





American and foreign anti-slavery society.

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

ANTI-SLAVERY CHRISTIANS

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

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# ANTI-SLAVERY CHRISTIANS

OF THE UNITED STATES.



FRIENDS AND BRETHREN:—We address you in behalf of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Approving of the principles avowed and the measures pursued by that association, we beg leave to submit to you the considerations which peculiarly entitle it at the present juncture to the active sympathy and effectual aid of the friends of the anti-slavery cause.

While the advocates of constitutional government in Europe are lamenting a wide-spread reaction in behalf of despotic authority, the friends of the inalienable rights of man behold with grief and mortification a similar reaction in our own Republic, in behalf of a despotism more inexorable, and more hostile to human progress and happiness, than any which afflicts the eastern continent. In both instances, the reaction is more apparent than real. Opinions in favor of human liberty remain the same, but the expression of them has to a greater or less degree been stifled by a sudden, mighty, and combined effort of capitalists and politicians, aided to a great extent by ecclesiastical influence, and in each case accompanied with violated pledges and revolting perfidy.

In our own community, the cause of Christian morals has been deeply wounded, and a new impulse given to infidelity, by the various modes adopted by merchants, politicians, and divines to conciliate the slaveholding interest. Doctrines have been advanced on high authority respecting the supremacy of human laws, which, if true, convict the "noble army of martyrs," including the blessed apostles themselves, of being but felons and traitors. Public men, and even public meetings, have professed in unqualified terms their ignorance of a higher law than the Federal Constitution. Rich men among us have given of their abundance to reduce to slavery the

fugitive from bondage; and lawyers, heretofore regarded as reputable, have not shrunk from taking reward against the innocent, and prostituting a noble profession to the service of the slave-catcher. The sympathy heretofore felt for the victim of oppression who had escaped from his prison-house, and the repugnance manifested to aid in his arrest, have been denounced as "prejudices to be conquered;" and lips which once uttered noble words in behalf of human rights, have been busily employed in proclaiming to republicans the duty of catching slaves. Nay, some professed ambassadors of the merciful Jesus have announced from their pulpits that He has sanctioned the conversion into articles of merchandise of beings charged with no crime, made a little lower than the angels, and redeemed by his own blood! A law has been passed for the recovery of fugitive slaves, which, for its cool violation of all the received and acknowledged principles of judicial justice, for its outrages on humanity, and for its arbitrary requirement of every citizen to assist in a slave-hunt when commanded by an official menial, is unexampled in the legislation of any Christian country. Yet an active agency in the execution of this most detestable law has been made, even by professed ministers of the gospel, a test of Christian obedience.

The success which has thus far attended the combined effort to which we have referred, has been in a great measure owing to the fancied security of the North and the simulated violence of the South.

The war against Mexico was waged for the acquisition of slave territory, and great was the fear felt by the North that human bondage would be extended to the shores of the Pacific. No less than fourteen States protested, through their Legislatures, against any enlargement of the area of slavery. The voice of Daniel Webster was raised to warn his countrymen of the impending calamity, and to approve and enforce the great principles announced by the Free Soil Convention at Buffalo. The innate love of liberty was awakened throughout the North, and its representatives in Congress bowed to the will of their constituents; and all the devices of the slaveholders to procure territorial governments for the conquered territories, allowing the slavery of a portion of the inhabitants, were defeated. Soon, the Wilmot proviso, applied, with the assistance of Daniel Webster; to Oregon, secured that important territory to freedom. This was followed by the joyful intelligence that New-Mexico and California had both adopted State Constitutions prohibiting slavery. A shout of victory ascended from the North, and the greatness of the triumph was supposed to be attested by the wailings of desperation uttered by the slaveholders. It was at this moment of fancied security that the capitalists and politicians contrived a panic about the Union, and traders in Southern votes and merchandise devised the patriotic work of saving the Union, by surrendering the territories of New-Mexico and Utah to the slaveholders, and making slave-hunting a national duty, under regulations of extraordinary cruelty. The work was hastened on by the most astounding treachery, supported by the audacious assumption that the law of physical geography and Asiatic scenery rendered

it physically impossible that any portion of the vast region conquered from Mexico could ever be trodden by slaves.

A dissolution of the Union could have no other effect on the slavesholding interest than to break down those bulwarks which the Federal Government, from its beginning, has been busy in raising around it, and to rouse all beyond the slave territory into active hostility. But although the Union was in little danger, the work of saving it was no less profitable than patriotic, as it tended to prevent the political and commercial non-intercourse threatened by the South; and the proceedings of Union-saving committees were found a convenient mode of advertising for the trade and the votes of the slavesholders. In this manner an influence was exerted which, aided by the supposed security of the North, led to the so-called Compromise, in which the fruits of the recent victory were all thrown away, with the single exception of the anti-slavery Constitution of California. Something was indeed gained to the *character* of the national capital, by prohibiting the importation of slaves for sale, but nothing to the cause of humanity, since the traffic was only transferred from Washington to Alexandria. In return for the Californian Constitution, which Congress could not have prevented and did not dare to annul, we have had the prodigious enlargement of the slave State of Texas, the abandonment of New-Mexico and Utah to slavery, and the enactment of the Fugitive Bill, as drafted by the slavesholders themselves, forced through the House of Representatives without discussion, and so intensely odious and wicked, that not even personal interest nor party discipline could induce one half of the members of the Lower House to incur the infamy of giving it their votes.

