the church had fallen was one to be deplored or one which she deserved is of little moment. The important consideration is that she had lost her former power and influence. No longer could the organized church be expected to act unitedly as she had done before 1830. The early period had been characterized by harmonious action on the part of large groups. Denunciation of the evils of slavery was possible then. The 1816 resolutions of General Assembly, thought not often enforced, expressed the sentiment of the whole body of Greater Presbyterians.\(^5\) This was not true of the later period. General Assembly no longer took decided antislavery ground. The Presbyterian denunciations of this period were to be found in smaller groups, in synods, presbyteries, churches, and in the Lesser Presbyterian Churches, or among individual Presbyterians.

With the appearance of Garrison's \textit{Liberator} in 1831, beginning the later, or abolition period, the North, as a region, displayed for the first time distaste for the southern institution of slavery. The

\(^4\)Ibid., 26-29.

\(^5\)The principal Presbyterian Church, exclusive of the lesser bodies, Reformed, Associate and Associate Reformed.
movement was almost exclusively a northern one. The issue had become sectional. With abolitionists demanding "immediate and unqualified emancipation" the South could hardly longer remain the main champions of the anti-slavery cause. It was now on the defensive. The aggressive attitude of abolitionists, together with the removal to free territory of the most ardent opponents of slavery in the South, and the changed economic status of whole sections of the upland South, explain the sectional twist the movement took after 1830. A body organized on a national scale as was the Presbyterian Church was rendered impotent by such sectionalism. The church is not an institution which has remained uninfluenced by the world. The same forces, operating in society at large, have changed the attitudes of religious groups. Church doctrine and practice do not develop in vacuo. Churches are as much social products as other organizations; they echo the existing order. To use the expression of The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society already quoted, the church is the "creature of public sentiment." If the church was able in the early period to mould sentiment on the subject of slavery, be the "creator of public opinion," it was due to a general

6 See page 55.
belief that slavery was an evil. When people began to differ among themselves on the subject, as they did in the later period, some holding that it was a sin, other that it was a necessary evil, and still others that it was a "divine institution," the church reflected their diversified sentiments.

In the Presbyterian Church all shades of opinions on slavery existed. Many were actively opposed to General Assembly's former actions, especially the 1818 resolutions. Many Presbyterians in the South had become large planters, and the holders of numerous slaves. In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth the stronghold of Presbyterianism had been among the Scotch-Irish in the uplands. They were ardent advocates of liberty, and as seen, mostly non-slaveholders. By the second period of the antislavery movement the Presbyterian Church had supplanted the Anglican Church in many sections of the South as the planters' church. Many Presbyterian uplanders had prospered to such an extent that they had attained the planter state. They retained their Presbyterian connections. The church was nothing more

7The Charleston Union Presbytery in April, 1836 declared: "It is a principle which meets the views of this body, that slavery, as it exists among us, is a political institution, with which ecclesiastical judicatories have not the smallest right to interfere ..."—Anti-Slavery Lecturer, Nov., 1839.
than the people in it, and as the people's opinions on slavery changed, the church's attitude changed automatically. Although the religious revival of 1800 had swept through the South with great numerical force it seems unlikely that it changed the character of the church membership. In fact it is doubtful if slaveholders were much influenced by the revival. The southern church's changed attitude on slavery would rather seem a shift in opinion than in membership. In the North, particularly the Northwest, revivalism bore a close relationship to the antislavery movement.\(^8\) The revival, culminating in that region around 1830, had prepared the soil, and had trained the men. It was a decidedly Presbyterian movement, but not the Presbyterians whose work, mostly in the slave states, has been traced. The numerous benevolent societies, organized in the thirties, were called non-denominational. In reality they were Presbyterian, the denomination most influenced by the Great Revival. There was much jealousy on the part of other denominations. With them the Presbyterian Idol\(^9\) was a "bug-bear."

But to call the new antislavery movement a Presbyterian one calls for explanation. In the early period

\(^8\)For recognition of this fact we are largely indebted to Gilbert H. Barnes' book entitled, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844.*

\(^9\)G. H. Barnes, op. cit., 19.
of the antislavery movement little was heard from Presbyterians in the North, yet thousands using Pennsylvania as a gateway, had gone into the northern states. Little was heard of the Congregationalists in the early period too. Their church was exclusively northern, and the question of slavery had not occupied it. As the older settlements expanded and people moved west Congregationalists found themselves in the same communities with Presbyterians. These two large bodies of Calvinists were in agreement on many points, and effected a plan of cooperation, the Plan of Union, in 1801. Under this plan a Congregational minister might be called to a Presbyterian Church, or if a Congregational Church was in need of a minister and had none a Presbyterian might be called. The one would not organize a new church where the other was already established. Congregationalists and Presbyterians, therefore, often united in one church. Such cooperation and mutual goings and comings modified both Presbyterianism and Congregationalism in a large part of the Northwest.

Among these people the Great Revival culminated, as Prof. Barnes has illuminatingly shown, in the many benevolent societies of the thirties. Of these societies the American Anti-Slavery Society was the most important. If the other denominations were distrustful of the dominating position of the Presbyterians in the reform
societies, the Presbyterians presented no united front. The Presbyterians of the South, and border states, even those in the southern parts of the free states, were as distrustful of their "Congregationalized" brethren as were other denominations. This element was known as old school Calvinists, while the Presbyterian–Congregational mixture was known as the new school. This division among Presbyterians was fundamental, and later caused disruption. The lack of harmony in the Presbyterian Church constituted another reason for that church's lack of action on the question of slavery, and for that want of leadership and influence she had shown earlier. Since this thesis deals primarily with the Presbyterians who were not in contact with New England, the new school group and their activity will be discussed less fully than the old school. Excluding so large a portion of the Presbyterian Church from primary consideration does not mean that it was not important, for such was not the case, but the fusion of ideas in the region where the Plan of Union had been in operation had produced a distinct product, the "Yankee Presbyterian," whose anti-slavery activity has been often written.

Despite the weakened influence of the church there were those who felt the slave would soon have been freed if she had taken some action against the institution; "It has at any time been in her power, "to revolutionize
the whole public sentiment of the country, and to hasten the hour when in the United States ... the last shackle of the slave should fall ... Others felt that the church was taking an attitude too sympathetic to the abolitionists: "...The Synod of Virginia solemnly affirm that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church have no right to declare that relation sinful, which Christ and his Apostles teach to be consistent with the most unquestionable piety ..." The majority of people, however, felt that the church was inactive; if not indifferent, afraid to take any definite stand. Charleston Union Presbytery criticized General Assembly because the subject of slavery had been postponed indefinitely, and the Presbytery of Chillicothe complained that General Assembly refused its memorial of 1834 a hearing. Here is another complaint of inactivity, by one who wanted to see some antislavery action: "Make what preparation you please for his [Slavery's] future dismissal, but by no means touch him at this time ... you'll endanger the Church and make it more unpopular than it now is."

12Ibid., Dec., 24, 1836.
argues the bulk of the church. 14 Thus the church was criticized by one group for antislavery activity and by still another for inactivity.

It would be erroneous to suppose that all antislavery activity in the slave states stopped immediately The Liberator was published. As late as 1836 the Synod of Kentucky appointed a committee to prepare a plan "for the moral and religious instruction, as well as for the future emancipation of the slaves." 15 The committee pointed out that the slaveholder had three alternatives, immediate emancipation, continued bondage or gradual emancipation. In the opinion of the committee immediate emancipation was the most simple plan, but not, it believed, the best, although such a plan with all its weaknesses, the committee agreed, was preferable to perpetuating bondage. This indicates that the committee was essentially sympathetic to antislavery still. It was unusual to find such support in the South as late as that, but the Synod of Kentucky had been a pioneer in the movement. 16 The plan which the committee finally

15 An Address to the Presbyterians of Kentucky, 3.
16 See pages 25–26. It was first organized as the Presbytery of Transylvania.
submitted to the Synod provided for gradual emancipation. The master was to retain, "during a limited period, and with a regard to the real welfare of the slave, that authority which he before held, in perpetuity and solely for his own interest." The slave was to be given a "recorded deed of emancipation to take effect at a specified time." In the meantime he was to be trained for that state of liberty he was soon to enjoy. Slaves under twenty and those yet to be born were to be emancipated on attaining their twenty-fifth birthday. The plan was never acted on by the Synod, for the growing hostility to abolitionism had swept everything in its way, including the Synod of Kentucky. 17 The plan is nevertheless interesting and significant, for it expressed the belief of the committee at the time it was written. Furthermore the entire synod had asked that such a committee be appointed. Its failure was significant because it showed how abolitionism divided the issue and complicated the problem.

And yet the Philanthropist of March, 1836 claimed the committee's address as proof that the abolition movement was stirring the South to action. The Philanthropist said, when asked what northern abolitionists had

17 An Address to the Presbyterians of Kentucky, 29-34.
done, "we point the inquirer to the 'Address of the Synod of Kentucky." Neither Colonization, nor Unionism, nor Gradualism, although a thousand steam presses had been at the command of either, would have called forth that address." The Philanthropist was certain that "Southern Christians," an appellation some abolitionists would have denied all southerners, had awakened to the need of doing something. 18

The Presbytery of Indianapolis in its meeting in 1836 resolved that no minister would be received who was a slaveholder, or had sold slaves into "unconditional bondage," unless he first made all amends in his power. The presbytery at the same meeting recommended to the various church sessions that no slaveholder be admitted to the communion of the church, unless he, too, made every reparation possible. 19

The Presbytery of Chillicothe continued to maintain its antislavery stand. 20 In 1834 it presented an antislavery memorial to General Assembly, but it was refused a hearing. In 1835 the Presbytery insisted that the memorial be received and that action be taken on it. It declared it was the duty of General Assembly to pass

18 Philanthropist, March, 1836.
19 The Liberator, July 16, 1836.
20 See page 27.
on matters of right and wrong.\textsuperscript{21}

At the 1836 meeting the Synod of Cincinnati, composed of the Presbyteries of Cincinnati, Chillicothe, Oxford, and Miami, passed a resolution asking inferior judicatures to enforce discipline on those who held property in their fellow men, or those who claimed the right to do so.\textsuperscript{22} In 1837 the Presbytery of Athens declared that slavery was productive only of evil and that slavery was a religious and moral question, as well as a political one.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1836 S. L. Gould, an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society, went into Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. The minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanter) asked him to speak at the "Monthly Concert" at the Court House. During the meeting one of the County Commissioners came intending to stop the meeting. When he got there the members of the Presbyterian Church assured him that it was their meeting, and he was unable to stop it. Mr. Gould tried to hold a second meeting, but the Court House was refused him. The Covenanters threw open their church for the meeting. Gould's addresses, according to his own declaration,

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals}, June 9, 1835.
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{The Emancipator}, Nov., 17, 1836.
\textsuperscript{23}\textit{The Philanthropist}, Nov. 7, 1837.
averaged "two hours and a half—sometimes three hours long." But he declared he had never seen an audience impatient west of the Alleghanies.  

While these synods, presbyteries, and churches were declaring against slavery other agencies were as harsh in their denunciation of abolitionists. The Western Presbyterian Herald, published in Kentucky, voicing the convictions of an old school section, in 1832 declared that the principles of the abolitionists were "subversive to all government." The paper pointed out that there was a difference between freedom of speech and licentiousness. It believed that no man had a right to disseminate through the press such doctrines as characterized the French revolution and "disgrace the worst infidel school of the day."  

No effort was made to justify or uphold the institution; the quarrel was with the principles and practices of the abolitionists.

To study the slavery discussions at the 1835 meeting of the Virginia Synod is to go behind the scene and witness the developing southern attitude on slavery; an attitude which led ultimately to biblical justification. The meeting showed with what reluctance many of the Virginia clergymen left their old position for the new, and how abolitionism was a cause of the change. Dr. Baxter

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24 Philanthropist, Mar., 1836.
25 Martin, op. cit., 77.
of Union Theological Seminary presented a paper on slavery in which he set forth the bible argument for the institution. The biblical argument led him to the conclusion, a conclusion embodied in his paper, that slavery was a divine institution as was marriage. He proposed that the Synod of Virginia adopt this as representing its view of American slavery. At once there were many ready to repudiate his stand and refute his arguments. Dr. Hill of Winchester was "horrified" at Dr. Baxter's conclusions on slavery. He believed slavery began in "injustice and wrong and was never sanctioned in the Bible; unless allusions to it as an existing relation and a tolerated evil are so misinterpreted."26

This brought Dr. Baxter to his own defense. He abandoned his biblical defense and openly asserted that the only way to meet abolitionists' argument was to oppose their first principle, that is, that slavery was unlawful. Therefore it was necessary to declare that it was not unlawful, but recognized by scripture. There were several who stood solidly with Dr. Baxter in his belief that the abolitionists must be defeated with scriptural justification of slavery. Dr. Carroll, President of Hampden-Sidney College, however, did not think

26 The Emancipator, Dec., 1835.
it necessary to oppose abolitionists in that way. In his speech he developed the idea that even if slavery were a sinful relationship it was so much a part of the existing order that immediate emancipation was impossible. Abolitionists proposing such method were simply ignoring the consequences. He was inclined to be very lenient with the abolitionists, declaring that their errors, of which he had no doubt, were "of the head more than errors of the heart." 27

The Rev. Benjamin F. Staunton, of Prince Edward, believed with Dr. Carroll that there was no necessity to justify slavery from the Bible while it was better justified by circumstances. It was his opinion that Dr. Baxter's paper went too far. In fact, he declared in the course of his speech: "Better contend for immediate emancipation, than for perpetual servitude." Then he added he hoped never to see the Synod of Virginia "even in appearance assume principles which justify the perpetuity of slavery." 28

The Rev. William Maxwell of Norfolk was the spokesman for a group who feared Dr. Baxter's stand would lead to the belief that slavery need not be changed, that it could never become a sin. His contention was that it

27 Ibid., Dec., 1835.
28 Ibid., Dec., 1835.
was justified under present conditions, but that did not alter his determination and obligation to alter conditions and work for the betterment of his slaves. He believed it possible to aim at emancipation, but to maintain authority over slaves in the interval. His speech was a good summary of the gradual emancipation arguments of the earlier period. He ended by declaring that although immediate emancipation was "adding death to injustice; murder to oppression" nevertheless the justification of slavery from scripture was abhorrent to him. He was clearly what Dr. Baxter, in his eagerness to inflict forensic defeat on the abolitionists had not seen; that arguments based on the bible would incense the North to such a point that reconciliation would be impossible. The Synod of Virginia refused to accept Dr. Baxter's paper as its stand on the question.\textsuperscript{29}

Although the Synod of Virginia refused to give its sanction to the biblical arguments in favor of slavery proposed by Dr. Baxter, Harmony South Carolina Presbytery would have gone the whole way with him. That presbytery reasoned thus:

\textit{Slavery has existed from the days of those good old slave-holders and patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (who are now in the kingdom of heaven), to the time when the apostle Paul went a runaway home to his master Philemon, and wrote a Christian and}

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., Dec., 1835.
and fraternal letter to this slave-holder, which we find still stands in the canon of the scriptures ... Slavery had existed ever since the days of the apostle, and does now exist.

This same presbytery also held that the relation between master and slave was a purely civil one. The relation, such defenders of the slave system held, was not in and of itself sinful, but only the evils growing out of such a relation.

Several Presbyterian Churches in Virginia were charged with the practice of "jobbing," the worst possible form slavery could take, in which slaves were hired out by the year. It was to the advantage of the employer to get as much out of the hired slaves as possible. If they were killed the loss was not his, but the master's. In one instance at least the money gained from hiring out slaves was used to pay the pastor's salary.

When the 1835 General Assembly met the stage was set for excitement, and possible trouble. The two

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30 Quoted by Parker Pillsbury, The Church As It Is: Or the Forlorn Hope of Slavery, 13–14.
31 The Friend of Man, Nov. 8, 1836.
32 Cumberland Church, Briny Church, Buffalo Church and Pisgah Church.
33 Pillsbury, op. cit., 69. The author took the information from the Mercer Luminary. The church attended by the students of Hampden Sydney College and Union Theological Seminary was the one referred to.
opposing sides, old and new school, were marshalling their forces. The antislavery group had not forgotten General Assembly's refusal to report the Chillicothe memorial on slavery out of committee. Organized anti-slavery interests had determined on this meeting to force the subject before General Assembly in such a way as to require an answer. Lobbying, in its advanced stages, was carried on. Theodore Weld, a reformer cast up by the Great Revival, and one of the prime movers in the American Anti-Slavery Society, resigned his Ohio agency for the society for the month of June, 1835, to be present at the meetings of General Assembly. He was so busy interviewing individual delegates that he was scarcely ever able to attend the antislavery meetings he himself organized. The pressure brought to bear on the Assembly by such outside interests as the American Anti-Slavery Society, represented by Weld, and others, was enormous. The more jealous guardians of sectarianism, the old school, were on the defensive. Dr. Nevin a delegate to the Assembly, and a member of the faculty of Western Theological Seminary, had promised to speak at one of the antislavery meetings arranged by the abolition forces. The authorities of the Seminary heard of it, however, and he was forbidden to appear. He

34 See page 65.
proposed to resign his position as soon as a successor could be found "for the sake of truth and a good conscience."\textsuperscript{35}

Despite Weld's exultation over the results of the antislavery lobbyists the old school had the upper hand. Weld estimated that there were forty-seven delegates decidedly in favor of abolition.\textsuperscript{36} If his numbers were correct the cause of immediate emancipation had almost one fourth of the delegates of the Assembly. The other three-fourths, of course, controlled the Assembly.

