

The Story of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" *By J. L. Bolling*

FROM a recently published book, "Trumpets of Jubilee," and from other sources in the Library of Congress I gleaned the following information respecting the origin and effect of the story which caused the Civil War:

"The false impression of the condition of the Southern slave created by 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' encouraged Brown to believe that . . . the negroes would rise and massacre their masters; and he laid a plan to arouse them to take this step. . . . The negroes, however, did not join the conspirators, as had been expected."

The same writer says further that the book was "a misleading but strongly-written story", and was "one of the powerful agents in arousing against slavery the passions of the North. . . . It was condemned in the South and by the conservative element of the North, yet a great many Northern people professed to believe that the book gave a true picture of Southern life. . . . It is probable that this book did more than anything else to increase the feeling of the North against slavery."

Let us remember that the world had not only entered the time of the end, and had been in it for half a century, at the time the volume was given to the masses, but we were also in the midst of increasing spirit activity, as predicted by the apostle.—Eph. 6:10-13; 2 Thess. 2:9.

In harmony with this, the Fox sisters had startled New England by their "table rappings" in 1848; Horace Greeley gave ample space to their writings on spirit phenomena in his *Tribune*; and the Davenport brothers were astonishing the people with their strange exhibitions.

Thousands were falling a prey to these deceptions, and the word "medium" was rapidly becoming a household word. It was not surprising, therefore, that one of Mrs. Stowe's temperament should come under the same evil influence; and this is exactly what happened, as is abundantly proven by what follows.

Mrs. Stowe was the sister of Henry Ward Beecher, the noted preacher. Among other things, she says of herself that "thought, intense, emotional thought" was with her "a disease"; and that she was "the slave and sport of morbid feeling and unreasonable prejudice". She "felt and thought with such absorbing intensity that her mind was exhausted and she seemed sinking into a deadness". "About half of my time I am scarcely alive," she once declared.

Miss Beecher married Calvin Stowe, who "entertained phantoms, his visions, as he called them. . . . Since his earliest childhood they had appeared before him, emerging from the unlikely background of the homely puritan village of Natick, Mass., where he was born. It had been years before he had realized that they were not as tangible as the persons about him, and he saw them with pride and pleasure to the end of his life. Their talk, which was silent, shook him profoundly, as did the playing of their musical instruments, which he always heard. They came into view through the walls or furniture, lovely landscapes often lay about them; they enacted little dramas over and over again, without variation, in a thrilling rhythm. Indians were among their number, who played viols and fiddles. . . . Most of these ghostly visitants had no counterparts in life; but occasionally men and women whom he detested would swim before him in pleasant guises, while persons whom he loved would be terribly torn, blackened or shriveled by funnel shaped clouds. Once as a child he had awakened to discover in his bed an ashy-blue skeleton, which seemed to him entirely palpable."

These demon manifestations were remarkable in their abundance and persistence; but history affords not a few parallels of a somewhat similar character. They bring to memory at once the visions of Swedenborg, Dante, Loyola, and many others who were worked upon by the evil spirits and inspired to write voluminous records regarding their experiences. Through her husband, Mrs. Stowe undoubtedly was strongly influenced by these wicked spirits; and this was doubtless Satan's object in effecting their union in marriage.

The author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" received a thorough training from her husband in the art of coloring her narrative, we are told, "writing in the midst of gingerbread and baked beans in the kitchen, and a baby at her feet"; for she was a writer of some note before she attempted this work.

We read that she was impulsive in her literary efforts, caring little for facts, and never taking time to even cursorily investigate her chosen subject. She was rash and bent upon making her point at all hazards, usually writing from the standpoint of a preconceived opinion. "Absence and wandering of mind" was "a physical

infirmity". Her memory was unreliable; and she often contradicted herself, but refused to correct the most glaring inconsistencies of statement.

Once she visited Dr. Holmes with a manuscript, but frankly told him that she did not want his opinion, since her mind was already "made up"; but she thought that he might suggest improvements in the phraseology. "In many years of her life the author avoided all reading upon or allusion to the subject of slavery," believing that no one could understand it. It was "a passing phantasmagoria".

Once her husband and her brother assisted an escaping slave along the "underground railway", and on another occasion she visited for a few hours a plantation in Kentucky. But, save for stories told her by colored women who often helped her with her work in the household, this was the extent of her contact with the institution. During the Birney riots in Cincinnati "she was concerned not with the issue of Slavery, but with that of free speech".

In 1857 the Stowes moved to Brunswick, Me.; and shortly thereafter she was "stirred by letters from Mrs. Edward Beecher, of Boston, urging her to write something on the subject". "She began without plan or premonition, breaking into ecstasies of tears as she wrote." Her hasty installments appeared in *The National Era*. She "judged the whole by a piece", and the story was overcolored to the last degree. It was merely a sweeping indictment and a hysterical outcry against the institution.

