





DISCOURSE ON SLAVERY:

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY IN LITTLETON, N. H.,

FEBRUARY 22, 1839,

BEING THE

Anniversary of the Birth of Washington.

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BY W. D. WILSON.

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“He whom God moves to speak, expresses himself openly and freely, careless whether he be alone or has others on his side.”—*Martin Luther.*

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### PREFATORY NOTE.

I have not thought it best to encumber the pages of this discourse with references to authorities, either in the text or in marginal notes. The principal authorities, beside the few references in the page where the quotation occurs are, the Bible, Jahn's Archæology, Eschenburg's Manual of Classical Literature, Bancroft's United States, Kent's Commentaries, and Jay's Inquiry.

W. D. W.

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## DISCOURSE.

*Mr. President and Gentlemen :*

I accept with pleasure the invitation you have been pleased to give me, to come up here and speak to you at this time on the subject of human slavery. The birth-day of Washington brings with it, to every lover of freedom, and especially to every freeman of America, associations calculated to awaken in his bosom the noblest and holiest emotions. The recollections of a man great, almost beyond human weakness, a nation's father and idol, who had been their pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day, to guide them during their long and perilous struggle for liberty, and who, when that struggle was ended, planned and reared a form of government to which all eyes are turned in admiration, and on which the trembling hopes of the world yet hang, till they may see if it be not too like heaven to be long realized here on earth, seem to call us forth from the homely routine of every day thought and feeling, to set apart this hour to the entertainment of holier and nobler emotions. When we think of him whose life and energies were spent in the cause of human freedom, without a taint of selfishness, avarice or ambition, but who even refused the emoluments and power that the fond idolatry of the people he had served would gladly have given him, we seem to shut our eyes upon the avarice, corruption and oppression that is around us, and for a while persuade ourselves that it is not so. It cannot be that a nation, before whose eyes has been displayed so much greatness, such purity, such devotion to the cause of man, should still rob three millions of their fellow-men of their dearest rights. It cannot be that men made of the same clay, and in the same image with Washington, can be so unlike him as to hear calmly the chains of the slave clank upon their native soil, and in their own dwellings; the bread of a soil watered by the tears and blood of slaves cannot be sweet to their mouths; the shrieks and groans of the chain-galled African cannot be music to their ears. But, alas! it is so; it is no dream. Oh! that it were.

It does seem that the mention of human slavery in connection with the name of Washington would be enough to make any man an abolitionist. It does seem that the thought of three millions of slaves in our own country, occurring amidst the thoughts and feelings inspired by this day and occasion, would be enough to call every heart and hand to the assistance of the oppressed. It does seem that every apology for slavery, and every plea or excuse for its continuance, must shrink

with shame from that mind where the thought of Washington is. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial," or Washington with Slavery? No; that mind through which recollections of Washington are passing is too much purified by their sacred presence to harbor a thought of continuing slavery.

Let us then seize this auspicious moment to examine the subject of human slavery. Let us direct the thoughts suggested by the recurrence of an anniversary so dear to freedom to the cause of those who pine in bondage and servitude. It will be well to bring the subject of slavery into our minds at this time, and look at it as it lies beneath the blaze of glory shining there from Washington's life and character. It will be well for us to look at it from a point of view so elevated as that to which the recollections of Washington can carry us, and with minds purified and ennobled by their sanctifying influence.

I ought to say in the outset, that I do not come here as the organ of the Anti-Slavery Society. I have not stretched my views upon the Procrustes-bed of any society, or any man. I have scanned my language by no measure but that of my own thoughts and feelings. It is but justice to myself and to the abolitionists to say, that they are not responsible for any thing I may say, nor am I for any of their doctrines or measures. I expect, as a matter of course, that the views I am about to offer will coincide with theirs. But I have not sought such a coincidence. My only aim has been to be the mouth-piece of Truth and Justice. Truth is one; and all who seek it will agree if they seek aright. The dictates of justice are identical, and the same to all men who will hear with reverence; *therefore* it is that my views coincide with the views of the abolitionists, in the main; and I do not see how any man can hold up his head in this enlightened, liberty-loving country, and dissent from them. That man must be awfully depraved, and awfully unconscious of his depravity, who can in this age apologize for slavery. How much worse is the case of him who objects to having the subject thought of and discussed in public! What but unrighteousness shuns the light? Who are they that love darkness rather than light? and why?