The aggressive methods of the abolitionists in the 1835 General Assembly\textsuperscript{37} caused the Synod of Philadelphia, the largest synod of the church, to issue a "Narrative on the State of Religion." It said in part:

In this day of public excitement and fanatical excess the Synod feel called upon to warn the churches against the agitators of the public mind, who reckless of consequences, and desperate in spirit, are endangering the integrity of the American Union, and the unity of the Presbyterian Church, by the unchristian methods which they adopt to advance the cause of abolition. The Presbyterian Church, through her superior judicatures, and other bodies, has

\textsuperscript{35} C. H. Barnes, \textit{op. cit.}, 243-244.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 243-244.
\textsuperscript{37} The same methods used in the Connecticut and Massachusetts General Association (Congregational) caused them in 1836 to pass one resolution excluding evangelists and another against abolitionists.—C. H. Barnes, \textit{op. cit.}, 96-97.
often and freely expressed her views of the evils of slavery. But at the present crisis it is earnestly recommended to all our people to discountenance the revolutionary agitations and unrighteous plans and doctrines of the self-styled abolitionists, who, it is firmly believed are retarding ... the progress of universal emancipation. If they succeed they must rend the church and the Union ... 38

James Nourse, an abolition member of that synod, charged that this "Narrative" was passed by a "small portion of the synod at the dead of night ... the last night of the session." Nourse brought the charges in the Presbytery of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. He succeeded in getting that presbytery to pass a resolution asking the Synod of Philadelphia to erase from the minutes that part of the "Narrative" which branded abolitionists with infamy. He declared in his speech against the "Narrative" that it was proper for a synod to condemn the plans and work of abolitionists, but to abuse them personally was not a duty of an ecclesiastical body. Nourse was a convinced abolitionist, he objected to the term "self-styled abolitionists" and declared it was the work of "Colonizationists—men who are upholding the strongest scheme of deception that ever was palmed upon the church."

Nourse had been a colonizationist, in fact had been an agent for the society, and said he knew it to be a scheme of self-deception, but he had confessed his sin

38 The Emancipator, Sept. 29, 1836.
and repented of it. 39

With a few synods and presbyteries ready to go the whole way with abolitionists, a few others staunchly defending slavery from the bible, and with a very large number wanting to avoid the controversy of the last meeting, General Assembly met in Pittsburgh in 1836. When certain leaders suggested to Lyman Beecher that repressive measures be used in 1836 to avoid the difficulties of the previous year he declared that the subject would not down and the repressive measures would surely disrupt the church. 40 It was in this session that Beecher himself urged on General Assembly his plan to unify all antislavery activity. He met with no more success than in the country at large. Colonizationists and abolitionists were both unmoved and continued their "fratricidal strife." 41

The slaveholding churches represented in the 1836 General Assembly tried to pass this resolution:

> Whereas the subject of slavery is inseparably connected with the laws of many of the states of this Union, in which it exists under the sanction of said laws and of the Constitution of the United States, and whereas, slavery is recognized in both the Old and New Testaments as an existing relation and is not condemned by the authority of God, therefore, resolved, That the General Assembly have no authority

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39 Ibid., Sept., 29, 1836.
40 G. H. Barnes, op. cit., 244, f.n.
41 Ibid., 243-244.
to assume or exercise jurisdiction in regard to the existence of slavery.\footnote{42}

Neither antislavery nor pro-slavery faction was able to secure action favorable to itself, for the whole subject was "indefinitely postponed." But the election of Dr. Witherspoon, a slaveholder, to be Moderator—the highest office bestowed in the Presbyterian Church—gave "painful evidence" to the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society "of the prevalence of a low tone of sentiment with regard to the influence of slavery."\footnote{43}

Decrying abolitionism was a popular means of showing disapproval of the antislavery movement in general. There were two groups, both found in the Presbyterian Church, who opposed abolitionism, first, the defenders of slavery and second, gradual emancipationists, who disliked the violent methods advocated by the abolitionists. The latter group were severely criticized by the abolitionists as hypocrites—"hating slavery in the abstract and loving it in the practice."\footnote{44} The Presbyterian Church was open to this charge for although the 1818 resolutions declared slavery "inconsistent with the law

\footnote{42}{Human Rights, Jul., 1836.}
\footnote{43}{Report of the Second Anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, April 27, 1837, 24.}
\footnote{44}{George Bourne, An Address to the Presbyterian Church, Enforcing the Duty of Excluding All Slaveholders from the "Communion of Saints, 9-10.}
of God" and urged abolition with due regard" "to the public welfare" it had never exercised discipline nor excluded slaveholders from communion.

Some Presbyterian synods and presbyteries were unsympathetic to all anti-slavery activity as the synod which declared the "spirit and principle of abolitionists at variance with the precepts of the gospel." Another synod believed that abolition societies were acting inconsistently "with the interests of the slaves, the rights of the holders and the great principles of our political institutions."

On the other hand some bodies, as the Synod of Missouri, regarded slavery, as it existed in the South, a great evil that should be removed as soon as a "safe and practicable method can be found, but believed abolition to be unjustifiable."

The Presbyterian minister was charged both with abolitionism, and lack of abolitionism. This is probably good reason to believe that there were both kinds of

45 See page 22 et seq.
46 Synod of North Carolina.
47 The Liberator, Dec. 24, 1836.
48 Synod of South Carolina and Georgia.
49 Anti-Slavery Lecturer, Nov., 1839.
50 The Liberator, Jan. 9, 1836.
ministers in the Presbyterian Church. An observer and critic of American manners and culture, Harriet Martineau, would bear out this statement: "A very few Presbyterian clergymen have nobly risked everything for it (abolition); some being members of abolition societies... But the bulk of the Presbyterian clergy are as fierce as the slaveholders against the abolitionists." 51

Another observer, Stephen Foster, by no means unbiased, 52 said that the clergy of "this genteel and influential sect" (Presbyterian) were the first to decry abolitionism. This action, he believed, made the Presbyterians the greatest perpetuators of slavery in the land. 53 The Presbyterian, published at Philadelphia, had opposed the formation of a National Anti-Slavery Society, which was agitated in 1833 by a group of professional reformers, notably the Tappans. 54

When the plans for such a

51 Harriet Martineau, "Views of Slavery and Emancipation" in Society in America, 73-74.
52 Harriet Martineau could scarcely be called unbiased on the subject of slavery, either.
53 Stephen Foster, The Brotherhood of Thieves Or, A True Picture of the American Church and Clergy, 42.
54 Arthur and Lewis Tappan were wealthy merchants, benefactors of almost every reform society. They promoted the revivals of Charles G. Finney, endowed the antislavery institution of Oberlin College in Ohio, and served on the board of almost every benevolent society during the thirties.
society were known the Presbyterian wrote: "The attempt talked of in this city to break down the American Colonization Society by the formation of a National Anti-Slavery Society should be met ... by a consolidation of all our forces." The Presbyterians had been leaders in the colonization cause and that of gradual emancipation generally. They were loath to see radical reformers injure the movement, as they believed.  

In the whole history of anti-abolition literature it is doubtful whether two more sarcastic comments could be found than those made by two zealous Presbyterian ministers. "Let the character of Abolitionists be what it may," said William S. Plummer of Richmond, Virginia, "in the sight of the Judge of all the earth, this is the most meddlesome, impudent, reckless, fierce and wicked excitement I ever saw. If the Abolitionists will set the country in a blaze, it is but fair that they should receive the first warming at the fire." The other denunciation ran thus:

You (members of West Hanover Presbytery) are aware that our clergy, whether with or without reason, are more suspected by the public than the clergy of other denominations. Now, dear Christian brethren, I humbly express it as my earnest wish, that you quit yourselves like men. If there be any stray goat of a minister among you, tainted with the

55 G. H. Barnes, op. cit., 217, f.n.
56 Pillsbury, op. cit., 14.
bloodhound principles of Abolitionism, let him be ferreted out, silence, excommunicated, and left to the public to dispose of him in other respects. Your affectionate brother in the Lord,
(signed) Robert N. Anderson

As already seen the Presbyterian Church was accused of pro-slavery activity and of abolitionism. She was also charged with inactivity. These charges came from both pro-slavery and antislavery factions, but particularly from the abolitionists. They held that "silence meant consent" and silent sanction was as strong as a pro-slavery declaration. The church justified inactivity, saying that church unity had to be preserved at all costs. It might be sinful to remain silent on so important a subject as slavery, but it was decidedly more sinful to cause a disruption in the church, it reasoned. Presbyterians also continued to point to the 1818 resolutions, declaring that they represented the position of the church still. It was argued that to take any such action as that proposed by the abolitionists was not for the best interests of the slaves nor of the church.

The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society reported in 1837 that while a few Presbyterian churches in Ohio had taken a stand against slavery, the majority were indifferent to the issue. "Its discussion is a source of dread,"

57 Green, op. cit., 95.
continued the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, after reviewing the history of the slavery question in the last few General Assemblies.\textsuperscript{55} It complained that General Assembly had lost an opportunity to aid the antislavery movement by indefinitely postponing the subject in 1836. Over the same postponement, however, Charleston Union Presbytery resolved that General Assembly should have grasped this time to declare slavery "no sphere for church action as it is a 'civil and domestic institution'!\textsuperscript{59}

It may be concluded from the foregoing accounts that most of the complaints against the church's action, whether pro-slavery charges, abolition accusations, or complaints of inactivity on the subject of slavery, came between 1835 and 1837. Explanation seems to lie in the fact that the forces for and against the antislavery movement were by that time well organized, and had specific ends in view. Those who made the complaints may have been few in number, but they were determined. If the majority approved the middle course steered, rather successfully up to 1836, by the church they have left few defences of their church's position.

The election of Dr. Witherspoon as Moderator of the General Assembly in 1836\textsuperscript{60} caused an upheaval among

\textsuperscript{55} Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, \textit{op. cit.}, 26.
\textsuperscript{59} The \textit{Liberator}, Dec. 24, 1836.
\textsuperscript{60} See page 76
antislavery Presbyterians. The safe middle course on the
subject of slavery was by this act undone. The majority
of the church in its desire to let rest the question of
slavery was sincere in its efforts to prevent division.
These people knew that the old and new school factions,
tending to differ on "revivalism," "original sin" and other
purely theological matters, needed only a lively issue
such as slavery to precipitate a crisis. The election of
Dr.Witherspoon in 1836 was the beginning of trouble, but
not yet division.

In 1837 the old school leaders decided to divide
the church, either by voluntary secession or by excinding
those churches considered un-Presbyterian in doctrine.
The latter course was followed. Before General Assembly
met the old school group held a convention, and resolved
to end the strife of the previous years. To this end the
conference prepared a "Testimony and Memorial" to the
General Assembly in which were listed the "doctrinal
errors and lapses in discipline" of the other faction.
The old school had a majority; it decided how the division
was to be consummated.

The first thing done was to abrogate the Plan of
Union of 1801. The funds and institutions of the church
were agreeably divided, but the new school delegates
would not consent to immediate division, nor recognize
the old school organization as the successor of the
united church. The new school asked that the plan be laid before the synods and presbyteries charged with errors. The old school group exercised the power possessed of a majority, refused this request and excised Western Reserve, Utica and others. All ministers and churches within the bounds of the excised synods who did not adhere to fallacious doctrines were permitted to join with the nearest old school organization.

The relation of the church to the institution of domestic slavery is sometimes given along with "original sin," "church creed," "revival methods" and "Plan of Union" as a cause of the division in the Presbyterian Church in 1837 and 1838. The agitation over slavery has been assigned various degrees of responsibility for the division. One author puts it on a par with the various theological disputes. Another considers it only a secondary cause. Several seem

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61 Both synods where the Plan of Union had prevailed.
62 In all 533 churches were cut off.
63 Minutes, 1837, 430-439. Hereafter this reference will read either Minutes (Old School) or Minutes (New School).
64 Edward D. Morris, A Book of Remembrance; the Presbyterian Church New School, 1837-1862, 59
65 Edward D. Morris.
66 Zebulon Cracker, The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church, cited by Robert E. Thompson, op. cit., 122, n. 8
67 W. L. Rice and Gardiner Spring.
to be of the opinion that abolitionism, not merely mild antislavery sentiment, was an important cause of the division. Those holding that view, however, do not agree as to whether or not it was desirable to disrupt the unity of the church. One critic of abolitionism cited the division of the Presbyterian Church as proof that abolitionists were rendering the cause of emancipation hopeless. Before the emergence of abolitionism, said this author, the church was "decidedly favorable to the cause," but division had ruined unity of action and the antislavery movement the worse off.

There were some who believed that division was due to a fear of abolitionism. These, however, did not agree as to the merits of abolitionism. One felt that division was superior to an abolition General Assembly: "Painful as (division) was, they (delegates to General Assembly) were obliged to rend the church to avoid being engulfed in the sentiments, feelings, and schemes of the abolitionists." The other opinion was that the old school group feared that the new school faction was tainted with abolitionism. The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society

68 N. L. Rice.
69 Rice, op. cit., 38.
70 Gardiner Spring and Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.
placed this interpretation on the division. Of course it considered the old school group painfully lacking in insight to fail to recognize the justice of immediate emancipation. The Philanthropist was of the opinion that slavery and anti-slavery divided the church, not doctrinal errors. It was not the standards of the church that were being protected but the system of slavery, this paper charged.

There was a group who denied that slavery or abolition had anything to do with the trouble. Those who believed that slavery played no part in the controversy declared that the difference was a purely theological one. The Rev. S. J. Baird declared that "neither Old or New School ... were diverted from the 'great issues before them' by the question of slavery."

That slavery was not one of the reasons given by the church for the unusual procedure of 1837 is certain. But it seems just as certain that in the minds of some, especially abolitionists outside the church, it was a cause. At any rate the opinion was widely held at the time that the new school group would constitute

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73 Philanthropist, Apr. 17, 1838.
74 Parker Pillsbury and S. J. Baird were among them, and Pillsbury was an ardent abolitionist.
75 Samuel J. Baird, A History of the New School and of the Questions Involved in the Disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1838, 536.
an anti-slavery church. Others were sincere, doubtless, in their belief that the division was made because of differences over fundamental (in their opinion) doctrines. It has been claimed that the most hostility to slavery was to be found in the region "where the most liberal interpretation of the Symbols prevailed, where revivals were most abundant, and where church government assumed its freest type." In other words this would be the region influenced by New England, where churches had been established under the Plan of Union. Although abolitionism had found there a very fertile soil, such a generalization is not altogether warranted. The Great Revival of 1800 began in Scotch-Irish Kentucky and the first anti-slavery activity was not among Presbyterians or any other denomination in the North, but among Quakers and Presbyterians in the slave states. The Plan of Union was, without question, a cause of separation. The new school, defending the Plan of Union, was largely composed of churches which had been established under it.