The country was set on fire when the story later appeared in book form. It was a time when men gave loose rein to their emotions, thought intensely, and talked with a reckless abandon. Then came "The Key", another volume of hearsay, without documentary proofs. It unlocked nothing.

We know that the days of divine inspiration are over. They ended when John gave to the church a record of the wonderful visions on Patmos. But Satan has at intervals thrust upon the world during the centuries following works claiming divine origin. A good modern example is Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures". Not one single book of the Bible was written by a woman.

As to the unseen origin of Mrs. Stowe's book, believed by her and her friends to have been in-

spired, we will allow her to convict herself by her own confession: "The scene [a vision] presented itself to her mind while she was seated at the communion table in the little church at Brunswick. She was perfectly overcome by it, and could scarcely restrain the convulsion of tears and sobbing which shook her frame." She often used the third person in referring to herself.

After she had completed the book, she admitted her belief that it was the product of "an unknown power", stating that this unseen force was "something uncontrollable"; that it continued to control her throughout her effort, and ultimately left her exhausted.

We quote again: "Mrs. Stowe felt her: *she possessed* that she became the conscious agent of a power other than her own. The story can less be said to have been composed by her than *imposed* upon her." (Italics are ours.) "'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is a work of religion; God wrote it," she averred. But some of her contemporaries pronounced it the work of Satan; and they were quite right.

Of course, God permitted the work to be written, and has or will overrule it for ultimate good, as a part of the general permission of evil; but He was not the author of it, because He is "not the author of confusion, but of peace", and tempts no man to do evil.

The volume was issued at a time when conditions were ripe for its reception. It was the "psychological moment" for Satan to accomplish his long-cherished design to disrupt the Union, his ultimate purpose being to throttle liberty in America and frustrate an important part of God's plan.

Centuries before, anticipating the settlement of North America by a liberty-loving people, and the founding of a government favorable to enlightenment, Satan had sought to forestall it through the voyages of Columbus and the resulting effort to people it with Spaniards and other backward races under the influence of Rome. This undertaking failed.

Grandly God's plan went forward, and in due time the nucleus of a new nation appeared along the North Atlantic coast. Satan was dismayed, and inspired a tyrannical ruler to cruelly oppress the colonies, in the hope that the torch of freedom, then burning so brightly, would be extinguished.

Again, failure attended his efforts; the colonies revolted, and he tried the harsher means of subjugation by war. But Jehovah raised up a Washington, through whose instrumentality He overruled the anger of men and devils for good, and "brought forth on this continent a nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal".

God's plan provided that America should be, in a peculiar sense, the workshop and experimental laboratory of the time of the end; and accordingly, from this central source He has distributed His chief blessings of the millennial dawn period. Hence, His favor has rested upon this country from the first in a very special sense. It has been, indeed, "the land shadowed with wings," providential protection. This, therefore, accounts for the repeated attempts of Satan to destroy its institutions.

Nothing daunted by his defeat, Satan tried to mislead the framers of the Constitution by suggesting through his agents the formation of three republics, or one with three presidents; but wiser counsel prevailed, and he was disappointed. Finally, he achieved a triumph when slavery was made constitutional; and from that time forward he lost no opportunity to stir up sectional hostility and create crises in Congress.

Satan's first chance came in 1820, when Missouri applied for admission into the Union. Previously, the states had been admitted "somewhat in pairs; first, one from the South, and then one from the North" in order to prevent trouble; but a dangerous crisis was precipitated when Satan endeavored to have two Southern states received in succession. Alabama had been admitted when Missouri knocked at the door with a constitution legalizing slavery. This angered the North, and war seemed imminent. It was only averted by the "Missouri Compromise" introduced by Henry Clay, and the final struggle was deferred for three decades. Again Satan was foiled. A Clay had been provided for the emergency. Thenceforward he became known as "the Great Pacifist".

In 1832 a tariff bill inimical to Southern interests was passed, and South Carolina threatened secession. If Buchanan had been president, a "Southern Confederacy" would have resulted; but the Lord had permitted Jackson to occupy the office at this juncture, and the influence of Calhoun and Hayne was offset by

Clay and Webster. The president made known his determination to use armed force to preserve the Union, and Clay secured the passage of a "Compromise Tariff". South Carolina then repealed the "Nullification Ordinance". Satan was again defeated.