The political parties, having thus conciliated the slavesholders, entered upon a new race between themselves for power and office, and mutually agreed to prevent, as far as possible, all interference in the race by the avowed friends of human rights. The anti-slavery agitation was to be suppressed at all hazards; and every man who expressed sympathy for the oppressed, or indignation against slave-hunts, was to be driven from either party. By virtue of this compact, similar in its spirit to that which in Europe is smothering every aspiration for freedom, all who protest against the oppression of millions of native-born Americans are to be deemed disturbers of the public peace, while the powers of slavesholders, like those of kings, are to be regarded as held by the grace of God, and too sacred to be discussed or questioned.

It is under these circumstances, painful, mortifying, and unexpected, that we address ourselves to the Anti-Slavery Christians of the United States. The whole question of the duty of opposition to slavery rests on the sinfulness of reducing innocent men and women, and their children after them, to articles of merchandise. If human beings may be held as chattels, they are, of course, legitimate subjects of traffic, and the African, no less than the American slave-trade, is a commendable and a Christian commerce. The lawfulness of slavery in no degree depends on the complexion of its victims, since the slavery alleged to be recognized in the Scriptures was



unquestionably that of Asiatics and Europeans. None of our clerical champions of the institution ever venture to dwell on its accordance with the attributes of the Deity, or the precepts of the gospel. On what ground, then, is the moral vindication of American slavery rested? On the alleged fact that God permitted the Jews to hold certain heathen as slaves, and that, consequently, it cannot be morally wrong in Americans to hold their own countrymen, and even their fellow Christians, and often their own children, brothers and sisters, as slaves. Without admitting the premises, we utterly deny the conclusion drawn from them. The Creator and Judge of all men, infinite in wisdom, goodness, justice, and power, selects his own modes of maintaining his moral government; and of inflicting deserved punishment; and none may say unto him, "What doest thou?" To him belongeth vengeance, and none may execute it in his name, except by his appointment. He saw fit to destroy by water a guilty world; but will it be inferred from this act of divine sovereignty that saints have a moral right to drown sinners? For their extreme wickedness, the seven nations of Palestine were doomed to extermination, and the Jews were ordered to take possession of their land, and to put all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, to the sword; to make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them. Does this commission to the Jews confer upon us similar rights in other lands? The nations adjoining Palestine were idolatrous and otherwise excessively depraved; and we are assured by pro-slavery divines that God, by an *express revelation*, gave the Jews the privilege of buying and holding their inhabitants as slaves; and hence we are taught that, without any similar revelation to ourselves, we are authorized to keep our own brethren in bonds, and to reduce them to the condition of beasts of burden, in defiance of the express commands of God to do justice and to love mercy, and to do to others as we would they should do unto us. We utterly deny the authorized existence of hereditary chattel slavery in the Jewish commonwealth, such slavery being absolutely forbidden by the universal emancipation proclaimed on each returning Jubilee. But so far as relates to the lawfulness of *American* slavery, it is wholly immaterial whether the Jews held slaves or not, since it is admitted by all that if they did, they acted by virtue of a special and express permission from God, while it is equally admitted that no such permission has been given to us. If American slavery be sanctioned by the religion of Jesus Christ, then, indeed, is that religion an inexplicable riddle, both tolerating and forbidding every species of cruelty, injustice, and oppression.

Friends and brethren, we believe before God that American slavery is hateful in his sight, and utterly irreconcilable with the holy and merciful precepts of the gospel of his Son. Hence, we believe it morally *wrong* to render any voluntary aid in upholding an iniquitous system, or in reducing a fellow-man to bondage.

We are continually told that the Federal Government has nothing to do with slavery, and yet from a very early period its powers have been exerted to protect, to extend, and to perpetuate the institution. It is the object of



the A. and F. A. S. Society to effect, as far as possible, an entire divorce of the Federal Government from the subject of slavery. In relation to the constitutional powers of the Federal Government, we indulge in no opinions more ultra than such as have been avowed by Daniel Webster himself. With him we hold that Congress is fully authorized to abolish and to forbid slavery in its own territories, to suppress the commerce in slaves between the States, and to refuse admission into the Union of new slave States. We also cordially concur in his "judgment," expressed in his speech in the Senate, on the 7th March, 1850, that the Constitution does not confer on Congress the right to legislate respecting fugitive slaves. In accordance with these views, the A. and F. A. S. Society aims at delivering the General Government from all entangling alliance with slavery, and they desire to effect this much-desired deliverance by inducing the people to select for their representatives in Congress such men only as will resolutely refuse to legislate in behalf of slavery.