There is a numerous and daily increasing party, who have professed to take the part of the slave; and while I can see nothing to dissent from in their principles, and while I believe their cause to be the cause of justice and truth, I dare not withhold my assistance. There may be something in their measures to disapprove of: there may be something uncharitable, undignified and unchristian, and unworthy so noble a cause. But they are men and not angels. They have a nobleness of principle at bottom that gives them unwavering confidence. It gives them a boldness that leads to those very measures that call forth disapprobation. It will make them irresistible and triumphant over all the opposition they may meet with. They plant themselves upon the eternal principles of Truth and Justice; and though they may sometimes fight with unlawful weapons, still the cause of humanity, which they have espoused, will give them a mouth and wisdom that all their ad-

versaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. They appeal to the hearts and consciences of men, and their words go to the hearts and consciences, and stir the depths of the soul ; while those who oppose them address the cupidity and fears of men, by portraying the evils which they *fear may* come from emancipation.

There is no case, perhaps, in which the superiority of the heart over calculation, of conscience and principle over cupidity and seeming expediency, is so manifest as in the case of the abolitionists. Let an apologist for slavery get up and portray all the profits of slavery, all the difficulties and hindrances in the way of emancipation, and the evils of it when it shall have come, in all the eloquence his subject can command, and it will be sufficient to do away the effect of all that he can say, to have a person whose heart swells with humanity and love, address the higher sentiments and appeal to the consciences of men in favor of the oppressed. He will arouse them from the slumber into which the apologist for slavery would rock their consciences, that so the lower nature may rule the man. He will raise them above all the fears, and cupidity, and love of ease, which the slave-holder would address in pleading for the continuance of slavery. All that is or can be said against emancipation is like fuel to the fire. It reveals more of those very evils that called forth the abolition enterprize. The motives which are urged for the continuance of slavery, and the considerations by which the appeals of the abolitionists are met, are like stone walls to stop the birds. An abolitionist will arise, and by appealing to the higher nature, he will raise them at once above all the considerations of avarice. He is able, by the eloquence with which his subject inspires him, to soar with them above all that the opponent of freedom can present, and carry them over all the mountain difficulties that make the foot path to the desired land of liberty impassable. It is only when one is tired, or lazy, or drunk, that he hits his foot against the inequalities of the road and falls ; but let there come over his heart some all-engrossing enterprize, and he moves on unimpeded by those very banks against which he was just before stumbling. Let a man be animated by some ennobling sentiment, and the difficulties in the way of attaining his object disappear, or even become advantages. It is the slothful man only, or the self-interested, that sees a lion in the way. The cause of humanity does thus engross and animate. It is the glory and the recommendation of the abolition principles that they can and do raise men above the stumbling stones in the way of the stupid and thoughtless ; that they can and do raise men above avarice, conservatism and an indolent fear of consequences. I know that this fact is regarded by many as a proof of fanaticism in the abolitionists. I do not know what men mean to insinuate by calling the abolitionists fanatics ; I simply know that it is the nature of truth and justice to make what the sober, calculating, ease-loving votaries of 'Expediency' call fanatics, especially if they are opposed. The river that runs quietly and noiselessly when undisturbed, becomes the thundering cataract only when it is provoked by the rocks and dams that obstruct its course.

This state of the case and these considerations prove to him who

can read the signs of the times, and discern what the spirit meaneth, two most important things in regard to the subject :

1. It proves the righteousness of the cause of the abolitionists ; inasmuch as it succeeds by appealing to the conscience and the higher sentiments, while those who oppose it appeal to something much lower, as conservatism, avarice, or a selfish fear of consequences.

2. It proves also that it must and will succeed. Those who oppose it succeed only so long as they can belittle people, chill them and keep them in the dark. But the abolitionists ennobled and warmed men, by calling out the magnanimous sentiments of love and justice. They spread abroad a light that reveals the dark recesses of cruelty, crime and pollution. They make men feel that there is something more important than money, personal gratification, or safety even, when bought at the cost of innocence and righteousness.

With these prefatory remarks upon the nature and prospects of the abolition enterprise, I enter upon the great subject.

I. When we consider what man is, and his relation to the universe in which he lives, it does not seem wonderful that slavery should have originated early, and have extended to all countries. There is, however, one exception, according to Bancroft, to the universal prevalence of human slavery. Slavery and the slave trade have not been known in Australasia. Slavery grew out of man's indisposition to work.