Encouraged by his near success, the Devil instituted a double program, that of slavery agitation through the Abolition societies, churches, clergy, newspapers, etc., and by harassing Congress with petitions and documents from all quarters. Crisis after crisis recurred. Satan well knew that if Congress could be induced to abolish slavery, war would result. Therefore that body was flooded with abolition petitions.

In order to settle the matter, six resolutions affirming the constitutionality of slavery and "the inability of Congress to abolish" it, were passed in 1838. *The Liberator*, published by Garrison, demanded "immediate emancipation"; and the Constitution was denounced as "an agreement with death and a covenant with hell". Negro insurrections occurred, and many white people were murdered. Calhoun sought to stop the agitation in 1836 with "the Gag Law", forbidding the reception of petitions; but the measure was killed in the Senate.

Matters were further complicated by the annexation of Texas in 1836 and by the Mexican War in 1846. The sentiment against slavery was stronger than ever. More than two thousand newspapers carried information everywhere; and the greatest word-battle in history was in progress.

Crude, slow-moving trains crawled through the land, in fulfillment of prophecy. Stormy and prolonged debates occupied both houses of Congress, and Clay and Webster pleaded for peace and harmony. The admission of California as a free state was hotly contested. With the passage of the "Omnibus Bill" the work of Clay and Webster was ended, and they died. There was, therefore, no Clay to introduce compromises and no Webster to raise his voice against secession when the hour struck.

In 1854 Congress passed the "Kansas-Nebraska Bill", which permitted these territories to decide for themselves the question of "slavery or no slavery". This transferred the struggle from Congress to the people, and civil strife at once resulted. The fighting lasted several years; but the anti-slavery faction finally won.

The Dred Scott decision widened the breach, and the two sections now glared at each other like tigers. The clouds of war were rapidly gathering; fitful lightning flashes and the roll of thunder gave warning of the great storm which was soon to break in all its terrible fury.

Providence permitted a split in the Democratic ranks, which insured the election of Lincoln, God's chosen instrument in saving the Union. Secession resulted, and the war came. After repeated failures, the Devil had finally accomplished his purpose through the agency of a well-meaning, but misguided woman.

After the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" war was inevitable. It soon came in a torrential downpour; and its author immediately became a world figure, for a time overshadowing that of Lincoln. She was received in Europe by crowned heads, and her foreign tour became a pageant. She was idolized by the women of Europe, and presented with a monster petition of twenty-six folio volumes, urging abolition.

She meddled in everything, issued scores of pamphlets, entered into the thick of the Kansas-Nebraska discussion, consulted mediums and freely dipped into spirit writings. She met Mrs.

Browning while in Europe, a "convincee spiritualist"; and we read that "these two sister souls were wafted together on a faint and lovely sea of emotion". They exchanged letters on the subject for many years.

In her correspondence with George Eliot she "poured out a flood of evidence", telling about "communications" which she had received from the spirit world. Once she was mistaken by her husband for a "phantom". "She had in truth the look of a trance-walker. Her air of vague absorption had become an incorrigible habit."

When the war came, her friends told her that it was her war. "She had an augmented sense of divine appointment," and "presently she decided that Lincoln was too slow". Accordingly, she hastened to Washington to offer him advice.

Lincoln was sorely beset by many evangelists; but he received her gravely, with the significant remark, "So you're the little woman who made this great war." Although very talkative and versatile, she left no record of the conversation which followed! Evidently, she was no match for the great Emancipator.

What Will They Think?

IT IS only ninety years since the pillory passed out of use in England. Pillories were commonly erected in the center of the town, usually near the village church. The offender had to stand with his head and hands through holes in the bar, all clamped at the same level, an extremely painful posture. Occasionally the ears were cut off by those gentle men from whom we received our parentage and our ideas of justice and mercy.

We are more merciful; sometimes, it would seem, almost too much so. At Joliet there were seven murderers. Three times they succeeded in breaking out of prison. On each occasion one officer of the law, either a warden or a policeman, was shot and killed; and on each occasion one murderer escaped and has not since been found. On a fourth attempt one of the murderers was himself slain. Now there are but three of the murderers left awaiting execution.

Evidently in the above cases justice has been too long delayed. And yet we cannot afford the other extreme, either. Two white men met two colored men in a road in Mississippi. Strife followed, and one of the white men was killed. No inquiry was made as to the cause of the strife. A mob of a thousand white men, women and children gathered and burned the two colored men at the stake. This happened in June, 1927.

When sanity comes, as it will surely come with the establishment of the Lord's kingdom, what will the people of that happy time think of the so-called civilization of our day and of the recent past? What will they think of the World War among the so-called Christian people of the world? They will ask, How is it possible that these poor unfortunates could look forward so hopefully to a future hell when they already had as bad a one as the Devil could possibly manufacture?