But as Anti-Slavery Christians, our duties in regard to this horrible and sinful system extend beyond the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, and reach even to the slaveholders themselves. True Christianity is an aggressive religion. "Go ye into all the world," was the command of its divine founder. Can it be our duty to send missionaries into China and Hindostan, to rebuke the sins of their inhabitants, and to prostrate in the dust their altars and their gods, and yet to observe the silence of the grave in regard to a sin which, in our own country, reduces millions to ignorance, degradation, and wretchedness, and, by denying them the lamp of life, keeps them in virtual heathenism? Convinced that slavery is a sin, we not only have the right, but are bound by the obligations of Christianity, to oppose it, and to use all lawful means for its abolition, whether in our own or other countries. If slavery be not sinful, then we know not what degree of cruelty and injustice amounts to a violation of the law of God.

A combination of circumstances has led many of our clergy at the North, and nearly all at the South, to regard slavery, with all its inseparable abominations, as an exception from the Christian code. We must love all men as ourselves, with the exception of such as are black. With the same exception, we must do good unto all men, and exercise justice and mercy to all. We must give Bibles to men of all lands and all races, except to about three millions of our countrymen. The laws must protect the marriage tie, except in the case of these same millions. Supplications must be made for all men, except those among us who are of all men the most miserable. In short, as Christians, we must rebuke every sin except that giant sin of our nation which involves the perpetration of almost every other. But it is affirmed, by way of apology, that we at the North are free from this sin, and have therefore no concern with it. Were the assertion true, the apology would be equally valid for not attempting to overthrow the idolatry of the Hindoos, or the delusions of the false prophet, and for recalling all our missionaries to the heathen. But unfortunately the assertion is utterly destitute of truth. Probably not a sermon is preached in our large city churches

which is not listened to by slaveholders; probably not a congregation is assembled in the free States which does not include persons directly or indirectly interested in slavery. How many of our sons are constantly removing to the South, and becoming slaveholders! What numbers of our daughters are mistresses on slave plantations! How many Northern clergymen now descend from Southern pulpits on the divine rights of slaveholders! And shall we be told that Northern Christians have no cause to raise their voices against a sin which is daily corrupting their sons, their daughters, their politicians, and their clergy? Alas! there is a mighty conspiracy, prompted by selfish considerations, to suppress all discussion of this sin, all exhibition of its withering influence on human virtue and happiness. We have great national societies for disseminating Christian truth; but no reader of their tracts and Sunday-school books learns from their pages that it is sinful to rob black men of all their rights; to compel them to labor without wages; to deny them the Holy Scriptures; and to send fathers, mothers, and children to market, like cattle and bales of cotton. All other sins are in these publications faithfully and freely rebuked; but every allusion to this great and all-pervading sin of our nation is carefully excluded. Occasionally, a tract or religious biography from the other side of the water is deemed worthy of republication; but it is first submitted to a process significantly termed "cottonizing," and which consists in carefully expunging every expression condemnatory of human bondage. The A. and F. A. S. Society, utterly repudiating such a time-serving view of Christian duty, aims at convincing the hearts and understandings of all, both at the North and at the South, of the sinfulness of American slavery.

It must, however, be understood, that this Society directs its labors to the abolition of CASTE as well as of slavery. We have among ourselves a population, each individual of which is a swift witness of our cruelty and unchristian conduct. While protesting against the injustice and oppression practised by our Southern brethren, let us not forget the deep guilt of our Northern community in their treatment of the free people of color. No casuistry can reconcile the scorn and contumely poured upon these people with the precepts of the gospel of Christ; of that gospel which makes love for each other the badge of the Redeemer's disciples. It is unnecessary to dwell on the privations and disabilities to which our colored citizens are subjected. When the professed ministers of Christ refuse to sit in the councils of the church with their reverend brethren *not colored* like themselves, and when colored candidates for the ministry are excluded from theological seminaries solely on account of the tincture of their skin, it is not surprising that others should be as regardless of the temporal, as certain of the clergy are of the spiritual welfare of men to whom God has been pleased to give a dark complexion. When the pious colored youth is denied the usual facilities for qualifying him to minister to the diseases of the souls of his people, who shall rigidly condemn the professors of the healing art for denying similar facilities for ministering to the diseases of the body, by excluding colored students from their lecture-rooms? Surely, the ruffians

who insult and abuse the colored man, and the demagogues who, availing themselves of a popular prejudice, deny him equality before the law, have high examples to extenuate, if not to justify their pride and cruelty. In striving to secure to our colored people the rights freely accorded to all others, and thus giving them the means of maintaining themselves by honest industry, of developing and improving their talents, and of studying the things which belong to their peace, the Society is pursuing an object in perfect accordance with Christian benevolence, and one that must commend itself to every unprejudiced mind.