That is why when once the lines of division were clear they "coincided in the main with the lines of discrimination between the Scotch-Irish and New England

76 Advocate of Freedom, Jan 31, 1839.
77 Baird, op. cit., 536.
78 Morris, op. cit., 61.
79 See page 32.
element." It is very probable that an incompatibility existed between the Yankee and the Scotch-Irish. It does not necessarily follow that difference over slavery was the cause of the incompatibility, an assumption sometimes made, however. It would rather seem that differences over church organization and doctrine was at the root of the disharmony. §1 In examining all the issues of the Presbyterian of the West, an Old School organ, between the years 1841 and 1844 no reproaches were cast on the New School's stand on slavery, but innumerable aspersions were cast on its theology and church organization. The Presbyterian of the West quoted from the Christian Observer, a New School organ, a passage concerning the organization of a new synod. The Observer said that a convention of "Ministers and Ruling Elders met at Hannibal" and "resolved themselves into a synod." The Presbyterian of the West commented: "So this is being duly organized. Then, whilst in the act of trampling upon all Presbyterian order, they put forth a long manifesto, claiming to be the only true Presbyterians!" §3 Although in general the new school faction

§0 R. E. Thompson, op. cit., 121.
§1 Lewis G. Vander Velde Writing of a later period of Presbyterian history (The Presbyterian Churches and the Federal Union 1861-1869, 4) concludes that the split was over church doctrine and government.
§2 Published at Springfield, Ohio.
§3 Presbyterian of the West, Feb. 2, 1842.
seem to have been expected to establish an antislavery church, one abolition paper writing in 1837 had no illusions as to the position of the two groups on the subject of slavery. "We have heretofore expressed our belief," wrote the Friend of Man, "that abolitionism in the Presbyterian Church is not a thing of 'schools' or parties, but is found on both sides; as it is certain, zealous antagonists of Abolition are found alike among both." The new school men attended the General Assembly of 1836 and demanded their seats, but their names were refused places on the roll. After this refusal they adjourned to another meeting place and there proceeded to organize the New School Presbyterian General Assembly. They termed themselves the constitutional Presbyterian Church. The old school group went about the business of organization, minus the new school members, as though no break had occurred. Dr. Plummer, who had insisted on division even if it could have been avoided, was elected the first Moderator of the separate Old School General Assembly. His supporters believed he had saved for the country and posterity the Calvinistic system of theology and the Presbyterian system in church government.

The Friend of Man, published at Utica, New York, in a New School territory.

Nov. 8, 1837 issue.

Minutes (New School), 1838, 635. The New School believed it had been unconstitutionally excommunicated.

Vander Velde, op. cit., 295-296.
II. The New School Presbyterian Church in the Antislavery Movement

The opinion seems to have been widely held, particularly among the organized antislavery forces, that the division in the Presbyterian Church was for the best interest of the antislavery cause. It was thought that here at last was a powerful religious body which would actively and unitedly bear testimony against the evils of slavery.¹ Such high hopes were speedily shattered. Just after the formation of the two separate Assemblies in 1836 Samuel Grotner, an avowed abolitionist, received an antislavery memorial from the "female members of the church of Putnam (Ohio)." Although he was known to be an ardent abolitionist he had refused to sit as a commissioners in either Assembly, for he considered neither of them constitutional. It is interesting to notice that his antislavery sentiments had not put him automatically into the New School, as might have been expected had he believed the division due to abolition. Although in neither Assembly he wanted to have the memorial presented. He felt there was but little hope of consideration from the Old School, and as little from the

¹*Advocate of Freedom*, Jan. 31, 1839.
New. Finally he had the memorial presented by a member of the New School in that Assembly. Soon afterwards an important member of the committee to which the memorial had been referred advised Crothers to withdraw it. He did not do so, yet the Philadelphia Observer, which had espoused the New School cause, reported that "the committee to whom were referred sundry memorials on the subject of slavery, reported, that the applicants for reasons satisfactory to themselves, have withdrawn their papers." Whereupon Crothers concluded that both Schools were "engaged in a hard race for slaveholding favor; and to consistent abolitionists it will be a matter of but little concern which wins the prize."²

Crothers, having had no faith in the New School's antislavery position from the beginning, had to make no revision of his opinions. The same cannot be said of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, which had expected favorable antislavery action from the New School. After the 1836 meeting the society declared that the New School ... are quite as devoted supporters of slavery, as their Old School brethren. The abolition act of 1816 is boldly affirmed by their leading writers to be an insult to southern Presbyterians, and they urge the necessity of instructing delegates to insist on its repeal. Christian fellowship with slaveholders on anti-slavery grounds seems entirely

²Philanthropist, Jul. 3, 1836.
out of the question. The price of Union is clearly, silence and inaction, complete and perpetual on the question of slavery.⁷

In 1839 the subject of slavery was discussed, but as no agreement could be reached the matter was referred to the lower judicatories.⁴ The next year the subject was discussed for the better part of four days and then "indefinitely postponed." When the motion to postpone discussion passed, one of the influential New School ministers⁵ is reported to have exclaimed, "our Vesuvius is capped safely for three years."⁶ Such an attitude was scarcely one to encourage abolitionists.

In 1843 when the General Assembly next met there was too much diversity of opinion to permit passing a resolution of any weight on the subject of slavery.⁷ The question of slavery was again left to the "lower Judicatories of the Church to whom it properly belongs, and who alone are competent to judge and act with a full knowledge of this intricate and delicate subject..."⁸

⁸ A. Barnes, op. cit., 72–73.
⁹ Rev. Dr. Cox of Brooklyn, New York.
¹¹ Liberty Standard, June 14, 1843.
¹² Minutes (New School), 1843, 18.
Three years later a series of resolutions was passed on the subject of slavery. Slavery as an institution was condemned as "contrary to the law of God." The 1818 action was declared to be still the recorded testimony of the New School General Assembly. Members were urged "to put it (slavery) away from them." The church did not condemn all slaveholders, believing that some state laws made this unjust. The report expressed the hope that the New School would not be divided over this question. Cases of discipline (if any) were left to the synod and presbytery.  

The Cincinnati Synod in 1847 suspended the Rev. Mr. Graham for publishing a bible argument in favor of slavery. Yet when the Rev. Mr. Dickey in the same session tried to pass a resolution to have the word "slaveholders" inserted after the word "manstealers," in answer to the 142nd question in the catechism it was refused. The Moderator held that the subject of slavery had been previously dealt with and the subject could not be reconsidered without a two-thirds

9 A. Barnes, op. cit., 76-78.
10 After the 1838 division in General Assembly the Cincinnati Synod had divided into two parts, an Old and a New School. Lyman Beecher and Calvin Stowe belonged to the New School Synod.
vote of the synod. The proposed vote of reconsideration lacked one of having a majority and two-thirds was necessary.\textsuperscript{11} The General Assembly declared the action taken by the Cincinnati Synod against Mr. Graham unconstitutional and "therefore null and void."\textsuperscript{12}

In 1847 there were nineteen documents presented to the committee on slavery. They came from four synods, thirteen presbyteries, one church, and a group of individuals. The committee reported that in every case the purpose was the same, namely, to rid the Presbyterian Church (New School) of all connection with slaveholding. The large numbers of petitions and memorials sent to the General Assemblies in the forties, for the Old, as well as the New, School, was besieged with them, paralleled the great antislavery campaign in the Congress of the United States. The petitions presented in 1849 to the New School Assembly suggested various methods of ridding the church of slaveholding. Some of the memorialists asked for discipline; some for a "pastoral letter," one petition proposed the reorganization of the church, one threatened secession unless immediate action against slavery was taken, and some of the prayers suggested no remedy, but merely protested against the

\textsuperscript{11} The \textit{National Era}, June 17, 1847.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Liberty Standard}, June 18, 1846.
evil of slavery.

The committee, after stating the general nature of all the petitions to General Assembly, delivered itself of a warning. The committee stated that two classes of people were often in error, the "one for-warding in a wild purpose, and the other forgetful that get (s) that the first step in progress is not perfection." This warning did not strike a sympathetic note among many of the memorialists. Most of the petitions had asked for immediate action, the warning for caution must, therefore, have been distasteful to those petitioning. The committee's warning prepared the way for a mild resolution, which fell far short of "pronouncing slavery a sin per se," thought the abolition devotees.\textsuperscript{13} The committee proposed nothing definite, but reaffirmed the 1815 and 1816 resolutions. In the end the whole matter was left to "God and the consciences of all those that love his blessed cause."\textsuperscript{14} The recommendations, or reaffirmations, of the committee were commended to the consideration of all New School Presbyterians, especially those "whose lot is cast where the institution of slavery exists."\textsuperscript{15}

Not until 1850 was any attempt made in the New School Assembly to put into practice the principles

\textsuperscript{13}Annie H. Abel, and Frank J. Klingberg, eds., \textit{A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1854}, 130-131.
\textsuperscript{14}Minutes (New School), 185.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 185.
it had stated in regard to slavery in 1846 and 1849. In
that year a resolution was passed making slaveholding
except where it was "unavoidable due to state law" an
offence to be followed by discipline. The church sessions
or presbyteries were to act as primary courts in the
trials of such offences.\(^{16}\) The Assembly of 1851 decided
to let the problem of slavery stand where it had been
left the previous year, yet this was the Assembly in
which Albert Barnes, the most outstanding abolitionist
in the New School, was elected Moderator. President
Fillmore and Attorney General Crittenden were said to
have congratulated some members of the Assembly meeting
on the outcome. To this the \textit{National Era} parenthetically
remarked:

\begin{quote}
The reverend gentlemen must have been
greatly refreshed and strengthened by one
opinion of these high authorities in
spiritual matters. It is delightful to
witness the tender solicitude with which
our most gracious President and his
Secretaries watch over the interest of
both Church and State! \(^{17}\)
\end{quote}

It will be recalled that Fillmore had signed the (to
the abolitionists) obnoxious compromise measure of
1850. In 1853 the General Assembly called upon its
southern presbyteries to report what they had done to
purge the church of the evil of slavery. Consternation

\(^{16}\)\textit{A. Barnes, op. cit., 85.}
\(^{17}\)\textit{The National Era, May 29, 1851.}
reigned when the Presbytery of Lexington (Mo.) responded that some ministers and members of its churches were by choice slaveholders. General Assembly condemned this position. 18 The debate over this matter continued in 1856. When General Assembly convened in 1857 the Presbytery of Lexington again notified the Assembly that a number of its elders, and ministers held slaves from principle, believing it right to do so, and that their position was upheld by the presbytery. To this General Assembly declared emphatically "that such doctrines and practices cannot permanently be tolerated in the Presbyterian Church." The southern New School synods withdrew from the Assembly immediately and formed themselves into the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church. 19 The seceding synods first made overtures to the Old School Assembly for union, but differences over the excising act of 1837 kept them apart. 20

James G. Birney 21 had written, with much truth concerning the early history, of the New School as follows:

The New School Assembly is more solicitous to have the favor of the few slaveholders

18 R. E. Thompson, op. cit., 135.
19 George P. Hays, Presbyterian A Popular Narrative of Their Origin, Progress, Doctrines, and Achievements, 208-210.
20 R. E. Thompson, op. cit., 135.
21 In The American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery, 37.
who are members, than to have the blessings of the poor who are perishing in their grasp; more earnest to equal the Old School in numbers than to outstrip them in righteousness.

With the withdrawal of the six southern synods in 1857, however, the New School Presbyterian Church became a distinctly northern church. From its formation the geographical location of the membership had been predominantly northern. Even after the withdrawal in 1857 there continued to be a few New School churches in the South, but they were not consequential. In changing its position on the slavery issue the New School was only following the lead of the section in which its churches were located. By 1857 slavery had become so sectional a matter that such action from a northern church reflected no advanced antislavery conscience.

Many of the New School synods and presbyteries dissatisfied with the "compromising" attitude of General Assembly had taken decisive antislavery action long before 1857 or even 1850. The Synods of Ohio, Indiana, and Cincinnati all took action on slavery suitable to the abolitionists. Wabash College had excluded a colored man from that institution. This, the Synod of Indiana, in whose bounds Wabash College was located, condemned.

22 The Old School was always larger than the New.
23 At least it was suitable to the political abolitionists, for their actions were favorably commented upon in the Liberty Standard, a paper which advocated political abolition.
24 Liberty Standard, Jan. 29, 1846.
A group of ministers and elders of the constitutional Presbyterian Church called a meeting in October, 1845 of all ministers and elders in the United States who believed slaveholding a sin. They invited all other Presbyterian bodies, and Congregationalists to the meeting.26

The Congregational General Association was accustomed to exchange delegates with the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church. One of these representatives from the General Association of Connecticut called the attention of the New School General Assembly to the fact that a Presbyterian minister had published a statement to the effect that three-fourths of all Presbyterian Church members in the South were slaveholders.27 He also brought to Assembly's attention the sale at public auction of eight slaves along with cattle and furniture, for the "Directors of the Theological Seminary of The Synod of South Carolina and Georgia."28 Such reminders were not, to say the least, wholeheartedly welcomed even by New School Presbyterians, coming as they did from the representative of a Congregational Association. At a later day when a similar charge was made by a representative of a Congregational Association, a Presbyterian29

25 New School.
26 Anti-Slavery Bugle, Feb. 20, 1846.
28 Ibid., 4.
29 W. L. Rice.
wrote in defense of his church:

She [New School Presbyterian Church] has never been either Abolitionist or Pro-Slavery, but has undeviatingly adhered to the plain teaching of inspired men—firmly believing that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. 30

The Presbytery of Ripley (Ohio) and Ottawa (Ill.) went farther than any of the other bodies in their anti-slavery declarations. In 1839 Ripley passed a resolution prohibiting ministers holding slaves, or justifying the practice in others, from being received as ministerial candidates in that presbytery. All persons known to be guilty of slaveholding, or of justifying the practice were excluded from church communion. Finally the Presbytery of Ripley announced it would hold fellowship with no "Synod, presbytery or other ecclesiastical body" 31 as a court if slaveholding were permitted under its jurisdiction. It further resolved that Ripley would renew its efforts for the eradication of slavery in the denomination. This was deemed especially necessary in view of the "disgraceful proceedings of the last Assembly." 32

Since General Assembly had made the sessions and presbyteries the church courts, Ripley's declaration of refusal to hold fellowship with a slaveholding church

30 Rice, op. cit., 45.
31 Probably referred to General Assembly.
32 Advocate of Freedom, Oct., 29, 1840.
court did not constitute a break with General Assembly. It was a hint of what might occur. The Presbytery of Ottawa, however, resolved not "to send commissioners to the General Assembly while it extends the hand of Christian friendship to those who are guilty of the sin of Slavery." Therefore that presbytery was formally withdrawn from the New School General Assembly.\(^33\)

After the division of 1837 and 1838 the Cincinnati Synod divided; sixty-two ministers went with the Old School and forty-four with the New.\(^34\) Twenty-seven ministers refused to adhere to either group. They organized and decided to discipline for slaveholding as "for other heinous sins."\(^35\) John Rankin\(^36\) offered a resolution in the Synod of Cincinnati, New School, to the effect that the synod would not knowingly participate in the sin of slavery, but would endeavor to eradicate it entirely.\(^37\)

\(^33\)The Anti-Slavery Bugle, Dec. 15, 1849.
\(^34\)Philanthropist, Oct. 30, 1838.
\(^35\)Ibid., Jan. 15, 1839.
\(^36\)See page 157 et seq.
\(^37\)Philanthropist, Oct. 30, 1838.
III. The Old School Presbyterian Church in the Antislavery Movement

After the new school members had been refused seats in the 1836 General Assembly a convention of old school men agreed before the organization of the Old School Assembly that it would be to the best interest of the church not to discuss the question of slavery. The convention agreed to dispose of slavery memorials, should any come in, without debate if possible.¹ During the next few years nothing of importance was done on the subject of slavery. The Presbytery of Chillicothe requested General Assembly several times to take action against slavery. Each time the motion was postponed until the next meeting. In 1843 the Presbytery of New Lisbon asked for a resolution favoring more religious education for slaves. The resolution was turned over to the Board of Missions and nothing done about it.²

Many memorials on the subject of slavery were presented in the 1845 meeting of General Assembly. All were given over to a special committee.³ The committee reported that the petitions fell into three groups. The

²Robinson, op. cit., 39.
³Minutes (Old School), 1845, 14.

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first group asked that General Assembly take some action with a view of ameliorating the conditions under which the slaves lived. Another group asked that General Assembly permit a full and free discussion on the subject of slavery, and recommended that church members try to repeal southern laws prohibiting teaching slaves to read. The third group of memorialists urged the church to discipline slaveholding members and those who attempted to justify the relation of master and slave.\^4 The committee declared that the church was a spiritual body having jurisdiction only in matters of the religious faith and the moral conduct of its members. It concluded, therefore, that the church had no sanction to make terms of membership which Christ had not laid down. The Assembly did not deny the many evils connected with slavery, and it admitted that many slave laws were unjustifiable. But because Christ did "not make the holding of slaves a bar to communion, we, as a court of Christ, have no authority to do so."\^5 Southern churches were directed to give an account of the improvement of slave conditions in their annual reports.

When this resolution of 1845 was passed great protests arose from abolition members and churches.

\^4Ibid., 16.
\^5Ibid., 17.
One minister, a sincere abolitionist, wrote to another of similar opinion:

The report of our assembly is unutterably abominable. The more I examine it, the more offensive it seems to me. I feel as you do on the subject of secession. I have always opposed it strongly. But if the church, either by her action, or inaction, sanctions the Assembly's doctrines, why, why—why I can't stand it. I love our church. It is like death to part with her. But if she has taken her final stand on this subject I can say "the bitterness of death is past."