Here is man, a being that must be clothed and fed. But the earth will not bring forth its products spontaneously. Man must toil and cultivate it before it will satisfy all of his demands. But man is indisposed to labor, especially in southern latitudes, where the human race began its career. Those who had cunning enough to persuade their neighbors to work for them, and let them be idle, would do so. When men congregated into tribes it was found necessary to have some one for a leader and lawgiver, or judge, as he was usually called. He and a few of his friends, whom he would naturally associate with him in his authority and privileges, would naturally and almost necessarily be exempted from all the drudgery of manual labor. His successors would feel disposed to enjoy and increase, if they could, the privileges and immunities of their ancestors. Feelings of equality have given place to those of aristocracy. Gradually the laborers or servants come to feel almost as a part of the master's property. Foreign danger helped to tighten the bonds that bound the servant to his master. The servant would feel that he owed his protection to his master, and therefore he must be obedient and faithful. Here is the patriarchal institution.

But the servants did not like to work any better than the masters. Enmity would naturally arise between the different tribes, as they came in contact with one another. The tribes would go to war with one another. They would naturally feel that they had as good right to kill their fellow men who injured them as they had to kill wild beasts of which they knew and cared about as much as they did of the men of another tribe. If, then, it was right to kill them, they would naturally suppose that if they saved them alive they were the rightful property of their captors. The captor might put him to do his work and let



him enjoy his ease, or he might sell him or do what he pleased. The captive was his property.

It cannot be doubted that powerful tribes would encourage war, and perhaps enter into it expressly for the sake of making slaves, either for their own use or as an article of merchandize, after they had begun to have commercial relations with one another. Here is the origin of slavery, properly so called.

By slavery I mean involuntary servitude. Slavery does not consist in laboring without pay, or in being confined and subjected to another's will merely. Neither does it consist in the cruelties of the situation. But it consists in servitude to which one is subjected without consent or crime; which is consent when the known penalty is imprisonment and servitude. Hence there may be many whose condition is as bad as slavery who are yet no slaves. It will be well to keep this definition of slavery in view.

Let us now take a short historical survey of slavery, as it existed in the principal nations of antiquity. We must never lose sight of the fact that the slaves of ancient times were the captives taken in war. A nation made slaves of its equals and sometimes superiors. Slavery was the event of what was considered honorable and lawful war. There was no man-stealing, no kidnapping one race under the pretence that they were made inferiors for the purpose of being slaves to their superior. This doctrine is of comparatively modern invention.

Among the Hebrews, Moses was obliged to permit many things that were not so from the beginning, in consequence of the hardness of their hearts, and which he no doubt disapproved of. The Jews were a stiff-necked people, and by no means plastic and submissive in the hands of their legislator. He found it more than he could do to secure obedience to a system of religion and a form of government so much better than that of any people around them, without aiming at perfection. He must suffer them in many things, in consequence of the hardness of their hearts.

There were two kinds of servants among the Hebrews.

1. The first class of servants, or slaves, (for the same word is used in the Hebrew language for both, as they stand in our Bible,) were Hebrews who had by some means or other reduced themselves to bondage. A Hebrew might fall into slavery in various ways: (a) If reduced to extreme poverty he might sell himself: (b) A father might sell his children for slaves: (c) Insolvent debtors might be delivered to their creditors as slaves: (d) Thieves who were not able to make the required restitution for their thefts, were sold into slavery.

It is extremely difficult to ascertain in many cases whether a law was intended for Hebrew servants, or for those who were captives. There was, however, this one distinction. At the end of seven years the Hebrew servants might go free. If, however, one chose to remain with his master, he might declare this choice in the presence of the judges, and the master would bore a hole through his ears, and he must remain with him forever. But this *forever* was probably only until the year of jubilee, which might not be more than one year, and could not be more than forty-three.

2. The second class of servants, or slaves, were those who had been taken in war. Their condition was probably worse than that of the former class. These, and their children after them, were slaves until death. The master was obliged to circumcise them and teach them his religion. If the master injured the slave in eye or tooth, or any member whatsoever, the servant, in consequence of such injury, was entitled to his freedom. Any slave who had run away from another nation and sought refuge among them, was not to be given up, but must be treated kindly.

Says Stevens, (Travels in Egypt, Arabia Petrea and the Holy Land, vol. 1, p. 77 :) "In the east slavery exists now precisely as it did in the days of the patriarchs. The slave is received into the family of a Turk in a relation more confidential and respectable than that of an ordinary domestic, and when liberated, which very often happens, stands upon the same footing with a freeman. The curse does not rest upon him forever; he may sit at the same board, dip his hand in the same dish, and if there are no other impediments, may marry his master's daughter."