In our opposition to slavery and caste, we desire to use no instruments of unsanctified temper; nor have we any wish to conceal those we do use. Believing it sinful to compel an innocent man to serve as a slave, we must refuse to be partakers of other men's sins; and hence, under no circumstances can we aid in catching or securing fugitive slaves, whatever may be the penalties of our disobedience to a sinful act of Congress. It will be the endeavor of the A. and F. A. S. Society to dissuade all from joining in slave-hunts, as a palpable violation of Christian duty. Setting aside the moral turpitude of slavery, the Fugitive Slave Act comprises a mass of iniquity in no degree required by the provisions of the Constitution. The Act points out the mode of seizing and surrendering, not slaves, but *persons owing service or labor*, and is therefore applicable to white apprentices, and to persons under contract to labor for a limited time. Apprentices have already been surrendered under it, and there is no reason why others, who are alleged to have hired themselves out for a month or a year, may not be. To illustrate the intense injustice of this Act, let us suppose a young man to leave his father's home, in Boston or New-York, for California. After the lapse of a year or two, he returns. While pursuing an honest calling, he is arrested in the street, on the charge of stealing—the stereotype charge in such cases, to prevent resistance—and hurried before a Commissioner. An affidavit made in California, and there certified by a judge, is read, setting forth that the prisoner is the apprentice of the deponent. Immediately, without being permitted to produce any testimony to rebut a document which the law declares SHALL BE CONCLUSIVE, he is put in irons, and sent on board a vessel departing for the Pacific, without being permitted to take leave of his parents, wife, or children. Do we revolt at the mere supposition of such barbarity? But does the barbarity and injustice depend on the complexion of the victim? That the Constitution requires the perpetration of such horrible outrages on justice and humanity, is denied even by Daniel Webster, the great champion of the law, since he proposed giving the accused the benefit of a trial by jury. We should be faithless to the cause not only of Christianity, but of civil liberty, did we not oppose an enactment so detestably atrocious; one which establishes a title to property in an intelligent, accountable, immortal being, on testimony which in no civilized country would support the claim to a dog.

The cruelty and heartlessness attending the execution of this law, the extraordinary zeal which our rich men and politicians manifest in its behalf,

the sanction given to it by popular divines, and the infidel sneers which many of our party presses have deemed it expedient to cast on the advocates of "a higher law" than an act of Congress, have unitedly exerted a most disastrous influence on the tone of public morals. One of the most striking instances of this influence is the vile attempt made in Pennsylvania, under the special countenance of the Federal Administration, to convert resistance to the execution of the Fugitive Act into the capital crime of high treason. A fugitive, who had been arrested at Boston, was liberated by some of his colored friends, who, finding the door of his room in the courthouse open, hustled the officer, and secured the escape of the intended victim. Not a weapon had been provided, not a wound was given; yet the rescue was boldly proclaimed by Mr. Webster, Secretary of State, to be an act of treason, a levying of war against the United States!

On the 11th September, 1851, a more serious affair occurred. An armed party, headed by a deputy-marshal, attempted to arrest some fugitive slaves in Pennsylvania. The fugitives, aided by some others, stood on their defense. The claimant, a Maryland slaveholder, was shot in the affray, and the fugitives escaped. Five days after, the Governor of Maryland was officially informed, from the "Department of State," that "the District Attorney was specially instructed to ascertain whether the facts would make out the crime of TREASON against the United States, and, if so, to take prompt measures to secure all concerned for trial for that OFFENSE." Faithfully and zealously were the orders from Washington obeyed. Incredible as it may seem, a grand jury was found with consciences sufficiently pliant to present no less than seventy-eight indictments against thirty-nine persons, alleged to have been concerned in the riot. All were indicted for TREASON, as well as for various crimes of inferior grade.

Let it be recollected that the Constitution, to prevent tyrannical prosecutions for constructive treason, declares: "Treason against the United States shall consist ONLY in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." It may well be supposed that the Government selected for the commencement of the prosecutions the strongest case of the thirty-nine. On the 25th November, Castner Hanway, a white man of irreproachable character, was placed at the bar, charged, on the oaths of the grand jury, that on the 11th September, 1851, "HE DID WICKEDLY AND TRAITOROUSLY LEVY WAR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES." The only offense proved against him was, that he was near the scene of action, unarmed, and on horseback, and that, when ordered by the deputy-marshal to aid him in capturing the fugitives, like an honest man, he declined rendering the required assistance. The presiding judge charged the jury that "The Court feel bound to say, that they do not think the *transaction* with which the prisoner is charged with being connected, rises to the dignity of treason or of levying war;" and a verdict of not guilty was returned without hesitation. This verdict led the Government to abandon all the indictments for treason, among which was one against Samuel Williams, a colored man, for levying war against the United States, by *giving notice to the fugitives*

*that a warrant had been issued for their arrest!* But still an effort was made to punish him for this act of benevolence, and he was tried on an indictment for misdemeanor, under the Fugitive Act, for obstructing the arrest by his notice, and for which, if convicted, he was liable to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding six months. The trial by jury was again vindicated by a verdict of acquittal. All the prosecutions were then abandoned in despair; and, if the gallows and the prisons were denied their intended victims, the Government could at least beseech the slaveholders to accept the will for the deed, especially as it is said no less than seventy thousand dollars were expended on these prosecutions from the public treasury.