These men were willing to give General Assembly a chance to retract in 1846 what had been done in 1845, or at least give it a chance to declare that the action of 1845 in no wise repudiated that of 1818. The church at Greenfield, Ohio, however, withdrew fellowship from General Assembly and the Synod of Cincinnati. The 1845 resolutions were the cause of its withdrawal. The session of the church called the justification of slavery from the scriptures, being permitted in the church "a shocking prostitution of his Word."

The General Assembly of 1845 did more to rouse the ire of abolitionists than pass resolutions. A

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6 Hugh S. Fullerton, cf. page 154.
7 Thomas E. Thomas, cf. page 155.
8 Thomas E. Thomas, Correspondence of Thomas Ebenezer Thomas, Mainly Relating to the Anti-Slavery Conflict in Ohio, Especially in the Presbyterian Church, 68-69.
9 Anti-Slavery Bugle, Nov. 6, 1846.
letter from the Free Church of Scotland, a strong remonstrance against slavery, had been addressed to the Assembly. It was refused a hearing by General Assembly. Even the proposition to read the letter was disallowed. 10 The Scotch were asked in firm, though diplomatic, evi
dentious language, to attend to their own business. 11

After the disturbance of 1845 the meeting of 1846 was eagerly awaited. The General Association of Massachusetts, Presbyteries of Beaver, Hocking, Blairsville, New Lisbon, and Albany and the Synod of Cincinnati all presented petitions or memorials on the subject of slavery. The committee on slavery reported that the Assembly had given its opinion before and there was no need for further declarations, except to explain that the action of 1845 was not intended to have rescinded the tes
timony of previous dates. 12 This statement, though far from satisfactory to many of the petitioners, kept most of them in the church. 13

Again in 1847 General Assembly received a remon
drance against slavery from the Free Church of Scotland, also one from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Answ er, in which the 1845 resolutions were virtually

10 Cincinnati Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, May 21, 1845.
12 Minutes (Old School), 1846, 206.
13 Fullerton and Thomas remained.
repeated, were drafted. The committee proposed to vote on the answers without reading the letters from the Irish and Scotch Churches. To this proposed procedure there was objection. The abolitionists disapproved of voting on the answer without hearing the original letters. One delegate believed the letters should be read, not because he disapproved of the answers, for he did not, but "that we might treat the churches over the water with respect, and thus heap coals of fire on their heads." Another minister, from Georgia, objected to reading such "harmful" letters. Finally the letters were read and the answers adopted practically as reported from committee. The National Era reporting the affair was extremely critical of the answers sent to Scotland and Ireland. 14

The Presbytery of Chillicothe asked General Assembly in 1847 for a more definite testimony against slavery, and further that Assembly's actions on slavery be published. The Presbytery of Chillicothe was kept from withdrawing, it seems likely only because of the declaration in 1846 that the 1845 resolutions were not to be construed as rescinding former actions on slavery.

14 The National Era, June 17, 1847.
As to Chillicothe's request for additional publicity General Assembly resolved no more was necessary.

In 1847 the Presbytery of Chillicothe asked that the sin of slavery be removed from the church by discipline. The Presbytery of Coshocton proposed that the church devise a plan for the abolition of domestic slavery, and the Presbytery of Erie petitioned for a change in the 1845 acts on slavery. General Assembly was not disposed to grant any of the requests, in fact it declared that making a plan of abolition was not a proper subject for General Assembly, but one demanding the action of 'secular Legislatures.'

In 1850 memorials were received from the Presbytery of Beaver and the church of Rocky Spring. Both asked for a more severe denunciation of slavery than had thus far been given. This, General Assembly refused, saying that previous declarations sufficiently covered the two requests. The General Association of Massachusetts sent a delegate to this meeting of General Assembly. He declared that the Association was in sympathy with the antislavery faction of the church, and

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15 Minutes (Old School), 1849, 254.
16 In Presbytery of Chillicothe.
17 Minutes (Old School), 1850, 455-456.
urged that General Assembly do everything in its power to promote the speedy removal of slavery from the country. To this General Assembly responded by moving that the next delegate to the Association of Massachusetts inform that body "that this General Assembly must consider itself the best judge of the action which it is necessary for it to take as to all subjects within its jurisdiction..." General Assembly further stated that future interference from the Association would lead to an interruption of the correspondence between the two bodies. 18

The committee on slavery recommended in the 1853 General Assembly that a committee be appointed to investigate the slaveholding members of the church. The committee was to consist of one member from each of the Synods of Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Virginia. The following points were to be reported to the next General Assembly:

1. The number of slaveholders in the churches and the number of slaves held.

2. The number of slaves held due to state laws, guardianship, or the "demands of humanity."

3. To what extent the sacredness of slave marriages were observed, and baptism administered to the children of Christian slaves. 19

18Minutes (Old School), 1850, 475
19Caleb, P. Patterson, op. cit., 145.
Sectional bitterness was present to a marked degree in this meeting. About the same time the New School Assembly ordered an investigation and report on slaveholding in its churches. Dr. Ross of Tennessee, in the Old School Assembly, strenuously objected to the investigation proposed by the committee on slavery. He said that "the South never submitted to a scrutiny." He proposed a substitute motion for the formation of a northern committee to report to the next General Assembly on these and other points:

1. The number of northern church members who traffic with slaveholders, and try to sell them negro clothing at a profit.

2. The number of church members in the North directly or indirectly concerned in fitting up slave-trace boats.

3. The number of northern church members who have ordered slaves sold to satisfy southern debts owed them (for convenience the committee is referred to Uncle Tom's Cabin!).


5. How many northern church members have inter-married with slaveholders.

6. How many church members in the North own stock in underground railroads.

7. The number of northern church members who are descended from negro kidnappers.
6. How many northern church members are Bloomers or Woman's Rights Conventionalists. 20

Aside from appointing the committee to investigate slave-holding members the Assembly did nothing on the subject of slavery except to recommend the cause of colonization for the support of the churches. 21

In the 1855 General Assembly meeting the delegate from the General Association of New Hampshire suggested that the 1816 resolutions ought to be reemphasized. The Moderator informed him that the 1845 resolutions on slavery still stood, and further that the Assembly considered its first duty was to improve the conditions of the slaves and the "degraded free blacks" of the North. 22 This was a phase of antislavery work often lost sight of by abolitionists of the later period. In the early period the slave had been the important consideration. As the abolition movement gathered momentum, the slave came to be almost incidental to the cause. The important thing to the later abolitionists was self-salvation. Slavery was an evil; evil must be denounced, "we must decry slavery for our own salvation,"

21 Minutes (Old School), 1853, 459.
the men in the advanced stages of abolition reasoned. This tendency may be seen from discussions of individual Presbyterian abolitionists.

The General Assembly took no stand on the Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854. The delegate from the General Association of Connecticut rebuked the Assembly for being so remiss. Because of this interference General Assembly retaliated in 1855 by refusing to send a delegate to the meeting of the General Association. \(^{23}\)

The slavery issue became more and more one of sectional difference in the fifties. For the New School Church, always predominantly northern in composition, particularly after the withdrawal of 1857, \(^{24}\) the question of slavery was practically solved by geography. The same was not true of the Old School Presbyterian Church. It, too, was stronger in the North than in the South. Nevertheless over one-third of her membership was in the South, and fourteen of the thirty-five synods of the church were in the slave states. In the decade before the outbreak of the Civil War southern pressure was increasingly brought to bear on this non-sectional church. In that period of the church's history there

\(^{23}\) Ibid., Jul. 7, 1855.
\(^{24}\) See page 96.
was little of real significance to the antislavery movement. It was occupied mainly with the maintenance of its unity. Cyrus McCormick is credited with the oft-repeated remark, fondly quoted by Old School Presbyterians, that the two great hoops holding the Union together were the Democratic Party, and the Old School Presbyterian Church. 25

The policy of the Old School had been from the beginning to avoid the issue of slavery. This tendency became more and more pronounced in the last years before the war. In 1860 General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution, in answer to several antislavery memorials, that it was inexpedient, in view of past resolutions to take further action. 26 The Chillicothe memorialists, persistent still, were referred in 1861 to "all the deliverances of the General Assembly on this subject [i.e. slavery], from 1816 to the present time." 27 Although General Assembly gave the antislavery forces little encouragement in the last years, it did not by

25 Vander Velde, op. cit., 21. The New School Presbyterian Church was confined mainly to the North, and Methodists and Baptists had divided over the issue of slavery.

26 Minutes (Old School), 1860, 44.

27 Minutes (Old School), 1861, 355-356.
any means take a pro-southern stand. In 1860 it refused to accept Dr. Thornwell's belief that the church was so purely spiritual and limited to the restricted business of saving souls that it would be "unlawful" to permit ecclesiastical action on such secular subjects as bible societies, temperance, colonization, slavery, or the slave trade. 28

Outside General Assembly, with its resolutions, petitions, and memorials on slavery, there was considerable Old School antislavery activity. The southern Ohio abolitionists called an antislavery convention of ministers and elders of the Old School Presbyterian Church at Hamilton, Ohio in 1844. The convention proposed sending an antislavery memorial to the Synod of Cincinnati, and by other means make known the convention's position on slavery. In 1845 another convention of Old School abolitionists was held. This meeting came just after the 1845 General Assembly meeting when the resolutions on slavery of that year were uppermost in the minds of the group. The meeting declared that although the General Assembly had acknowledged slavery to be an evil yet no evidence had been seen of refusing fellowship with slaveholders. Samuel Crothers commenting on

this resolution said he did not approve of reproof which "neither offend [s] (n) or reform[s]." The resolution was passed, however. A second resolution, declaring that they had no intention of withdrawing from the Old School Church, was almost unanimously passed. Then it was added, "but such might be necessary." In 1846 the same group met again. There were eleven presbyteries represented. Oxford and Chillicothe Presbyteries took the initiative. The convention again almost unanimously voted not to withdraw.

Though very little was actually done in General Assembly against slavery it was by no means altogether lacking in antislavery sentiment. Many of the most ardent Presbyterian abolitionists were in the Old School and many of them believed any church action against slavery would have to come through the Old School. This belief kept some from secession, for it was thought more could be accomplished in a united church. The same may be said of a large part of the antislavery faction in the New School.

The final decision of most to remain in the church after the objectionable 1845 resolutions, however,

29 Cincinnati Weekly Herald and Philanthropist, May 21, 1845.
30 Anti-Slavery Bugle, June 5, 1846.
31 Thomas, op. cit., 21.
minimizes the secession movement. A writer in the 
*National Era*,\(^{32}\) signing himself "Presbyter," outraged by the action in 1845, and disappointed at General Assembly's failure to repent in 1846 awaited the action of 1847 before making his final decision. He had come to the conclusion that "Duty to God and Duty to Man" required withdrawal. He reasoned that since the Presbyterian Church was not a confederation (in which it differed from New England Congregationalism), but one church, each church was responsible for the sins of every other. Association with slaveholding churches made him, an abolitionist, guilty; furthermore General Assembly was a representative body and its action was his action. He was apprehensive of the sin of schism, but he had concluded that the "schismatics" of the church were those who broke with the anti-slavery past of Presbyterianism as expressed in the 1818 resolutions. Another consideration which led him to the belief that secession was the "duty of anti-slavery men was the obligation to rebuke sin. General Assembly refused this "means of grace" to the rebuked and to the rebucker therefore secession was a duty.\(^{33}\) This is a theological expression of a characteristic abolition principle.

\(^{32}\)April 22, 1847.

\(^{33}\)The *National Era*, April 22, 1847.
namely salvation to the agitator whether the slave, originally to have been the beneficiary, was saved or not.\textsuperscript{34}

An antislavery society had been formed at Miami University in 1834, before the division.\textsuperscript{35} This society continued throughout the entire later period. Oxford, Ohio\textsuperscript{36} was, in fact, an abolition center, as was the whole region included in the Chillicothe and Oxford Presbyteries. The frequent antislavery memorials to General Assembly from the Chillicothe Presbytery\textsuperscript{37} is indicative of the sentiment of that territory. In the division of 1838 Miami University went to the Old School.\textsuperscript{38} About that time Dr. Bishop, a thorough-going antislavery man, was replaced by Dr. Junkin, a champion of the biblical sanction of slavery.\textsuperscript{39} The antislavery forces of southern Ohio were greatly aroused over the removal of Dr. Bishop. They claimed he had been removed because of a "deficiency in thorough-going Old School partizanship and ... antislavery principles."\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{34}See page 109
\textsuperscript{35}Thomas, \textit{op. cit.}, 1.
\textsuperscript{36}The town in which Miami University is located.
\textsuperscript{37}See pages 27, 72, 101, 105, 106.
\textsuperscript{38}See page 82.
\textsuperscript{39}Thomas, \textit{op. cit.}, 46.
\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., 52-53.
Princeton had been liberal on the subject of slavery in the early years of its establishment. It had long since, however, become a stronghold of conservatism. It was so conservative, as a matter of fact, that a Theological student there in 1840 could write: "Abolition does not even breathe here, let alone flourish." Dr. Hodge, the most prominent member of Princeton's faculty in the twenty years following 1840, never relaxed his hostility toward the radical abolitionists. As anti-abolitionism rather than pro-slavery sentiment characterized Dr. Hodge it also characterized the Seminary.

The slavery controversy entered into the newly organized theological seminary at Chicago. The project for the Northwest Seminary originated with the anti-slavery party of the church. It was its desire to have a training school where students of theology could have inculcated the testimony of 1818. The institution was, as first arranged, to have been under the care of the synods of the Northwest, instead of General Assembly.

Doctors MacMaster and Thomas, "two men," said the National Anti-Slavery Standard, "as finished scholars and as well fitted for their posts as the church could produce,"

41 Vander Velde, op. cit., 294.
were to be on the faculty. As the high praise of the National Anti-Slavery Standard would indicate they were avowed abolitionists. Their appointments were a part of the antislavery party's original plans for the seminary; plans made, however, before Dr. Nathan Rice became interested in the seminary.

Dr. Rice was a Presbyterian minister from St. Louis, who favored colonization. He induced Cyrus McCormick to endow the seminary with $100,000 on condition that it be located in Chicago. Rice received for himself the most important chair on the faculty. A large majority was given Rice over the antislavery Dr. E. D. MacMaster, slated for the post, by the 1859 General Assembly. The original plans that the seminary be under the synods of the Northwest were abandoned when Dr. Rice succeeded in persuading eight of the ten synods of the Northwest to turn over the institution to General Assembly. It was said Dr. Rice feared that the seminary under the synods of the Northwest might become an Oberlin in Illinois.

