

Meredith deplored the prospect of a break with the Triennial Convention; and only a month before the Southern Convention was organized, he expressed the opinion that "so long as union on honorable terms is possible," there should be no separation. However, he added, "After it shall appear that our brethren are entirely cut loose from the north, we reckon that we shall have to go with them."

Slavery he held to be "an evil of great magnitude," which he would rejoice to see removed. That end would be brought about, he believed, not by creating in the slave "a restless, insubordinate, and rebellious disposition," but by "improving his moral and mental condition, and thus qualifying him for the enjoyment of freedom while it renders him worthy of its blessings." The gospel, he asserted, "tends to the ultimate extinction of slavery, as well as of all other evils which lie in the way of human happiness on the broadest scale."

Much of Meredith's best writing was in his answers to questions sent in by readers. Some of these were doctrinal questions, and he gave clear, forceful expositions of passages of Scripture. Others were concerning moral issues which arose in contemporary living. Whether a single sentence or several paragraphs, these answers are remarkable for their sound common sense and for his recognition of a general principle underlying the specific question. More than once he was asked questions concerning slaves. To a query as to whether or not it was right for a Christian to sell separately slaves who were husband and wife, he answered:

For the sake of convenience, this question might be stated thus: Jesus Christ has said concerning man and wife, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," but pecuniary interest very strongly urges me to separate my slave from his wife;—what shall I do? Shall I obey the prohibition of Christ or the impulse of my own selfishness? If a person is at liberty to violate one moral precept because his interest is supposed to require it, it is difficult to conceive of a crime which might not be committed on the same ground. Besides this, the gospel teaches that when private interest happens to conflict with moral duty, the former must be sacrificed to the latter, even to the cutting off of a right hand or the plucking out of a right eye.