In connection with the Fugitive Act, we ask your attention to the renewed efforts to transport the free people of color to Africa. We freely acknowledge not only the right of these people to seek a more favorable home than this country affords, but also the right and duty of others to afford them, according to circumstances, the aid they may desire for this purpose. But the American Colonization Society proffers them *undesired aid*, and some colonizationists recommend their removal to Africa, as rendering slavery more secure and more profitable, and relieving the country of a population which they represent as a "nuisance." To induce them to accept the proffered aid, the oppressions they here suffer are excused and often justified, while attempts to render their condition here more tolerable, by promoting their intellectual improvement and enlarging the field of their industry, are often discountenanced. In short, the whole tendency of the Society is, by rendering their condition here intolerable, to extort their consent to go to Africa. We all know the extreme anxiety of the slaveholders to expel the free blacks from within their borders. Says a late South Carolina paper,\* recommending the State "to ship her free negroes to another land:" "The very condition and the circumstances that surround the free negro *are in direct hostility and diametrically opposed to the institution of slavery.*" Mr. Webster, in his memorable speech of 7th March, 1850, adroitly recommended himself to his new patrons by declaring that EIGHTY MILLIONS had been received from the sale of lands ceded by Virginia; and that, "if Virginia and the South see fit to adopt any proposition to RELIEVE themselves from the free people of color among them, they have my free consent that the Government shall pay them *any* sum of money out of the proceeds which may be adequate to the purpose." And again: "If any gentleman from the SOUTH shall propose a scheme of colonization to be carried on by this Government upon a large scale, for the transportation of her colored people to any colony *or any place in the world*, I should be quite disposed to incur almost any degree of expense to accomplish the object." Of course, the Secretary of State is willing to tax the whole republic to any amount not exceeding eighty millions, not to benefit the free people of color, not to civilize and Christianize Africa, but to banish to any part of the world hun-

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\* *Greenfield Mountaineer.*



dreds of thousands of his own countrymen, solely and avowedly to *relieve* the slaveholders, and give additional security and permanence to the system of human bondage; and this gentleman is now the public champion of the American Colonization Society.

We have in our country a population, free and bond, of between three and four millions, who, merely on account of their complexion, are treated with an almost total disregard of that justice and humanity enjoined by the religion we profess. The A. and F. A. S. Society are laboring to secure to them that Christian treatment to which the gospel of Christ entitles them. In this work of mercy, they invoke, and have a right to invoke, the countenance and aid of the Church. We are not unconscious that the Church has, in past ages, been frequently faithless to her high mission of cultivating peace and good-will among men; and he is but little acquainted with passing events who is ignorant that the American Church is at this moment one of the strongest buttresses of American caste and slavery. Would we, then, if we could, destroy the Church? God forbid. If the world is so full of sin and wretchedness notwithstanding the Church, what would it be without a Church? The answer may be found in the cruelties and abominations of paganism. But the ministers of Christ are men of like passions with others, and liable, like others, to be swayed by popular opinion and motives of self-interest. It is possible many of the clergy have not reflected that, in supporting and vindicating slavery, they are lending their countenance to an institution which outrages every moral precept they inculcate from the pulpit. What answer will the Northern clerical slave-catcher, or the Southern reverend slave-breeder and slave-trader, return to the inspired question, "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Surely it is worthy of remembrance that, at the day of final account, the Judge will consider as done to himself both the kindness and the cruelty shown to the least of his brethren.

We are constantly reminded that the Church is the great instrument of moral reform. Most gratefully do we allow that the precepts of the gospel are sufficient for all the moral necessities of man. "Do to others as you would they should do unto you," is a law which, if obeyed, would of itself banish slavery and oppression from the face of the earth. But unhappily the Church, or at least a portion of her ministers, have not always applied the precepts of the gospel to existing and popular sins. It is certainly no exaggerated statement, that not one sermon in a thousand delivered at the North contains the slightest allusion to the duties of Christians towards the colored population; while at the South multitudes of the clergy are as deeply involved in the iniquities of slavery as their hearers. It is no libel on the great body of our Northern clergy to say that, in regard to the wrongs of the colored people, instead of performing the part of the good Samaritan, their highest merit consists in following the example of the priest and Levite, and passing by on the other side, without inflicting new injuries on their wounded brother: But we rejoice to know that there are

ministers of Christ among us, and not a few, to whom these remarks are wholly inapplicable; men who pray and preach and labor against slavery and caste, and thus adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. We rejoice also to know that such ministers are appreciated and honored by Christians abroad of every name. The clergy of England, Scotland, and Ireland decline admitting into their pulpits clergymen from this country holding what they deem heretical doctrines; but can they exclude any for a fouler heresy than that which abrogates all the Christian precepts of justice and mercy in their application to colored men? We trust our friends in Great Britain will not weaken our hands, and strengthen the pro-slavery influence of our churches, by overlooking, in their reception of American clergymen, the course they have pursued at home on the subject of slavery. They may be perfectly assured that the American clergyman who, abroad, is too dignified to be questioned as to his opinions on human bondage, is at home too patriotic to offer any vigorous opposition to the "peculiar institution" of his country.

We have thus frankly stated the objects of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and confidently ask if they are not objects worthy to be pursued by rational, accountable, Christian men? Nay, we go farther, and ask, has not a Society pursuing such objects valid claims on the countenance and generous aid of every philanthropist and every Christian in our country?