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42 National Anti-Slavery Standard, Jul. 23, 1859.
43 In 1855 he declared that colonization alone could save the country from "northern abolitionism and southern radicalism."—Harrison A. Trelaxer, Slavery in Missouri 1804-1865, 230.
44 National Anti-Slavery Standard, Jul. 25, 1859.
The election of Dr. Rice was considered by the public an indication that the seminary would not be an anti-slavery institution. Dr. MacMaster's good friend, and proposed colleague termed this event "a wonderful triumph of amition, injustice, dishonesty and pro-slavery."46

Dr. Rice secured not only the institution for General Assembly and the Presidency for himself, but succeeded in filling all chairs of the seminary with his friends.47 The anti-slavery press48 was bitter against this "autocrat of the Presbyterian Church"49 who "surrounded by his trained bands and attaches" controlled the new seminary. Dr. Rice had been for many years a leader in the General Assembly. He was instrumental in getting the 1845 resolutions passed. Although he classified himself as an emancipationist and colonizationist he denied the principle, fundamental to abolitionism, that slavery was sinful in itself. Wherever he was, he sought to influence public opinion against radical agitation, no matter whether southern or northern in origin. He was the editor of denominational papers and

46 Vander Velde, op. cit., 294-295.
47 Dodd, loc. cit., 782.
48 Free Church Portfolio, organ of the Free Presbyterian Church, and National Anti-Slavery Standard.
particularly interested in the educational policy of the Old School. 50

Abolitionists commonly divided the Old School Presbyterians into three classes: the pure antislavery party, the pro-slavery party, and the "Hunkers." The last group were "eaten up and consumed of the spirit of church extension and aggrandizement." Slavery, with them, was subordinate to the material consideration. Dr. Rice was considered the leader of the "Hunkers." 51

The Old School Church was one of large numbers and much wealth. It was in a position to educate many ministers as scholars, who abolitionists charged, were required to do the bidding of their benefactors. 52 The National Anti-Slavery Standard claimed that probably at least two-thirds of the ministers in the 1859 General Assembly owed a debt to the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Rice interested in the church's educational policy, and head, as the abolitionists claimed, of the "Hunkers," or party of Church aggrandizement, was, to his enemies, clearly implicated. In fact the Standard pointed out that

52 Ibid., Jul. 23, 1859.
Dr. MacMaster, Rice's rival for the Presidency of the new seminary in Chicago, owed no debt, "pecuniary or otherwise" to the church. The Standard continued:

Should an anti-slavery man rise in the General Assembly to give utterance to the sentiments that are agitating his breast, a look from the Secretary of the Board of Education, and a significant pointing of his finger to some roll of the beneficiaries where his name stands opposite the sum total he has received from the church, soon bring him to his seat... There always have been some noble sons of God who never could be purchased to a certain line of policy by Church benefactions. They never wore collars on their necks with this inscription, "The property of the Presbyterian Chruch, Old School."53

Of Old School antislavery activity there remains only that of some individual presbyteries and synods. In these smaller, more homogeneous divisions the stand on slavery was more decidedly antislavery or pro-slavery depending on the location, than in General Assembly in which all sections were represented. In the South it was not uncommon for presbyteries and synods to justify the institution of slavery from the bible. The Tombecbee Presbytery in Mississippi in 1836 received with courtesy the letter on slavery from the General Conference of Maine. The answer sent back, however, declared that it

53 Ibid., Jul. 23, 1859.
was the belief of Tomoebee Presbytery that slavery was recognized in both the Old and the New Testaments. 54

In 1844 the Presbytery of Georgia adopted a resolution in favor of the education of slaves in the state. In view of the many state laws forbidding slaves to be taught to read this was somewhat of a departure. In the next year the Synod of Kentucky adopted a resolution identical in provisions with that of the Presbytery of Georgia. 55 After this action was taken the Presbyterian Herald 56 came out in favor of the resolution, but declared it would oppose any future or further agitation on the question of slavery. In 1844 the American Colonization Society in Kentucky was promoting plans for a colony, "Kentucky in Liberia." The Presbyterian Herald was active in the campaign to raise the necessary funds for the project. 57 The Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky pledged five hundred dollars for the purchase of a regular packet to run between New Orleans and Liberia. It was to carry provisions from the Mississippi Valley as well as negroes to the colony. 58

54 The Philanthropist, Dec. 24, 1839.
55 Martin, op. cit., 60.
56 Published in Kentucky.
57 Presbyterian Herald, Jan. 15, 1846, quoted by Martin, op. cit., 60.
58 The Liberator, Oct. 24, 1845.
The year after the Presbytery of Georgia had passed the liberal (for that section) resolution in favor of the education of slaves the Savannah (Ga.) Republican carried this notice:

Charles, Peggy, Antonette, Davy, September, Maria, Jenny, and Isaac, levied on as the property of Henry T. Hall, to satisfy a mortgage, issued out of the McIntosh Superior Court, in favor of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia ...

Both Old and New Schools were strong in Cincinnati. The extent of their rivalry may be seen from the warning the Old School gave J.W. McCormick for recognizing the New School bodies as on equal standing with the Old. All Old School ministers were warned "from engaging in any practice militating against the unity, purity and peace of the church, as now purged."

In the year of division, 1838, the Old School Synod of Cincinnati requested General Assembly to inquire into the matter of slavery in all the presbyteries. The synod desired General Assembly to take some action "to hasten the emancipation of the oppressed."

59 Mar. 3, 1845.
60 National Era, Apr. 22, 1847.
61 See page 100.
62 The Presbyterian of the West, Oct. 6, 1842.
63 Philanthropist, Oct. 30, 1838.
In 1842 the synod passed by a small majority, a resolution enjoining subordinate judicatories to exercise discipline on those who justify sin by an appeal to the scriptures. This the synod considered a blasphemous denial of the infinite holiness of God, and the purity of his word.64

The Presbytery of Sidney (Ohio) in 1839 resolved that "slaveholders are to be blamed as well as pitied." This, one old elder considered, was going too far. He had tried to free his slaves, but they would not leave the state, and as he wouldn't give the necessary bond for their good behavior, demanded by the Ohio law, he still held slaves. He objected to being "blamed" for slaveholding under such circumstances.65 Oxford Presbytery in the same year resolved to use every effort to secure the enforcement by General Assembly of the 1818 resolutions.66

Of all the Old School Presbyteries the most persistent in its antislavery activity was that of Chillicothe. It had repeatedly petitioned General Assembly for more favorable antislavery action.67 It had declared

64 The Presbyterian of the West, Nov. 3, 1841.
65 The Pennsylvania Freeman, Oct. 31, 1839.
66 Philanthropist, Apr. 16, 1839.
67 See pages 27, 71, 101, 105, 106.
no fellowship with presbytery, synod, or other ecclesiastical body which justified slaveholding, or held slaves. The justification of slavery by appeal to the scriptures was particularly shocking to the presbytery. 68

The Synod of Cincinnati feared that the 1839 resolutions of the Chillicothe Presbytery would incite some church or presbytery to withdrawal. Therefore it passed a resolution requiring that presbytery to rescind or reconsider its "unbrotherly" act. Synod suggested that Chillicothe do one of two things, secede peaceably or rescind. Presbytery didn't want to secede and what is more did not propose to rescind. In fact it denied synod's power to require a presbytery to rescind a resolution. Presbytery did say that the resolutions were not directed against the Synod of Cincinnati, but insisted that it was a Presbyterian duty to denounce sin. 68 Such denunciation was not only a Presbyterian duty, but an abolitionist principle and practice. 69 The controversy was peaceably settled.

Although the abolition character of the Chillicothe Presbytery could scarcely be questioned, Edwin H. Nevin of Mt. Vernon, Ohio (in Chillicothe Presbytery)

68Philanthropist, Dec. 31, 1839.  
69 See pages 109.
censored it for "clinging to a cold and lifeless body (General Assembly) so long, that it is losing its own warmth and vitality." He was chagrined that the Chillicothe commissioner had made no protest against slavery in the 1849 General Assembly. 70

At a time when Gardiner Spring, then probably the most eulogised American minister, "sought to reconcile," to use the words of the National Anti-Slavery Standard, "the reluctant conscience of the North to that infamous statute" 71 the compromise of 1850, Chillicothe Presbytery boldly denounced it. After declaring that God's laws are paramount where the laws of man contravene the denunciation continued in part:

Resolved, That if it be a Christian privilege to disregard the claims of God's laws because the laws of man's making require it, the Prophets and Apostles, and all martyrs, "died as the fool dieth."

The presbytery advised all under its authority to quietly submit to the penalty of the law if they could not obey it with a clear conscience. The Fugitive Slave Law was clearly meant, for judicatories were requested to exclude from communion any who assisted slaveholders

70 The Pennsylvania Freeman, Oct. 31, 1839.  
in the pursuit of fugitives.\textsuperscript{72}

In the period before 1830 the church, then undivided, had been able to take a stand against slavery. However mild the early antislavery pronouncements had been they were more decidedly hostile to slavery than the subsequent actions of either Old or New School, until the latter became completely northern.

The division of 1837 and 1838 had by no means divided the church into an antislavery and a pro-slavery group, as some believed when division occurred.\textsuperscript{73} Truly it seemed that "the price of union" within the national organization of the Old, as well as the New, School, was "clearly, silence and inaction, complete and perpetual on the question of slavery."\textsuperscript{74} \textsuperscript{74} After considering the work of individual synods, presbyteries, churches and individuals it would seem equally true that "Abolitionism in the Presbyterian Church" was not a "thing of 'Schools' or parties, but ... found on both sides ..."\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{72} The National Era, Dec. 4, 1851
\textsuperscript{73} See page 86.
\textsuperscript{74} See pages 90-91.
\textsuperscript{75} See page 86.
IV. The Lesser Presbyterian Churches in the Later Period of the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1861.

Again in the second period of the antislavery movement it was the lesser bodies among the whole family of Presbyterians which took the most advanced anti-slavery position. The Associate Reformed Church had excluded all slaveholders, and many had moved to free states. Thus they had no connection with slave territory or slaveholding. Even so they received several memorials in 1837 asking for a declaration against slaveholding. No declaration was then made for Synod held that no ecclesiastical utterance was needed since the church had no connection with the institution. In 1839 the the General Synod of the church withdrew its support from the American Colonization Society, as an organization unsympathetic to immediate abolition views.

The Associate Reformed Church in Monroe County, Indiana refused admission to Hugh Marlin and his wife on March 26, 1846, on account of their views on slavery.

2Robinson, op. cit., 244-245.
A week later the session was satisfied as to their views and they were received into the church. Later Marlin was requested to appear before the session and explain his position on slavery. He denied that slavery was a moral evil as it existed in the United States, though he admitted the abuses of the system were moral evils. The session recorded in its notes that it had repeatedly tried to convince Mr. Marlin of the error of his views but without avail. He was suspended from the church until he gave satisfactory evidence of a change of sentiment on the subject of slavery.

In the 1840 synod meeting at Canonsburgh, Pennsylvania, of the Associate Presbyterian Church the American Colonization Society, or settlement in Canada was suggested for freed slaves. Any who held slaves in the Associate Church and refused to set them free were excluded from communion.

Franklin College, an Associate institution, after a struggle, continued its work as an antislavery college. In 1840 the faculty and Board of Directors were antislavery men and the place was regarded as one of the

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3Woodburn, loc. cit., 512.
4Ibid., 513-514.
5Philanthropist, Nov. 4, 1840.
6See page 39.
greatest antislavery centers in eastern Ohio. The college got deeper and deeper in debt, during the anti-slavery regime, however, and as the claims couldn't be met the property was sold by the sheriff. The property was purchased by a group of colonizationists and an institution called Providence College was organized. The Franklin men could not stand by and see what they considered a pro-slavery college flourish. They raised funds at once for a new building, continued the old faculty and in a short time forced the colonizationists to abandon Providence College. The sentiment of the community and church must have been strongly antislavery. When the new bell for the rebuilt college was cast it had these words on it: "Proclaim Liberty through all the Land." 

The Presbytery of Clarion of the Associate Church was on record as opposing the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. This presbytery said it would not obey a law which contravened the immutable laws of God. The resolution read: "...Notwithstanding the penalty of said law, we will not do what it commands, and we will do what it forbids—that is we will do what God commands..." 

8Philanthropist, Nov. 4, 1840.
Sessions were required to censure members who obeyed the law. Presbytery even made provision for the church to aid individual members who might be fined for obeying the law of God and their own conscience.\footnote{Ibid., June 5, 1851.}

In 1856 the Associate Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church united to form the United Presbyterian Church. These two churches agreed on many points\footnote{They both opposed secret societies, hymn-singing and open communion.} and differed on few. The most significant point of agreement from the standpoint of this thesis was their disapproval of slavery. The combined membership of these churches was of real importance.\footnote{Vander Velde, \textit{op. cit.}, 10.}

The new United Presbyterian Church in its \textit{Basis of Union} of 1859 included:

\begin{quote}
We declare, That slave holding that is the holding of unoffending human beings in involuntary bondage, and considering and treating them as property, and subject to be bought and sold—is a violation of the law of God, and contrary both to the letter and the spirit of Christianity.\footnote{R. C. Reed, \textit{History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World}, 338.}
\end{quote}

There continued a few synods in both the Associate Reformed Churches. They did not unite with the rest. Thus the unification of two churches resulted in not one, but three churches, Those remaining outside the
United Church were few, and of little influence. They continued to maintain their antislavery position.\textsuperscript{13}

The Covenanter, or Reformed Presbyterians, continued to exclude slaveholders from membership in their church, a practice begun in 1800.\textsuperscript{14} The General Synod of the Church in 1836 resolved that it could no longer support the Colonization Society. It stood with the abolitionists,\textsuperscript{15} by whom it was always highly honored.\textsuperscript{16} Its doctrine of "political dissent,"\textsuperscript{17} first applied in Great Britain, and later in American, was especially pleasing to Garrisonian abolitionists. In fact the quotation which Garrison had written at the head of his paper in 1843: "The compact which exists between the North and the South is a Covenant with death and an agreement with Hell..."\textsuperscript{18} was an expression applied to the United States by the Covenanter. Though a biblical expression\textsuperscript{19} Garrison may well have been inspired in his use of it by the Covenanter's example.

\textsuperscript{13}Vander Velde, \textit{op. cit.}, 390.
\textsuperscript{14}See page 30
\textsuperscript{15}The \textit{Friend of Man}, Nov. 24, 1836.
\textsuperscript{16}Pillsbury, Acts of \textit{Anti-Slavery Apostles}, 439.
\textsuperscript{17}R. E. Thompson, \textit{op. cit.}, 92
\textsuperscript{18}The \textit{Liberator}, 1843 issues.
\textsuperscript{19}Isaiah XVIII:18.
The Western Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1838 blamed churches which refused to make slavery a term of communion with the sin of slavery. 20 The Covenanters protested in 1856 against the Fugitive Slave Bill as a disgrace. The church also protested against the movement in Congress to make the Compromise of 1850 a finality. 21 In 1855 it had passed a resolution against the Kansas "outrage." 22 The 1856 General Synod condemned the whole policy of the Democratic party. The resolutions passed declared that the framers of the government intended to localize slavery. The attempt to extend it into free territory was, in the opinion of the Synod, an infraction of the laws of representative government as well as of the law of God. 23

It is interesting to note Covenanter denunciation of governmental policy and especially the statements of the intentions of the founders of the government to form a representative government. It is interesting coming from people, who as a rule abided by the teaching of their church to hold no office, and refuse to vote. They

20 *Philanthropist*, Jul. 3, 1838.
were always with the party with the strongest anti-slavery platform. They have been known to march in parades and shout for the party on Saturday, but refuse to vote for the cause: on Tuesday. 24

In 1859 the church testified thus against the constitution of the United States:

That we are more and more firmly convinced that the constitution of the United States is the great stronghold and bulwark of this system of violence and oppression, and that therefore we will continue to testify against it, refuse the oath of allegiance to it, or obey its unholy requirements. 25

The 1859 meeting declared that anyone who tried to justify slavery from the scriptures was guilty of a very serious form of infidelity. 26 In the same year the Chicago Presbytery of the church protested against the reopening of the African slave trade. Presbytery believed that the announcements and advertisements of the time indicated that the trade had been started up again. The foreign slave trade was labeled the "sum of all villainies," and the church members were asked to "labor to prevent this addition to the cup of our national guilt." 27

24 Woodburn, loc. cit., 507
26 Ibid., June 25, 1859.
27 The National Era, Aug. 25, 1859.
The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was not a transplanted organization like the Associate and Covenanter Churches, but was of American origin. It was organized to meet the needs of the Great Revival which swept Kentucky and the other border states around 1800. The revival created a great demand for preachers among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The church was not able to meet the demand, and the Presbytery of Kentucky and the Presbytery of Cumberland (Tenn.) licensed ministers who had not had the traditional educational training. The academic standards of the Presbyterian church were high and not easily met, hence the lax requirements. The ministers licensed in Kentucky and Cumberland Presbyteries were, in addition, not always orthodox in their views of predestination. The action of the two presbyteries was repudiated by the church and it resulted in the formation in 1810 of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Its standards of doctrine and ministerial training continued to be lax as compared with the parent church. It was almost exclusively a border state church. As such it was confronted at once with the institution of slavery.

Of the three constituent founders of the Cumberland Church, all ordained Presbyterians ministers, one, Finis Ewing, was a slaveholder. Soon after the organization, however, he emancipated his slaves. He frequently preached antislavery sermons in which he centered his attack on "the traffic in human flesh." He "feared" that there were some among his Cumberland brethren who would not scruple to sell fellow beings.²⁹ The Rev. Ephriam McLean, tried an experiment with his slaves. He gave them a farm, equipment and stock and set them free to take care of themselves. In a few years he had to take them back at their request, for idleness and drunkenness had brought them to suffering.³⁰ Another minister, Robert Donnel, inherited slaves. He wanted to free them, but the negroes objected, especially against going to Liberia when he proposed to colonize them.

The Revivalist, a Cumberland Church paper, published at Nashville, between 1830 and 1836 called the South Carolina slave legislation of those years "foul blots upon the records of a free people." The records of this church are difficult to find and not well kept (interesting in view of its lax educational standards),

²⁹Patterson, op. cit., 132.
³⁰Ibid., 133.
but it seems likely there were many slaveholding members. The Revivalist exhorted slaveholders to give their slaves religious and moral instructions. This, the paper pointed out, would make them better men and better servants.\textsuperscript{31} The Revivalist would seem to be advising its own people, yet the Cumberland Presbytery in 1835 declared it did not own slaves, and never would. This was the parent presbytery. It wanted to see the black man free and happy, it declared. Then it added: \textquote{And thousands of Christians who now hold them in bondage entertain the same sentiments.}\textsuperscript{32} Such charity toward slaveholders is in great contrast to the views of other lesser Presbyterian churches.

