

## **Presbyterians on Slavery in the Pre-Civil War Era**

These notices appeared in the New York Evangelist newspaper in 1835. Note the contrast in the views of two Presbyterian governing bodies.

### **The Presbytery of Charleston**

The Presbytery of Charleston hereby resolves that slavery is an institution ordained by God in the Holy Scriptures. It has existed during the time of both the Old and New Testaments. It does and should continue to exist as part of God's ordering of his creatures in the world. Africans, living in darkness in Africa, were brought to America and have received the benefits of Christian civilization. We do implore all slave owners to treat their slaves with respect and care. Slaves are likewise to obey their masters as is the injunction of Scripture. We also renounce the attempt of abolitionists to try to change what is God's eternal decree.

### **The Synod of Michigan**

It is the resolution of this Synod that slavery is a sin and is against the will of God. God, who is the father of all his children, countenances no distinction based on color or race. We admit the sinfulness of a society that has systematically subjugated one part of its population in menial servitude. We therefore call for the immediate abolition of slavery. It is a plague on the land and an abomination for the church of Christ. It is not enough to simply implore slave owners to treat their slaves more humanely. Rather slavery as an institution is wrong and sinful. We call upon the Presbyterian church as a national body to work for the abolition of slavery.