and abolishing the clergy and the church, insisting on its being necessary before the abolition of slavery can succeed; and there was another set, with brother May at their head, in favour of the continuance but reformation of the ministry and the church, for the use of such as required those aids. There was sister somebody with her party, who contended that it is a sin to take money for the support of a minister from a slaveholder, whose money was earned by his slave; and there was brother Pierpont, with others, for taking what they can get, whether of slaveholders, rum-makers, or rum-sellers. There was one party (a very large one) for consuming the time in useless strife about questions of order, and other frivolous topics, for the sake of hearing themselves talk, and of gaining a trifling victory over a rival speaker; and there was another party (a very small one indeed) with a most modest, respectable, and apparently sincere and benevolent person at their head, who were for discussing and devising means for *the speedy freedom of the slave*—discussions, on account of which some persons (himself probably meaning) had come five hundred miles to this city.

One of the principal topics on Wednesday and Thursday was, whether the ministry and the church, as now existing and organized, were divinely *instituted* or commanded. In the discussion, however, the question seemed to be whether *individual ministers* are specially called, appointed, and empowered by God to expound the scriptures, and to dictate to the people on religious subjects. One of the speakers, brother Campbell, related several anecdotes to the point. The Rev. Mr. Towne, he said, had declared, that he wished all his doctrines to be discussed by his hearers; that all had a right to judge for themselves, and to discuss religious points among themselves. Taking him at his word, this speaker undertook to discuss certain points at a church or conference meeting, but was put down by Mr. Towne, and forbid to speak upon such questions in vestry meetings. He alone, he said, was authorized to teach, advise, and enlighten others of his congregation on such subjects. Other instances of a similar nature were related.

Brother Pierpont came in, during the pendency of this question, while a sister was speaking of the sinfulness of taking money in payment of a minister's salary from a slaveholder derived from slave labour. The reverend brother took fire like a loco foco match and rose to reply; and he very soon became deeply involved in his favourite subjects, the temperance cause, and his long disputes with his parishioners. He said that some of his flock were rum-distillers and rum-sellers; but he should be very glad to obtain from them what they owed him for his salary, that he might be able to pay his debts, even though their money was earned in making and selling rum. But he would tell them plainly and boldly, when he received their money, that he should use it to nourish his body for the purpose of doing all in his power, while his life should last, to destroy their business and prevent their making any more money in that way. He would even take the money of his satanic majesty himself; but he would tell him, at the same time, that he should do his utmost to overturn his kingdom and destroy his power. He would not scruple to take his *money*, but he would, at the same time, boldly take the cloven-footed giver by the *horns*. He was here called to order by brother Quincy, the moderator, and told that the question was not about ministers' salaries, but whether they or their order were *divinely* instituted; or, rather, whether the belief of such a divine institution must not be rooted out, and the present establishment and organization of ministers and churches be abolished, before slavery could be abolished. Brother P. then disclaimed, for himself, any such divine authority. He claimed being a *man*, and nothing more. He stood six feet high or over in his shoes, and that, he thought, entitled him to be considered a man, and respected as such. He preached as a mere man, and performed his other duties in that

character. The speaker, however, soon diverged into his old favourite subject of salaries and parish disputes—was again called to order by brother Quincy—and, having nothing further to say about the real question at issue, resumed his seat.

On Thursday, the question came up, whether a true, honest, conscientious abolitionist could properly accept any office, or vote for any officer, who takes an oath to sustain the constitution of the United States—that constitution recognising and sustaining slavery. The affirmative was taken, I believe, by every speaker; and brother Wendell Phillips delivered an extemporaneous speech in its support, which, for ingenuity of reasoning, aptness of illustration, readiness of quotation from the greatest British and American statesmen, purity of diction, fluency and happiness of language, chaste and beautiful figures, propriety and elegance of pronunciation, and, in a word, of *classical oratory* worthy of the Augustan age itself, has been, it appeared to me, rarely surpassed even by our most gifted and admired speakers. It is to be regretted that his fine talents, except on occasions of this kind, are hid in the earth, and are absolutely unknown to the community in general.

During the discussion of this or some other question, brother Foster "had the platform," but departing from the question entirely, was called to order by the moderator. He refused to obey, and insisted on his right to say what he pleased, and to discuss any subject he pleased. Upon this, the moderator, brother Quincy, left the chair and abdicated his office. A motion was then made, by the "order party," that the chair should be sustained. A long and angry debate ensued, in the course of which brother Foster insisted that the moderator had only power to advise, but not to control a speaker. He had long contended for this right of speech, and he never would relinquish it. He had been imprisoned for exercising it in religious assemblies, and he was ready to be put in prison again for asserting it. Every person had this right, except the insane; and he considered Abby Folsom insane, and therefore not entitled to it. Sister Folsom being present, rose under feelings of the greatest indignation. They both had been arrested and tried for disturbing religious meetings. He had been committed to jail, and she was sent to the hospital at Worcester. She told brother Foster that in calling her insane, he had committed, she believed, the "unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost," and it would be found, at the day of judgment, that he was now "fighting against God." But she would say, as the Saviour said of his enemies and revilers, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." She had, it is true, been cruelly, unjustly, and wickedly sent, by those usurpers, the courts and judges, without righteous authority, to the Worcester *house of the dead*. They call it a *hospital*, said she, but most absurdly and improperly—for there is no *hospitality* there! She continued, a few minutes, speaking with energy, distinctness, and grammatical correctness, commanding the most earnest attention, though sometimes interrupted by a burst at the oddity or pungency of her expressions. The illiberal, unfeeling, and uncalled-for rudeness of brother Foster was amply compensated by a highly complimentary remark of brother Phillips afterwards, in regard to the great aptness and propriety of an observation made by her on another occasion.

After a long and pretty warm discussion among the brethren, the question was put to the audience, "that the chair be sustained," and was carried by a very large majority. Mr. Quincy was then unanimously invited to resume the chair, which he did; but brother Foster, finding himself not supported in his liberty doctrine, declared his withdrawal from the society and convention, with the intention of labouring in the "sectarian field" in future.

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