By 1848 the General Assembly of the Cumberland Church, like the two main bodies of Presbyterians, resisted any attempt to discuss the agitating subject of slavery. In the 1851 Assembly six memorials were presented from members in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The memorialists were reminded that the church had no power to legislate on topics on which Christ had not expressed an opinion. It also declared that church action could in no way benefit the slave. The committee's resolution in that year said that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Ibid., 134.
\item[32] Ibid., 134.
\end{footnotes}
had been organized under the principle that slaveholding was not a bar to communion. The church had prospered the committee declared, and it was believed unwise to change its position.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1855 T. B. McCormick, an antislavery Cumberland minister, wrote in \textit{The National Era} that he had peacefully preached against slavery for fourteen years at Princeton, Indiana. But after the Kansas-Nebraska Act even the people in Indiana declared it was a political problem, and one which it wasn't necessary to discuss in church. In 1854 he preached an antislavery sermon at the Indiana Presbytery of the Cumberland Church. At the same meeting the session resolved that it was not expedient to discuss from the pulpit the subject of slavery. He continued his preaching, however, and even seconded an antislavery resolution in the next meeting of presbytery. The resolution was flatly refused, and a charge brought against McCormick for "unchristian conduct." His association with the underground railroad was at the bottom of the charge, for which he was suspended from the ministry. McCormick in his article, or letter, in the \textit{Era} asked if this was the way a "spiritual body" took "no cognizance of civil matters."\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, 135-136
\textsuperscript{34}\textit{The National Era}, Nov. 22, 1855.
Ripley (Ohio) Presbytery belonging to the New School was dissatisfied with that church's stand on slavery. It had already withdrawn from the General Assembly (New School) when the 1845 resolutions on slavery in the Old School Assembly\(^{35}\) caused a part of the Presbytery of Mahoning (Penna.) to withdraw. The two organized the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church in 1847.\(^{36}\) John Rankin of Ripley was the chairman of the organization meeting. In a sermon he gave the reasons for the formation of a new church. He declared that his personal stand on slavery was not from prejudice of education for he was born in a slaveholding state, educated to be a slaveholder, baptized by a slaveholding minister and licensed to preach in a slaveholding presbytery. He stated that his antipathy was not sectional for he had formed antislavery societies in Kentucky as well as Ohio and preached abolition in both states.\(^{37}\)

Rankin preached from this text:

And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."\(^{38}\)

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\(^{35}\)See page 157 et seq.  
\(^{36}\)R. E. Thompson, op. cit., 137.  
\(^{37}\)The National Era, June 17, 1847.  
\(^{38}\)Revelations XVIII:4–5, quoted by Ibid., June 17, 1847.
The convention adopted the Confession of Faith and Catechism of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. On the subject of slavery it was resolved that all men have an equal right to freedom since "God has made of one blood all nations of men." No person, Church or presbytery holding slaves or advocating the justice of slaveholding could become a constituent part of the new church.39 The meeting wanted it understood that their denunciations were not against the church members personally. It was only a means of bearing testimony against the principles and practice of the two bodies. The convention declared it was complying with the divine injunction, "thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him."40

The manifesto drawn up by the committee on reasons for withdrawal gave three reasons. In the first place the church had always allowed slaveholders in her communion, and had by so doing declared slaveholding not inconsistent with Christian practice. In the second place petitions on slavery had been "laid on the table" on the plea that their discussion would cause division. Another reason given was the failure of the New School, with an almost exclusively northern membership, to take

39 The National Era, June 17, 1847.
40 Ibid., Dec. 30, 1847.
any action against the evils of slavery. In other words the New School had failed to live up to the expectations of many antislavery men.

The church was constituted in the main of antislavery churches in Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The Free Synod of Cincinnati, organized in 1847. At the organization meeting it declared the Mexican war an offensive war, and therefore one not pleasing to the Prince of Peace.

After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill in 1850 the church published this declaration: "We declare and testify before God and the Government of the United States, we cannot and will not, render obedience to this inhuman enactment." The Free Presbyterians admitted that civil government was a Christian duty, but a limit was reached when that government commanded that which was wrong, it said. The church at the same time testified against the two Presbyterian Churches from which they seceded, charging them as influential denominations with chief responsibility for the continuance of slavery in the country.

41 Anti-Slavery Bugle, Aug. 6, 1847.
42 Cf. page 69.
43 Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, Thirteenth Report, 36.
44 The National Era, Dec. 30, 1847.
45 The National Era, May, 22, 1851.
After the withdrawal of the southern presbyteries from the New School the Free Presbyterians sent an overture to the New School Assembly. It proposed now that the southern presbyteries had withdrawn that it adopt the resolutions of the Free Church on slavery. If such were done the Free Presbyterians declared union with the New School would be possible. 46 The New School Assembly refused the overture a hearing. 47 Free Presbyterians thought the New School had lost an opportunity when it refused to proclaim itself an antislavery church after the 1857 withdrawal. When some of the antislavery papers intimated a possible union of the Free Church with the New School, a Free Presbyterian indignantly denied it. "Would Free Presbyterians," he asked, "be such fools as to go in a church where they wouldn't close the door on slaveholders after they were all out?" 48

An interesting letter was published in The National Era for February 24, 1859. It was an invitation issued by a Free Presbyterian to all other Free Presbyterians to settle a colony in the western territory somewhere. He said there were several groups of their church people in Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. They seldom had preachers because their numbers were so few

46 National Anti-Slavery Standard, Mar. 21, 1859.
47 The National Era, Oct. 27, 1859.
and the resources of the church too limited. Should a colony migrate to that region the heavy drain on the church Missionary Society would be lessened. Another reason, and the most important, he believed, was the influence they could exert for freedom and righteousness in a rising territory or state. Among other things he wanted to know about those who were interested was whether they adhered to the "distinctive" principles of the church, that is, to abolition. The invitation was signed by W. G. Kephart of Gallia County, Ohio. ⁴⁹

Thus the lesser Presbyterian bodies, the psalm-singing Presbyterians, composed of the purest Scotch-Irish element in the whole body of Presbyterians took the most decided antislavery stand in the later period. They had done so in the early period too. ⁵⁰ These extremely sectarian Presbyterians were little influenced by outside forces, least of all by New England Puritanism, so frequently credited as the leaven of the entire movement, for they were far removed from them in location. It was some time after 1800 that New England gained her abolition or even antislavery reputation, yet by that date the Reformed Presbyterian Church had barred slaveholders from communion. ⁵¹

⁴⁹ The National Era. Bot. 27. 1859.
⁵⁰ Ibid., Feb. 24, 1859.
⁵¹ Cf. page 29.
V. The Role of Individual Presbyterians in the Later Period of the Antislavery Movement

By the very nature of the antislavery movement in the later period it was almost impossible for any large group to agree as had been possible in the early period. The second period was one of outstanding individual leaders. It was the period of William Lloyd Garrison, Gerritt Smith, James G. Birney and a host of others. Each was as ardent as the other, but by no means able to agree on any one plan or method whereby the slaves could be freed. In fact it often seemed that the slave had been forgotten in the attempts of each individual to "put over" his method. Both the Old and the New School Presbyterians made contributions to the antislavery movement through individuals. It seems to be true that the Old School, of course a larger church, had the more antislavery leaders. In this the estimate of a Free Presbyterian is fairly accurate. This author wrote his estimate in the National Anti-Slavery Standard in the same year that an overture from the Free Church had been ignored by the New School Assembly. Perhaps this rebuff is, in part, explanation of his attitude.
He writes of the two bodies as follows:

We never left her communion (i.e. the Old and New Schools) because we hated her people or her polity. We hated slavery with intense devotion. We loved liberty and free speech above all price; and as the church wedded herself to slavery, we were forced as an honest Presbyterian of the stripe of 1818 to withdraw from her pale ... The New School is by far the smaller body of the two ... Their standards, word for word, are the same as those of the Old School. And even on the slavery subject there is no practical difference. Both sides have the testimony of 1818 and both treat it as a nullity. The Old School in 1845, openly declared slavery to be no bar to Christian communion, thus virtually repealing the testimony. The New School practically set it aside by admitting slaveholders to communion. On the roll were the Synods and Presbyteries which went off in the Rose and Netherland stampede at Cleveland [the 1857 withdrawal of several southern presbyteries]. Had they all come back with their slaves and slavery defences, they would have been received with open arms. With the exception of Albert Barnes, we know of no man in the New School who has the reputation of being an anti-slavery man. In this respect they are much below the Old School. The Old School have Dr. M'Master, Dr. Thomas, the younger Fullerton and a host of others who are outspoken men.

Although antislavery activity in the later period was mainly in the North it was not non-existent in the South. John D. Paxton, a Presbyterian minister in Virginia, offended his congregation in 1826 by writing some essays against slavery in a religious paper. In

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1 He belonged very definitely to the New England abolitionists, though a Presbyterian (New School).
2 This was obviously not true with Calvin Stowe and Lyman Beecher, to mention but two, both in that church.
3 National Anti-Slavery Standard, Jul. 23, 1859.
1833 he published his Letters On Slavery. His aim was to justify his position as well as testify against slavery. He showed first that slavery was a moral evil, second, that it was contrary to the fundamental principles of democracy, the right to personal liberty and the other "inalienable rights" contended for in our Declaration of Independence.\(^4\)

Around Marysville in Blount County, Tennessee, a region important in the early period, considerable anti-slavery sentiment persisted. As late as 1838 T. S. Kendall, pastor of the Seceder Church, was agitating the subject. Only the year before Elijah Eagleston, an abolitionist and Presbyterian minister at Madisonville, succeeded in expelling from the church two of his most prominent members. They had each sold several slaves, enticed by the high price slaves were bringing in that year.\(^5\)

Kentucky continued to have considerable anti-slavery sentiment. President Young of Center College and Robert J. Breckinridge, who had written in favor of colonization and gradual emancipation in the early period continued their work into the second period. Young and Breckinridge were completely out of sympathy with the abolitionists. During 1834 and 1835 Young engaged in

\(^4\)Adams, op. cit., 18.
\(^6\)of. page 34-38.
a controversy with Samuel Crothers, an Ohio abolitionist, in the Cincinnati Journal. Robert J. Breckinridge in 1836 said he considered abolitionists the "most despicable and odious men on the face of the earth." At the same time the proslavery people of Kentucky as cordially hated and denounced Breckinridge as he hated the abolitionists. Robert Wickliffe, who opposed the non-importation act advocated for Kentucky, in the thirties, by Breckinridge, had no more use for Breckinridge than he in turn had for the abolitionists. Wickliffe declared that Breckinridge's "Hints on Slavery," "excited in the slaves of the county and city a spirit of insubordination that filled the country ... with murder, arson and rapes to such a degree, in one year, there were about fifteen committals of slaves for capital offences, and many executions ... when there had not been one case of an execution of a slave for fifteen years before they commenced their operations in favor of abolition." Breckinridge would have been swift to deny that his articles were abolition in character.

The bill to prevent the importation of slaves into Kentucky, for which Breckinridge fought so hard, was finally passed in 1833. Each year thereafter attempts

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7 Post page 157.
8 Ditto page 37.
9 Martin, op. cit., 101, f.n.
were made to repeal it. Breckinridge continued to uphold the law after its passage. He was aided by Cassius M. Clay, a nephew of Henry Clay, who like Breckinridge was an ardent gradual emancipationist. He published the True American, an organ of the antislavery interests in Kentucky. The first issue was put out in June, 1845, in August of the same year some of the "respectable citizens" of Kentucky packed up his type and sent it to Cincinnati.

In the year 1848 interest in emancipation in Kentucky was revived. The issue of a constitutional convention was before the people and emancipation was widely discussed. The Presbyterian Herald came out in favor of emancipation. William L. Breckinridge who was connected with the paper wrote the main articles. Though a slaveholder, he advocated gradual emancipation. He thought that the importation of slaves should be absolutely prohibited, slaves born after a fixed date freed at the age of twenty-five and all other slaves receive their freedom under the control of the state. His plan called for the freed slaves to be hired out under the state until sufficient money was raised to transport

10 Ibid., 96
11 The National Era, Jul. 1, 1847.
12 Martin, op. cit., 115.
them to Africa. 13

The Presbyterian church as an organization took no part in the controversy in Kentucky over a constitutional convention, but many of the church leaders were active in the controversy. An emancipation convention was held in Frankfort at which thirteen of the one hundred and fifty delegates were Presbyterian ministers. The Prentice Review (Louisville) noted that the Presbyterians had taken the lead in the struggle to get emancipation in Kentucky. It declared that every prominent man in the Synod of Kentucky was conspicuous in his efforts for emancipation. It declared it knew of no Presbyterian ministers among the advocates of slavery. 14

In the whole group none was more conspicuous than Robert J. Breckinridge.

Garrison ridiculed emancipationists, especially the platform advocated by Breckinridge in Kentucky, but the fact remained that he had a platform. He believed that the people of Kentucky ought by means of the constitutional convention to prohibit the importation of slaves into the state. The power of emancipation should be guarded in the constitution, he thought. This was necessary that the power be used only prospectively,

13 Ibid., 129, f.n.
gradually and in connection with the removal from the state of the freed slaves. The power of emancipation ought to come, not through ordinary legislation, but "local option," he held. Breckinridge regarded this last provision as a liberal concession to the pro-slavery party, for slaveholders were outnumbered ten to one, and most of the prominent emancipationists were slaveholders.\footnote{Martin, \textit{op. cit.}, 133.}

The emancipation movement failed in Kentucky. There were some who blamed the failure on the churches. The \textit{Biblical Repertory} denied that the reproof could be brought against "our own church" (that is the Presbyterian Church) and it too asserted that every important minister in the Synod of Kentucky had been zealous in the cause. It singled out Robert J. Breckinridge, John C. Young, William L. Breckinridge, and the Rev. Mr. Robinson as especially prominent.\footnote{R. L. Stanton, \textit{The Church and the Rebellion: A Consideration of the Rebellion Against the Government of the United States; and the Agency of the Church, North and South, in Relation thereto, 443-444.}

When E. P. Barrows was called to be pastor of the \textit{First Presbyterian Church} in New York in 1835 his congregation was divided on the subject of slavery. He prepared a series of sermons on slavery and succeeded

\footnote{Not the Free Church organized in 1847.}
in uniting his church. The essence of what he believed and what he told them was this:

Slavery is a great evil and usually admitted as such in the North, but there is a certain class of Northerners who, while admitting the evils of slavery, retard the progress of the whole movement by their hatred and opposition to abolitionism. When slavery existed under authority of the state legislature a legal means had to be found and used to eradicate it. Polygamy can find the same sanction in the bible that slavery has, but scriptural arguments are not advanced in support of polygamy.

What was Barrows proposal which established peace in his church? Let the opponents of slavery, he said, in the northern state withhold judgment until they were well informed, not censor the slaveholder too severely, not silence the abolition discussion of slavery completely, but endeavor to use a safer and saner type of argument when pleading for emancipation. In this belief he was seconded by his entire congregation.

Jane Grey (Cannon) Swisshelm was a typical reformer, interested in temperance, woman suffrage, moral reform, and most of all in antislavery. She was reared

[19] Ibid., 44, 73 et passim.
in a thorough-going Covenanter home. She early developed a taste for saving souls. When a child she was repeating the shorter catechism with her brother, she asked her father to explain one of the answers, "not that I needed any explanation, but that William might be enlightened; for I was anxious about his soul, on account of his skepticism." From saving the soul of her brother she took a logical step, and tried to save her fellow-women from the trampled status accorded the weaker sex and the negro from a life of servitude.

Her main work for antislavery was done through The Pittsburgh Visitor (sic), a paper dedicated to that cause. She had the Covenanters' hatred of slavery inculcated in her. She could hardly have been influenced by New England abolitionism, or any other variety, for "occasional hearing" was followed by discipline in the Covenanter Church. She imagined a slaveholder was a monster and a beast. Apparently she never knew that any other kind existed. Her accounts of slavery were all of the blackest and her denunciations of the perpetuators of the system, scathing. She did not

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21 She agitated for a law securing the property rights of married women in Pennsylvania. Such a law was passed in 1848.
22 Attendance at the services of any other denomination.
content herself with abolition subscribers, but put prominent slaveholders and southern editors on her mailing list. In this she resembled Garrison. The influence of her paper was, therefore much greater than the subscription list would indicate. Her articles were quoted to be condemned as well as to be praised.\(^\text{23}\) Her sex added to the publicity given her paper. She wrote a scorching diatribe against Dr. David Riddle, minister of the Third Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. Her wrath was occasioned by Dr. Riddle's sermon on the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850. He declared it was, in his opinion, wrong, but advised obedience to it so long as it was a law. Mrs. Swisshelm, the Covenanter, embued with the principles of "political dissent," had nothing but scorn for Dr. Riddle's compromising position.\(^\text{24}\) Jane Grey Swisshelm was an agitator, promoting the cause here, injuring it there.