Hostility to slavery has frequently been associated with various objects of political and moral reform. It is natural it should be so, since the same love for our neighbor which revolts at his oppression, seeks to advance his general welfare. But experience has fully proved that associated action cannot be efficiently maintained in behalf of various plans, respecting which the individuals associated entertain diverse opinions. Hence the A. and F. A. S. Society, without passing any judgment on other proposed reforms, confine their efforts in their associated capacity to the abolition of caste and slavery, leaving to their members individually the full and entire liberty of advocating and promoting, in such way as they may think proper, any other reforms, moral or political. We believe every man is bound to exercise the elective franchise in the fear of God; but while we shall ever rejoice in the election of virtuous rulers who will do justice and love mercy, it is not the province of the Society to recommend particular individuals for the suffrages of their fellow-citizens.

It is consoling to us to know that, in the sentiments we have expressed, we enjoy the sympathy of almost all without the limits of our own country who bear the Christian name. A vast multitude on our own soil hold the same sentiments, and, did they act with one heart and one voice, would soon triumph over the prejudice which supports caste, would array the Church on the side of mercy, and rescue the Federal Government from its unholy and unconstitutional alliance with slavery. But unfortunately the sympathies of this multitude, not being concentrated in action and counsel, are in no small degree powerless for good. The anti-slavery host has been



divided, and of course enfeebled, by conflicting opinions on topics immediately affecting the colored man. For the sake of the slave, for the prosperity of the country, for the good of the Church herself, we most earnestly desire the union of all abolitionists, and their harmonious action on behalf of their colored brethren. We ask all who approve the opinions we have expressed, to give vitality and energy to those opinions, by aiding the A. and F. A. S. Society in disseminating and enforcing them.

Public opinion is in this country the controller of legislation. At one period a traffic in African savages was encouraged by law, as an enlightened and legitimate commerce. At a later period, all but two States were desirous to abandon it, and, as a compromise, Congress was restricted from abolishing it until after twenty years. At a still later period, a commerce which had been guaranteed by the Federal Constitution was, by an act of Congress, denounced as PIRACY. Public opinion now, acting through the legislature, holds him a felon who brings to our shores for sale a native African, while we have just seen a citizen tried for his life because he declined to assist a slave-catcher in reducing to slavery a native American. To buy and sell Africans is wicked, base, and detestable; to buy and sell colored Americans is in perfect accordance with the most exalted position in both State and Church. In the city of New-York, we have seen "men of great stakes," merchant-princes, and others, lavishing courtesies on the most reckless and violent champions of slavery when they honored them with their presence; and we have seen these same gentlemen giving aid and comfort to the slave-catcher, without losing their place in polite society.

Most certainly public opinion on these subjects is unsound, and ought to be reformed. Very many of our clergy and their hearers need to be reminded that the commands of God have no reference to the color of a man's skin, but that all are equally entitled to receive, and are equally bound to render, the justice and benevolence enjoined by HIM who is the common Father of us all. Christians generally are to be warned not to be partakers of other men's sins towards the colored race. The cruelty of State and Federal legislation is to be exposed; the influence of the Colonization scheme in exasperating the prejudice against our colored brethren is to be demonstrated, and the public is to be fully instructed in the moral, social, and political evils resulting from slavery and caste.

But how are these great ends to be accomplished? Individual effort can do but little. In the present age, the press is the great lever by which the world is moved, but it can be employed to a great extent only through the united pecuniary contributions of many. The influence of a private Abolitionist can rarely reach beyond a contracted neighborhood; but a member of the A. and F. A. S. Society, and a donor to its funds, he may address thousands. The *National Era* was established at Washington with funds supplied by the Society, and since repaid; and it now weekly disseminates anti-slavery truth to seventeen thousand subscribers. The Society greatly needs a periodical of its own, but its present funds are insufficient for the

establishment of one. Treatises on various branches of this great subject are constantly offered to the Society, but it lacks the means of giving them to the public through the press. Intelligent, well-informed lecturers are wanted to awaken public attention, to collect popular assemblies, and to enlist the sympathies of those whose avocations deny them the opportunity of reading anti-slavery publications. Agents are desired to aid in the formation of auxiliary societies. Editors and authors are to be enlisted in the cause; and frequently, information and statistics, to be collected at much expense of time and labor, are needed for the use of members of Congress and other public men. The instrumentalities for influencing public opinion and correcting prejudices and erroneous statements are manifold, but they can be wielded only by associated funds and labors.

A crisis has arrived in which the friends of the anti-slavery cause should reorganize and act together. Unless they do this, their efforts to circumscribe the area of slavery, to break the fetters of the slave, and to rescue the free colored man from his present degradation, will be fruitless. Should the present mighty combination of capitalists, merchants, and politicians, aided by a number of popular divines enlisted in their service, succeed in suppressing all manifestations of sympathy for the slave, all discussion of the abominations of slavery, all compassion for the fugitive, the North will undoubtedly be prepared to sanction the designs now entertained for the erection of New-Mexico, Utah, and Southern California into slave States, together with the annexation of Cuba, Hayti, and the Sandwich Islands, all to be added to the domain of the slaveholder. Let us never forget that duties are ours, although events are not, and that, whatever may be the form in which it may please Divine Providence to punish our guilty land, he requires us not only to love mercy, but to do justice; a command we fail to obey, so long as we refuse to use lawful means to secure mercy and justice to others. Very many have no other opportunity of obeying this command, in regard to the colored race, than by their pecuniary contributions to the anti-slavery cause. The efforts of the A. and F. A. S. Society are now enfeebled by the exhausted state of their treasury.

Friends and brethren, we appeal to you in behalf of the Society. In the language of Scripture, we exhort you to show your faith by your works. So fully aware are our enemies of the importance of influencing public opinion by the Press, that a paper has been established at the capital of our Republic for the single and avowed purpose of vindicating and upholding human bondage. A large portion of the newspaper Press in our commercial cities is enlisted in the same unholy cause. Public rumor tells us, that a committee in the city of New-York, comprising many of its wealthiest citizens, raised a fund of one hundred thousand dollars; and knowing that opposition to slavery has its strongest fortress in the religious sentiment, this committee has spread broadcast through the land multitudes of copies of pro-slavery sermons. While the votaries of Mammon, and the aspirants to political power and emolument, are thus active and zealous in supporting and extending a horrible and degrading despotism, to further

their own selfish and ambitious views, will not the friends of righteousness, justice, and mercy be up and doing? We beseech you to reply by enrolling your names among the members of the A. and F. A. S. Society, and by speedy and liberal contributions to its treasury.

- DAVID THURSTON,.....Congregational Minister, Vassalboro, Me.  
 SAMUEL FESSENDEN,.....Portland, Me.  
 TITUS HUTCHINSON,.....Woodstock, Vt., Ex-Chief Justice.  
 LAURENCE BRAINARD,.....St. Albans, Vt.  
 CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS,.....Quincy, Mass.  
 SAMUEL OSGOOD, D.D.,.....Pastor of the First Cong. Church, Springfield, Mass.  
 WILLIAM C. CHAPIN,.....Fall River, Mass.  
 J. G. FORMAN,.....Unitarian Cong. Minister, Nantucket, Mass.  
 J. C. WEBSTER,.....Pastor of Congl. Church, Hopkinton, Mass.  
 J. P. WILLISTON,.....Northampton, Mass.  
 JOHN PIERPONT,.....Unitarian Congregational Minister, Medford, Mass.  
 BANCROFT F. WLER,.....Congregational Minister, Stockbridge, Mass.  
 ISAAC BASSETT,.....Stockbridge, Mass.  
 WILLIAM WHITNEY,.....Stockbridge, Mass.  
 WILLIAM W. PATTON,.....Pastor of Fourth Cong Church, Hartford, Conn.  
 WILLIAM JAY,.....Bedford, N. Y.  
 W. W. EVERTS,.....Pastor of the Baptist Church, Wheatland, N. Y.  
 S. S. JOCELYN,.....Pastor of First Cong. Church of Williamsburg, N. Y.  
 JOHN CHANEY,.....Minister of the Free Will Baptist Denomination.  
 D. W. GRAHAM,.....Pastor of the Free Will Baptist Church, Sullivan  
 street, N. Y. City,  
 J. WARNER,.....Williamsburg, N. Y.  
 LINDLEY MURRAY MOORE,.....Rochester, N. Y.  
 HARMON KING-BURY,.....Staten Island, N. Y.  
 J. A. PAINE, M.D.,.....Albany, N. Y.  
 WILLIAM E. WHITING,.....New-York City.  
 JOHN RANKIN,.....Brooklyn, N. Y.  
 LEWIS TAPPAN,.....Brooklyn, N. Y.  
 ARTHUR TAPPAN,.....Belleville, N. J.  
 GEORGE WHIPPLE,.....Belleville, N. J.  
 C. D. CLEVELAND,.....Philadelphia.  
 SAMUEL RHODS,.....Blockley, near Philadelphia, Pa.  
 CHARLES AVERY,.....Minister of the Methodist Protestant Church,  
 Alleghany City, Pa.  
 CHARLES B. BOYNTON,.....Pastor of Pine st. Cong. Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
 JOHN RANKIN,.....Pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, Ripley, O.  
 T. B. HUDSON,.....Professor of Languages, Oberlin College, Ohio.  
 JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS,.....Member of Congress from Ohio.  
 FLAVEL BASCOM,.....Pastor Congl. Church, Galesburg, Ill.  
 JONATHAN BLANCHARD,.....President of Knox College, Ill.  
 CHARLES DURKEE,.....Member of Congress from Wisconsin.  
 J. BIGELOW,.....Washington City.  
 JOHN G. FLEE,.....Pastor Independent Congregational Church, Cabin  
 Creek, Lewis Co., Ky.  
 ELLIS CLIZBE,.....Amsterdam, N. Y.

*New-York, May, 1852.*

CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
AMERICAN AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

P R E A M B L E .