There is one phase of abolition history, more particularly underground railroad history, frequently neglected. What happened to the fugitives once they arrived in Canada, for that was the customary destination,


\(^{24}\) Irene E. Williams, "The Operation of the Fugitive Slave Law in Western Pennsylvania From 1850 to 1860." *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine,* IV, 154.
seldom enters into abolition or antislavery literature. Yet it was a field of antislavery endeavor as much as any other. Isaac J. Rice left a good position as minister in an Ohio Presbyterian Church to go to Canada and minister to the fugitive colonies there. He made his headquarters at Fort Malden. There Levi Coffin in 1844 found him. He had a school for colored children and several missionary buildings where fugitives were kept until homes could be found for them.25 In 1849 William King, a slaveholding Presbyterian minister in Louisiana manumitted his slaves and settled them in a community called Buxton. The settlement grew rapidly, and the Elgin Association was formed in 1850 to advance the interests of the colony. King was the leader and chief agent of the association. Support came mostly from the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 1862 Dr. King reported a total population of one thousand in the colony.26

Southern Ohio was a fertile field for antislavery endeavor. The older generation of antislavery men many of whom had come from slaveholding states had prepared the soil.27 The southern Ohio abolitionists of the later period were disciples of the older men. Hugh S.

26 Ibid., 208.
27Cf. pages 52-53.
Fullerton was a native of Pennsylvania, but moved to Chillicothe in 1832 when and where he began active antislavery work. He later became minister at Salem Church where he stayed twenty-six years. He was a severe critic of the actions of the Old School General Assembly, to which he belonged. He was particularly displeased with the resolutions of 1845. When writing on that subject to a friend he wrote that if the church sanctioned this action, "why, why—Why I can't stand it." He and Thomas E. Thomas were instrumental in securing the passage in the 1846 General Assembly of the resolution declaring that the action of 1845 in no way rescinded previous testimony. Had General Assembly failed to take this stand it seems quite certain that Fullerton and many of the other southern Ohio abolitionists would have split off from the church (Old School). He had written that if the 1845 action were to be final "the bitterness of death is past." Fullerton was not to be induced to secession easily, however. In fact he was criticized by some abolitionists for his disapproval of separation. He held no brief for slavery, nor for his church's inactivity, but on the other hand he believed that the

28 Cf. page 103.
29 Cf. page 103.
wholesale exclusion of slaveholders from communion would be inimical to the antislavery cause in particular and the cause of religion generally. In fact in 1850 he went so far as to say that refusal to commune with slaveholders was evil no matter how much the institution was hated. His belief, he said, was that of the apostle Paul that the Lord's Supper was "not a badge of a party, but a token of fellowship with all the citizens of that kingdom. Therefore, he reasoned, abolitionists would be making themselves no better by withdrawing." A writer in the National Era pointed out that Fullerton was inconsistent in his disapproval of disunion. The writer showed that neither Fullerton's church (Salem) nor his presbytery (Chillicothe) would admit slaveholders to communion, yet he would not withdraw from a larger body, General Assembly, which admitted slaveholders.

Thomas E. Thomas was at one time President of Hanover College in Indiana. He was also a professor in Lane Seminary and held pastorates in Hamilton and Dayton, Ohio. He was mentioned along with Dr. Erasmus MacMaster for a post in the Theological Seminary at Chicago. Had the original plans been carried out he

\[30\text{The National Era, Sept. 26, 1850.}\]
\[31\text{Ibid., Mar. 20, 1851.}\]
would have gone there. Dr. MacMaster was one of the most outspoken of the abolition group. He, too, was President for a time of Hanover College. Later he went to Miami University, Ohio and still later to New Albany Theological Seminary in Indiana. While at Miami in 1840 he was charged with being an abolitionist. He was supported in his views by Thomas E. Thomas. After leaving Miami he went to New Albany where his views were more acceptable. He always said he stood with all the deliverances of the Old School General Assembly except those of 1845. He gave the 1818 resolutions as proof of the wrongness of the resolutions of 1845. Though uncompromising in his attitude toward slavery, he was charitable toward those involved in the system. He did not ignore the difficulties surrounding the practical question of emancipation and the future status of the slaves. Despite his charity for the slaveholders he was forced to give up his place in New Albany in 1857. He really suffered for his opinions, for his abolitionism lost him the place on the faculty of the New Theological Seminary at Chicago.

Dr. Samuel Steele was born in Londonderry, Ireland. He attended Princeton and then became pastor of

32 Cf. page 116.  
33 Lyons, loc. cit., 78-79.  
34 Cf. page 116-117.
the Presbyterian Church at Hillsborough, Ohio. He belonged to Chillicothe Presbytery, that disturber of General Assembly's peace. He was a friend of Samuel Crothers, and worked with him on the problem of slavery. Crothers was pastor of the church at Greenfield, Ohio. 35 He entered the antislavery movement earlier than many of the others. In 1827 he began to publish in the Cincinnati Journal, "An Appeal to Patriots and Christians on Behalf of the Enslaved Africans." He continued the articles until 1831. In 1833 he organized an abolition society. 36 He made his fight entirely within the church, and on moral grounds alone. He could not be induced to leave the church, though he disapproved of her inactivity on the question of slavery. He declared that he would "not be guilty of the sin of schism ... while ... permitted to think ..." 37

In the same Chillicothe Presbytery with William Dickey, James Gilliland, Samuel Steele, Samuel Crothers, and Hugh S. Fullerton was John Rankin. Of all the southern Ohio abolitionists he was probably the best known. In the thirties he was called "the Martin Luther"

36 The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society was not founded until 1835.
37 Thomas, op. cit., 21-22.
of the cause. His work for antislavery began in 1815, the same year in which Benjamin Lundy began his work. Rankin attended Washington College in Pennsylvania and was the pupil of Dr. Samuel Doake, known as an antislavery advocate as early as 1800. \(^{38}\) Rankin organized several local antislavery societies when a minister in Kentucky. In 1822 he became pastor of an antislavery congregation at Ripley, Ohio. There he remained for thirty-three years. His house overlooking the Ohio River received many fugitives, for it was a noted station on the underground railroad. \(^{40}\)

In 1823 and 1824 he published in the *Castigator*, a paper published at Ripley, Ohio, a series of *Letters on Slavery*. \(^{41}\) In 1826 these *Letters* were issued in book form and enjoyed a good sale. The *Letters* were addressed to his brother, Thomas Rankin, a slaveholder in Virginia. Rankin denounced the foreign slave trade in no uncertain terms. He was not interested in whether the negroes were better off in America than in Africa, but in whether Americans could in justice enslave them.

\(^{38}\) Patterson, op. cit., 182-183.
\(^{40}\) George Harris, described by Mrs. Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was said to have been received there.
\(^{41}\) Adams, op. cit., 61.
In this he was typical of the later abolitionists who looked at the problem from their own side, rather than from that of the slave. He again looked at the problem from the standpoint of the whites when he listed nine evils directly resulting from slavery. It lead free whites to idleness, vice, and disease, and these lead to poverty, he pointed out. He heard with scorn the arguments that slaves were better off as they were, than if they were free. On that subject he exclaimed: "Immaculate tenderness! Astonishing sympathy! But what is to be dreaded more than such tenderness and sympathy? Who would wish to have them exercised upon himself...?" 42

It was not uncommon for western abolitionists to call John Rankin "the father of abolitionism." 43 But to think of him as the "father of abolitionism" in the sense that he was the first immediate emancipationist is inaccurate. Rice and Bourne arrived at that point in their thinking, certainly before he did. 44 The dispute over this point has not, however, been with those who advance the cause of Rice and Bourne, but with the disciples of William L. Garrison. Probably Garrison did first use the expression "immediate emancipation."

42 John Rankin, Letters on Slavery, Addressed to Mr. Thomas Rankin, Merchant at Middlebrook, Augusta County, Virginia, passim. 43 Wm. Birney, op. cit., 168-170. 44 Ante page 15, 18 et seq.
Insofar as there is a controversy it would seem to be no more than a difference between "immediate emancipation" and "emancipation at once." This inscription is said to be in existence: "Rev. John Rankin, with the profound regards and loving veneration of his anti-slavery disciple and humble co-worker in the cause of emancipation—Wm. Lloyd Garrison." This was written on a fly leaf of the "Writings of Garrison," and was dated "Cincinnati, April 20, 1853."\(^{45}\)

Whether Garrison was a "disciple" of Rankin or not, the fact remains that Rankin exerted a powerful influence in the movement. Albert Bushnell Hart calls his Letters a "text-book for abolitionists."\(^{46}\) In the history of Presbyterian abolitionism he was important as the slavery agitator par excellence, in the New School General Assembly, and as the founder of the anti-slavery Free Presbyterian Church.

John Rankin worked through the medium of the antislavery societies as well as through the church. He entered the service of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1836. He lectured and collected money for the cause. In one month's time he organized six new societies, all

\(^{46}\) Albert B. Hart, Slavery and Abolition 1831-1841, 159.
in southern Ohio. He offered a resolution, in the Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Society in 1836, to the effect that the "domestic slave trade equals that of Africa, both in criminality and cruelty. Rankin had been one of the organizers of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society too. This society was founded in 1835 at Zanesville. It was the next year that he acted as agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society in southern Ohio.

John Rankin was a prolific writer for the public press. An issue of the Philanthropist, National Anti-Slavery Standard, of The National Era was not complete without a long letter by Rankin. Judging from the reprints in these papers from Presbyterian journals he must have contributed as freely to them. In one public letter he took a fellow Presbyterian minister, J. L. Wilson, to task for his backsliding on the subject of slavery. Rankin reminded Wilson that he had been known to declare that the argument of Samuel Crothers, based on I Timothy VI:1, 2 had convinced him that the bible did not sanction slavery. Rankin also avowed he had heard Wilson say before his own congregation that he was not an abolitionist, but an emancipationist, which, said Rankin, he considered a popular way of

47 The Emancipator, Sept. 29, 1836.
48 Human Rights, Jul. 1836.
49 G. H. Barnes, op. cit., 83.
50 Cf. page 157.
proclaiming that he was an abolitionist. 51

On the eve of the Presidential election of 1840 Rankin wrote a letter to the Philanthropist wherein he set forth his reasons for voting for a non-abolitionist. The Philanthropist was supporting the Liberty ticket, 52 headed by James G. Birney, so Rankin's arguments were refuted point by point. Rankin explained in the letter that to him the question of slavery was of more importance than any other before the country, yet he recognized it was not the only one. As a citizen he thought it his duty to vote. If he could vote for an antislavery man and at the same time promote other interests he would so do. If neither of the candidates were abolitionists then he would vote for the man most likely to do good for the country. Only if there was no difference in candidates would he stay away from the polls. He declared that in the 1840 election it would be painful to him to support a Whig, but he thought it the best he could do for his country. He reasoned that one of the two major parties would be elected, and his vote was needed to keep out the Democrats, the "stronger and worse party." 53

In 1857 a Compensation Emancipation Convention was held in Cleveland. Rankin was there denying that a

51 Philanthropist, May 28, 1839.
52 Post page 165 et seq.
53 Ibid., Aug. 4, 1840.
slaveholder had a "moral right" to compensation. The only excuse, so far as he was concerned, for compensation, was mercy to the slaves. Gerritt Smith was astonished that Rankin should deny the right of the slaveholder to compensation. The fact that Smith was a man of enormous wealth may explain his attitude. The reason he gave, however, was this: "We have shared the profits of slavery; shall we refuse to share in the loss occasioned by its abolition?" Rankin also participated in the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention which met at Columbus, Ohio in 1859.

These represent a few of the southern Ohio abolitionists. The first ones were mostly southerners strengthened by a few recruits from Ireland such as Dr. Steele. Those of the later period were in many cases disciples of the older men. This group was almost to a man composed of pure Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Except through the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society it seems doubtful whether they had much contact with New England or Western Reserve abolitionism. A letter from Thomas E. Thomas to Prof. Scott, an abolitionist, and professor at Miami University, bears this out. Thomas said he was looking forward to attending the annual meeting.

55 The National Era, Aug. 18, 1859.  
of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. Commenting on the
good chance he would have to meet other antislavery men
he wrote:

I have some curiosity (may my Old School
brethren forgive!) to look at Finney, 57
who is to be there. A large number of
Western Reserve people will be present;
and I wish to see a little of Western
Reserve character, having heard the fame
thereof with my ears. 58

James G. Birney was doubtless the most outstand-
ing Presbyterian abolitionist. Unlike most of the
other leaders he was not a minister, but a layman. Both
his father and his mother's father were slaveholders.
His home was near Danville, Kentucky, the "center of
anti-slavery feeling" in Kentucky and the "permanent
headquarters of Kentucky Presbyterianism." 59 His father

57 Charles G. Finney, famous revivalist, and abolition-
ist; President of Oberlin College. Finney was looked
upon by Old School Presbyterians as a most danger-
ous heretic. To them he represented what New Schoo-
ism might become. In fact the Aug. 18, 1842 issue
of the Presbyterian of the West noted that Oberlin-
ism was troubling the New School Presbyterians in
many places. The Presbyterian of the West for Oct.
20, 1842 carried an account of a controversy in the
Presbytery of Richland as to whether "baptism as
administered by the preachers of the Oberlin Assoc-
iation was to be regarded as valid." The committee
held that it was valid despite the "very great, and
exceedingly dangerous and corrupting" errors of the
Oberlin Association.

58 Thomas, op. cit., 12.
was at one time reputed to have been the wealthiest man in Kentucky. Nevertheless he voted for the Rev. David Rice, an unconditional abolitionist as a delegate to the 1799 constitutional convention.\textsuperscript{60} James G. Birney himself later came under Rice's influence.\textsuperscript{61} In 1826 he became interested in the Colonization Society and was its agent for a time in Alabama. In 1833 he was one of the nine slaveholders to organize the Kentucky Society for the Relief of the State from Slavery. The members gave their pledge of honor that after that date all slaves born their property would be set free at the age of twenty-five together with their children. A member was at liberty to withdraw at any time, and there were to be no coercive measures. By the end of 1834 between sixty and seventy men had taken the required pledge for membership in the society. Shortly thereafter, because of Birney's association with the immediate emancipationist of the North, it was dissolved.\textsuperscript{62}

In 1834 Birney was elected one of the vice presidents of the Colonization Society. At that time he wrote a long public letter setting forth his reasons for

\textsuperscript{60}ibid., 16–17. \textsuperscript{61}Robert E. Chaddock, Ohio Before 1850. A Study of the Early Influences of Pennsylvania and Southern Populations in Ohio, 95–96. \textsuperscript{62}Martin, op. cit., 70–71.
refusing the office and for no longer supporting the cause.\footnote{63} After that time he declared for immediate and unconditional emancipation. He was ridiculed in the South for his espousal of so radical a cause. In 1835 he freed his own slaves.\footnote{64} After his repudiation of the Colonization Society and declaration in favor of abolitionism he was dropped from several literary societies of Alabama University as an honorary member. He was declared "unworthy of such membership."\footnote{65} Notices such as this appeared in the papers:

\textit{A Fugitive From Justice!} -- \$100.00 Reward --

The above sum will be paid for the delivery of one James G. Birney, a fugitive from justice, now abiding in the city of Cincinnati. Said Birney, in all his associations and feelings is \textit{Black}, although his external appearance is \textit{white}. The above reward will be paid, and no questions asked, by

\textbf{OLD KENTUCKY}\footnote{66}

In 1834 he wrote a \textit{Letter to Ministers and Elders On the Sin of Holding Slaves, and the Duty of Immediate Emancipation}. In this he said if the ministers and

\footnote{63}{J. G. Birney, \textit{Letter on Colonization, Addressed to the Rev. Thornton J. Mills, Corresponding Secretary of the Kentucky Colonization Society}, 4. G. H. Barnes claims that Theodore Weld was the means of converting Birney to abolition.\textemdash G. H. Barnes, \textit{op. cit.}, 65.}

\footnote{64}{\textit{A Tribute to James G. Birney}, 5.}

\footnote{65}{Ibid., 5.}

\footnote{66}{J. G. Birney, \textit{Am. Churches Bulwarks of Am. Slavery}, v.}
elders (of the Presbyterian Church of Kentucky) would liberate the slaves they held in bondage they would "have crucified the giant sin of our land." He said further that it was within their power "to give the fatal wound to slavery in Kentucky—and if in Kentucky, throughout the slave-holding region of the Union ..."67

Birney's influence was not confined to the Presbyterian denomination, or to one section of the country. He represented the Kentucky Anti-Slavery Society in 1835. His paper, the Philanthropist, published at Cincinnati was made the organ of the Ohio society.68 This press was mobbed and Birney, though escaping the martyrdom of Lovejoy, was not unmolested.69 Birney's motto for the Philanthropist was this: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother ... therefore is this distress come upon us."70 This motto would indicate that Birney possessed characteristic abolition principles.