WHEREAS the Declaration of American Independence asserts that it is a self-evident truth, "that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights—that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and whereas this political axiom is based upon the Holy Scriptures, which declare that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth," and which require all mankind to love their neighbors as themselves; and whereas nearly three millions of the people of this country are held in slavery by their fellow-countrymen; and whereas the practice of buying and selling human beings prevails to an alarming extent; and whereas every man, irrespective of color, is entitled to equality of rights on the soil of his birth and residence; and whereas the prejudice against color, which exists in this country, is sinful in the sight of God, and should be immediately repented of; and whereas no scheme of expatriation should be countenanced by any friend of man or God; and whereas we owe it to the oppressed, to oppressors, to our country, to the world, and to God, to do all that is right, and lawfully in our power, to bring about the extinction of slavery and the slave-trade; we do hereby agree, with a prayerful reliance on the Divine aid, to form ourselves into a Society, to be governed by the following CONSTITUTION:—

ARTICLE I.

The name of this Association shall be the AMERICAN AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

ARTICLE II.

The objects of this Society shall be the entire extinction of slavery and the slave-trade; and the equal security, protection, and improvement of the people of color.

ARTICLE III.

The following are the fundamental principles of this Society:—That slaveholding and slavetrading are heinous sins in the sight of God, and violations of the rights of man, and ought to be immediately abandoned; that so long as slavery exists, there is no reasonable prospect of the annihilation of the slave-trade, and of extinguishing the sale and barter of human beings; that the extinction of slavery and the slave-trade is to be attained by moral, religious, and pacific means; that while the Society exacts no specific pledges as a condition of membership, it will urge on all the duty of exercising the political franchise against the election of any slaveholder, and in behalf of the enslaved; that the legislative action of government should be invoked to abolish slavery and the slave-trade, for the enfranchisement of free people of color, and to restrain the lawless from invading the rights of others; and that no measures be resorted to by this Society, in the prosecution of these objects, but such as are in entire accordance with these principles.

ARTICLE IV.

The Society will employ the following means, among others, to effect the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade:

1. They will circulate accurate information on the enormities of slavery and the slave-trade; furnish evidence to the inhabitants of the slaveholding States, not only of the practicability and safety, but of the pecuniary advantage of free over slave labor; diffuse authentic intelligence respecting the results of emancipation in the West Indies and elsewhere; open a correspondence with Abolitionists throughout the world, and encourage them in the prosecution of their objects, by all methods consistent with the principles of this Society.

2. They will recommend the use of free grown produce, as far as practicable, in preference to slave-grown.

3. They will urge upon all, and especially upon the ministry and Church of Christ,

the duty of embracing every suitable opportunity for exhibiting to slaveholders and slavetraders, and their apologists, an abhorrence of the system which they uphold, and its utter incompatibility with the spirit of the Christian religion.

## ARTICLE V.

Any person who consents to the principles and objects of this Society, and contributes annually to its funds, shall be a member of this Society; and the payment of thirty dollars, at any one time, shall constitute an individual a member for life.

## ARTICLE VI.

The Society shall annually elect a President, two Vice Presidents, Secretaries, and a Treasurer; and in case of a vacancy occurring from any cause, the Executive Committee shall have the power to fill such vacancy.

## ARTICLE VII.

The Society shall annually elect an Executive Committee, of whom nine members, at least, shall reside in the city of New-York, and vicinity; and five, regularly convened, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

This Committee shall have power to elect their own officers; to fill all vacancies which may occur in their number; to call an annual meeting of the Society at New-York, or elsewhere, at which a report of their doings shall be made; to transact all the business of the Society in the intervals of the annual meetings; to convene special meetings of the Society, when necessary; and to collect funds through their auxiliaries, or otherwise, according to their discretion.

## ARTICLE VIII.

The meetings of this Society, for the transaction of business, shall consist of its officers, and such other men as may be sent as delegates. Each State or Territory Society, auxiliary to this, shall be entitled to send two delegates; and every local Association, (consisting of not less than fifty members,) whether auxiliary to the State or Territory Societies, or to this Society, shall be entitled to one delegate for every fifty members.

## ARTICLE IX.

This Society shall invite and encourage the formation of Women's Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Societies, in furtherance of its objects, which Societies may be represented according to Article VIII.

## ARTICLE X.

This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting of this Society, by a vote of two thirds of the delegates present, provided the amendments proposed have been submitted, in writing, to the Executive Committee three months previously.

## OFFICERS.

*President.*—ARTHUR TAPPAN.

*Vice Presidents.*—F. JULIUS LE MOYNE and WILLIAM JAY.

*Corresponding Secretary.*—LEWIS TAPPAN.

*Recording Secretary.*—JAMES McCUNE SMITH, M.D.

*Treasurer.*—WILLIAM E. WHITING.

*Executive Committee.*—Arthur Tappan, S. S. Jocelyn, William Jay, Lewis Tappan, William E. Whiting, Joshua Leavitt, S. E. Cornish, James Warner, Alexander Macdonald, Arnold Buffum, George Whipple, Thomas Ritter, J. W. C. Pennington, E. D. Culver, D. C. Lansing, Henry Belden, and A. N. Freeman.