In 1840 he was elected one of the vice presidents of the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London.71

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68 G. H. Barnes, op. cit., 83-84.
69 Wm. Birney, op. cit., 246-248. A delicate contemporary writer described the eggs used in anti-slavery riots as "unmerchantable."
70 Julian P. Breck, "The Economic Background of the Liberty Party." American Historical Review, XXXIV, 253 (Jan. 1929). This was the motto during the panic of 1837.
71 Wm. Birney, op. cit., 366.
"There will be no cessation of conflict until slavery shall be exterminated or liberty destroyed. Liberty and slavery cannot live in juxtaposition," said Birney before Seward foresaw the "irrepressible conflict," and twenty years before Lincoln uttered his famous, "a house divided against itself cannot stand." 72 Birney was not the first to advocate political abolition. He was the leader, however, of the forces, sometimes called the constitutional resistance party. He was unanimously nominated by the political abolitionists, or Liberty party, as their candidate in 1840 and again in 1844. 73 This was the political advertisement used by the abolition press to promote Birney's candidacy:

73 Wm. Birney, op. cit., 353.
LIBERTY TICKET

Nominated by the National Convention, New York,

May 12, 1841.

For President,
James G. Birney
of New York

For Vice President,
Thomas Morris
of Ohio

"The righteous shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon"
Ps. XCVII:12

The Cedar of Lebanon

The Cedar is the emblem of constancy, of Protection, of Renown, of Immortality.

James G. Birney

When the Hickory of Tenn., the Elm of New York, the Buckeye of Ohio, and the Persimmon of Va., shall have perished in oblivion, our serviceable, fragrant, and ever-enduring Cedar shall stretch its sheltering arms over the Nation, and tower aloft, as a memorial of virtuous deeds and a witness to the latest ages that God loves good, and them that honor him he will honor. 74

74 The Friend of Man., Jul. 20, 1841.
Theodore C. Smith in his *Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest* explains Birney's strength in Ohio in 1840 altogether in terms of New England abolitionism. Nearly half of the state's vote came from the Western Reserve. "Outside the Reserve," he goes on to say, "the most votes appear to have been cast near Cincinnati, which like the Western Reserve, had many New England settlers." Any explanation is no more than conjecture, but in view of the strong Presbyterian abolitionism in southern Ohio any answer solely in terms of New England abolitionism is over-simplified. Also the influence of Birney's own paper, the *Philanthropist*, published at Cincinnati, on that region ought not to be overlooked.

James G. Birney freed his slaves in the face of censure and ridicule, discussed slavery at the constant risk of life and property. His press was destroyed at Cincinnati, but he persevered and his paper had wide circulation. At a time when pro-slavery men, Garrisonian abolitionists and gradual emancipationists opposed him, he sponsored political abolition. His principle was first embodied in the Liberty Party, and successively in the Free Soil, and Republican parties.

The Presbyterians lived in the southern, middle and the then western states. In their position of proximity to slavery they were not able to forget it. When William Lloyd Garrison published the *Liberator* in 1831 New England seemed shocked that the South had not yet freed her slaves. With the Presbyterians there was no sudden awakening. The movement for "immediate and unconditional emancipation" was not new to the Scotch-Irish of the upland South. They had been its leaders for many years.

After 1830, with Garrisonian abolitionism antagonizing the South, wealth increasing among the southern Scotch-Irish, and large numbers of abolitionists leaving the South for free territory, Presbyterian activity in the antislavery movement changed. In the first instance the Presbyterian Church had been the creator of public sentiment. After 1850 General Assembly, a body representing all sections of the country, took no decisive anti-slavery action. The diversity of opinions within the church made agreement impossible. In that sense the church had become the "creature of public sentiment." Even the New School Church from which some abolitionists expected much was not able, or willing, with a largely
northern membership, to lead antislavery public opinion. Both the Old and the New Schools had individual members, churches, and presbyteries that took a most advanced antislavery stand in the later period. The national organizations, however, did not follow. The smaller and more homogeneous lesser Presbyterian bodies, extremely sectarian and uninfluenced by other denominational currents of thought, were in both periods advanced abolition advocates. Although the character and emphasis changed between the early and later periods, the activity of the Presbyterians in the antislavery movement was continuous and significant.
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This tract tells the story of the attempt to put down James G. Birney's abolition paper in Cincinnati.

Pillsbury, Parker,
Cupples, Upham and Company, Boston, 1884.
The author denounces the Old and New School Presbyterian Churches for inactivity, but praises the Covenanter Presbyterians as "Honorable Exceptions."

Pillsbury, Parker,
The Church as It Is: Or the Forlorn Hope of Slavery.
The book gives the history of the Presbyterian Church's attitude on slavery. The author sees only the side of the Abolitionists.

Rankin, John,
Letters on Slavery, Addressed to Mr. Thomas Rankin, Merchant at Middlebrook, Augusta County, Virginia.
D. Ammen, printer, Ripley, Ohio, 1826.
These are the famous Letters, written in 1823, and published in 1826, which were called by the friends of John Rankin, the first Immediate Emancipation Documents. Protagonists of the Garrisonian cause deny this.

Rice, N. L.,
Ten Letters on the Subject of Slavery Addressed to the Delegates from the Congregational Associations to the Last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.
Keith, Woods and Company, St. Louis, Mo., 1855.
The author defends the Presbyterians' stand on slavery and charges the Congregationalists with Abolitionism.

VI. Articles and Essays in Periodicals, Annuals, and Publications of Learned Societies

Boucher, Chauncey S.,
"In Re That Aggressive Slaveocracy."
Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VIII, 13, 79 (June–Sept., 1921).
Interesting material is here to be found on the attitude of antislavery people in regard to the acquisition of Mexican territory.

Bretz, Julian P.,
"The Economic Background of the Liberty Party."
This account of article gives an excellent idea of the shifting emphasis in antislavery sentiment from the religious to the economic.

Commons, John R.,
"Colonial Race Elements."
The Chautauquan, XXXVII, 118–125 (Oct., 1903).

Dodd, William E.,
"The Fight for the Northwest, 1860."
American Historical Review, XVI, 774–788 (Jul., 1911).
The fight in the churches in the Northwest over the slavery is one topic treated.

Dodd, William E.,
"Profitable Fields of Investigation in American History, 1815–1860."
Points out the change in attitude on the subject of slavery in the Presbyterian Church between 1800 and 1850 as a suggestive field.

Fisher, Rev., S. J.,
"Reminiscences of Jane Grey Swisshelm."
Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, IV, 165-174 (Jul., 1921).

Funk, Prof., Henry D.,
"The Influence of the Presbyterian Church in Early American History."
Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, XII, 26-63; 152-224 (1924-1927).
This book contains a catechism for negro slaves who were members of the Presbyterian Church in the colonial period.

Galbreath, C. B.,
"Anti-Slavery Movement in Columbiana County."

Green, Samuel Sweet,
"The Scotch-Irish in America."

Hunter, William H.,
"Influence of Pennsylvania on Ohio."
Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XII, 287-309 (Apr., 1903).
He discusses several Presbyterian Abolitionists.

Hunter, W(illiam) H.,
"The Pathfinders of Jefferson County."
Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, VIII, 132-262 (Oct., 1900).

Jernegan, Marcus W.,
"Slavery and Conversion in the American Colonies."
American Historical Review XXI, 504-527 (Apr., 1916).
This is a detailed discussion of whether baptism meant freedom from bondage and the move away from that belief in England and the colonies.
Johnson, Oliver,
"Charles Osborn."
The author refutes Geo. Julian's contention in a previous issue of the magazine that Garrison wrote to Rankin acknowledging him as his leader in Immediate Abolitionism.

Julian, George W.,
"The Genesis of Modern Abolitionism."
International Review, XII, 533-555 (June, 1882).
The author believes that the work of the Colonization Society was in reality a pro-slavery movement.

Julian, George W.,
"The Truth of Anti-Slavery History."
It gives information on immediate emancipation.

Knabenshue, S. S.,
"The Underground Railroad."
Ohio Archæological and Historical Publications, XIV, 396-403 (July, 1905).
The article tells of the work of John Rankin, a Presbyterian minister of Ripley, Ohio, in the Abolition movement in Ohio.

Lyons, John F.,
"The Attitude of Presbyterians in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois Toward Slavery, 1825-1861."

Martin, Asa Earl,
"The Anti-Slavery Societies of Tennessee."

Martin, Asa Earl,
"Pioneer Anti-Slavery Press."
The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, II 509-528 (Mar., 1916).
The author stresses the fact that the early antislavery work was done in the West and not in New England, by the Friends, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, and not by the Congregationalists.
Sharpless, Isaac,  
"Presbyterian and Quaker in Colonial Pennsylvania."  
The account of the Presbyterian and Quaker cooperation in bringing about the abolition of negro slavery in the state of Pennsylvania is illuminating.

Sherwood, Henry N.,  
"Negro Deportation Projects."  
Efforts at colonization before the formation of the Colonization Society in 1816 are traced.

Siebert, Wilbur, H.,  
"The Underground Railroad in Ohio."  
Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, IV, 44-63 (1891-1896).

Williams, Irene E.,  
"The Operation of the Fugitive Slave Law in Western Pennsylvania 1850-1860."  
Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, IV, 150-160 (Jul., 1921).

Woodburn, James Albert,  
"The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Monroe County, Indiana."  
Indiana Historical Society Publications, IV, No. 3.  
The author gives interesting original letters from a South Carolina Presbyterian to a friend in Indiana telling why he wants to leave the older region, where the people are no longer of his "sort." He also gives specific cases of suspension and censure for slaveholding and the holding of pro-slavery views.

VII. General Assembly Minutes and Society Reports

Declaration of Sentiment of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in Philadelphia on the 4th Day of December, 1833.  
Published by the Society, New York, (1833).  
It contains a list of the anti-slavery papers of the time.

This report by a Congregational Committee condemns slaveholding in the Presbyterian Church.

Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. [Before Division], 1822-1826, 1837.

Jasper Harding, Philadelphia, 1826.
Lydia R. Bailey, Philadelphia, 1837.

Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. (New School), 1838, 1840, 1843, 1849.

Torchard and Adams, New York, 1838.
Daniel Fanshaw, New York, 1841, 1843.

Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. (Old School), 1838, 1841, 1844, 1854, 1860.

Lydia R. Bailey, Philadelphia, 1838-1839.
Wm. S. Marten, 1840-1841, 1844-1849,
Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, 1850-1854, 1860.

Report of the Second Anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, Held in Mt. Pleasant, Jefferson County, Ohio, on 27th of April, 1837. Pugh and Dodd, Cincinnati, 1837.

The Society goes on record as opposing the election of a slaveholding Moderator in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1836.

Report of the Third Anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, Held in Granville, Licking County, Ohio, on the 30th of May, 1838. Published by Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, Cincinnati, 1838.

The society registered disapproval of both the Old and New School's attitude and activity on the slavery issue. The report includes John Rankin's "Address to the Churches on Prejudice Against People of Color."


The report concludes that the American church is no longer an important force in the antislavery movement.

VIII. Biographies and Autobiographies

Birney, William,
James G. Birney and His Times; the Genesis of the Republican Party, with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South Before 1828.
D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1890.
The life and works of James G. Birney by his son.

Bourne, Theodore,
Methodist Quarterly Review (Jan., 1882).
The article tells of Bourne's part in passing the 1818 antislavery resolutions in the Presbyterian General Assembly.

Green, Beriah,
Sketch of the Life and Writings of James Gillespie Birney.
Jackson and Chaplin, Utica, N. Y., 1844.
This contains a good contemporary account of James G. Birney. It was probably published as campaign propaganda, however.

Johnson, Oliver,
William Lloyd Garrison and His Times; Or, Sketches of the Anti-Slavery Movement in America, and of the Man Who Was Its Founder and Moral Leader.
Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1881.
One chapter of this book is given over to a discussion of American churches and the slavery issue.
Shippee, Lester Burrell,  
"Jane Grey Swisshelm: Agitator."  
Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VII,  
206-227 (Dec., 1920).  
This short life of Mrs. Swisshelm is  
based mainly on her autobiography.

Sprague, William B.,  
Annuals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American  
Clergymen of Various Denominations, from the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Five, with Historical Introductions, IX. Robert Carter and Brothers, New York, 1869.  
This volume of the Annuals contains histories of the Associate, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterian churches as well as biographies of many clergymen of these denominations.

Swisshelm, Mrs. Jane Grey,  
Half A Century.  
Jansen, McClurg and Company, Chicago, 1880.  
The author tells of her personal experiences in the various reform movements and those of other reformers. The book was, as the author says, written from memory, for all her memoranda had been destroyed, it cannot be relied on for accuracy. It is, however, an interesting study of an early "female reformer."

A Tribute to James G. Birney.  
No Publisher, Detroit, n. d.  
This little book sets forth the accomplishments and contributions of Birney to his age; it is a "Tribute."

IX. Published Private Correspondence

Abel, Annie Heloise, and Klingberg, Frank Ji, editors,  
A Side Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858, Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.  
Published by the Association for the study of Negro Life and History, inc., Lancaster, Penna, 1927.
Some of this correspondence concerns the stand of the two schools of Presbyterians on slavery.

Thomas, Thomas Ebenezer,
Correspondence of Thomas Ebenezer Thomas,
Mainly Relating to the Anti-Slavery Conflict in Ohio, Especially in the Presbyterian Church. Published by his son (Alfred A. Thomas), Dayton, Ohio, 1909.

The correspondence contains much information about the "Ohio Abolitionists" not found elsewhere in print.

X. Contemporary Periodicals and Newspapers

Advocate of Freedom (Brunswick, Me., and Hallockwell, Me.) 1838-1840.


Anti-Slavery Bugle (Salem, Ohio) 1845-1852, 1857.

Cincinnati Weekly Herald, and Philanthropist May 21, 1845.

The Commonwealth (Frankfort, Ky.) 1841.

The Emancipator (New York) Dec., 1835; Aug.11, Sept. 29, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Dec. 22, 1836. This paper was first published monthly and later weekly for the American Anti-Slavery Society.


Friend of Man (Utica, N. Y.) 1836-1841.


This was a monthly publication of the American Anti-Slavery Society.
The Liberator (Boston) Sept. 15, 1832-Dec. 6, 1834; 1835; 1839-1843; 1845-1860.

Liberty Standard (Hallowell, Me.) 1841-1846.


National Enquirer (Philadelphia) Oct. 19, Nov. 19, Dec. 3, Dec. 10, 1836; Dec. 9, Dec. 14, 1837. Benjamin Lundy was the editor of this paper.

The National Era (Washington) 1847-1860.

Pennsylvania Freeman (Philadelphia) 1839-1841.

Philanthropist (Cincinnati) May 20, May 27, 1836; Nov. 7, 1837; 1838-1843.

Philanthropist (Hamilton, O.) Mar. 29, 1816.

Philanthropist (Mt. Pleasant, O.) Sept. 19, 1817.

The Presbyterian (Philadelphia) 1839; Feb. 8, 1851.

The Presbyterian of the West (Springfield, O.) Sept. 22, 1841-1844.

XI. Miscellaneous

Chambers, George,

Hanna, Charles, A.,
Historical Collections of Harrison County, in the State of Ohio, With Lists of the First Land-Owners, Early Marriages (to 1841), Will Records (to 1861), Burial Records of the Early Settlements, and Numerous Genealogies. Privately printed, New York, 1900.

An account of the antislavery struggle in Franklin College and of Presbyterian Abolitionism in eastern Ohio is given.
Martineau, Harriet,  
"Views of Slavery, and Emancipation," from  
Society in America.  
Fiercy and Reed, New York, 1837.  
She notes particularly the hatred for  
abolitionists among the organized churches.

Morris, Edward D.,  
A Book of Remembrance; the Presbyterian  
Church New School, 1837-1869.  
The Champlain Press, Columbus, 0., 1905.  
This is a history of the New School  
written by one of that group. It is pre-  
judiced in favor of the New School.

Parrington, Vernon Louis,  
The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-  
1860 in Main Currents in American Thought,  
II.  

Presbyterian Reunion: A Memorial Volume. 1837-  
1871.  
This is mainly biographical.

Turner, Lorenzo Dow,  
Anti-Slavery Sentiment in American Literature Prior to 1865.  
The Association for the Study of Negro Life  
and History, inc., Washington, D. C. [c.1929].

Washington and Lee University, Lexington,  
Virginia, Historical Papers. No. 5, 1895.  
John Murphy and Company, Baltimore, 1895.  
These documents give an account of the  
eyear antislavery debates in the Virginia  
Legislature.