Such was the slavery that Moses was obliged to permit to the Hebrews. How different from the slavery on our southern plantations! The slave there has no protection that the horse and ox have not, except when a murder can be proved by white men's testimony. No black man can be heard, and the blacks are usually the only witnesses of the cruelty. If the slave escape from bondage in one state, the citizens among whom he has sought refuge have bound themselves to return him if he be claimed by his master. But among the Jews the law was, "Thou shalt *not* deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell among thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.) The Jewish servant whose master had maimed him could receive his freedom for his wrong. But here he must drag out a miserable life, unless the master, more from considerations of profit than of mercy, end his life at once. The slave can get no redress, no comfort. The slave of the Turk, the follower of Mahomet 'the Impostor,' (?) can sit at the same board, dip his hand in the same dish with his master—"he can marry his master's daughter," and become as *son* instead of a *servant*, but the slaves of the Americans, the citizens of this christian democratic republic, "shall be deemed, held, taken, reputed and adjudged, in law, to be chattels personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, executors, administrators and assigns, to *all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever.*" (S. Carolina Laws.) "He can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to his master." (Louisiana Laws.) The Jewish slave must be taught the Jewish religion; but the slaves in this christian country are, in the language of the slaveholders themselves, 'a nation of heathen in our very midst, without God and without hope in the world,' and this too in consequence of the laws of the land.

Among the Greeks the character of slavery became still worse. Their

slaves were prisoners of war. They were seldom allowed to marry, so that very few were born into slavery. They carried on the whole business of the Athenians. They were their merchants and mechanics as well as cultivators of the soil. Many were skilful in the fine arts of sculpture and painting, and even well versed in letters. Some of the greatest names that have come down to us are the names of slaves, or freedmen, such as Epictetus and Æsop. Slaves often obtained their freedom. The courts were open to them. They could bring actions against their masters, and were allowed to testify against them in their courts. When they were oppressed, they could always flee to the Temple of Theseus, where they were free from the master's cruelty and tyranny. Have the slaves on our American plantations such privileges as these? Can they sue their masters at law? and testify in court against them? Are they ever allowed to be skilled in letters and the arts? Is there any refuge from the master's fury? No; none of these things in *christian* America. Yet the slave of the heathen Athens had them all.

In Rome, the condition of the slaves was similar to that at Athens. Wherever the army went, there they made slaves. Slave merchants were always found attached to the army.

"Slaves in Rome occupied every conceivable station, from the delegate superintending the rich man's villa, to the meanest office of menial labor or obsequious vice; from the foster-mother to the rich man's child, to the lowest degradation to which woman can be reduced. The public slaves handled the oar in the galleys, or labored on the public works. Some were lictors, some were jailors. Executioners were slaves. Slaves were watchmen, watermen, scavengers. Slaves regulated the rich palace in the city; they performed all the drudgery of the farm. They were frequently taught to read and write, and the arts. Virgil made one of his a poet. Horace was the son of a slave. The physician and the surgeon were often slaves—so too the preceptor and the pedagogue: the reader and the stage player: the clerk and the amanuensis: the architect and the smith. The armigeri, or esquires, were slaves. You cannot name an occupation connected with agriculture, manufactures, or public amusement, that was not the patrimony of slaves. Slaves engaged in commerce; slaves were wholesale merchants; the slaves were retailers. Slaves shaved notes, and the managers of banks were slaves."

All of this was a natural consequence of their system. They took their equals, and often superiors, in war. They did not go and steal a helpless race and degrade them even below what they were by nature, and then consider that very degradation which they themselves had made as a proof that they were intended for slaves. It was the common understanding among nations, that if they went to war they exposed all of their men to slavery who might happen to be taken prisoners. The whole army of Valerian were taken prisoners by Sapor, king of Persia. They did not complain of this as unjust, for it was according to the laws of war. It was doing to them what they would have done to their enemies, had fortune been in their favor.

While slavery thus spread over all of the east, we find nothing like modern negro slavery. We find no case where the slave laws and treatment were so hard as in our southern states. The slaves were the result of conquest rather than avarice; and when they had fallen into the master's hands, they received milder treatment, and had more means of enjoyment, and had far greater hopes of liberty, than in our own country. This kind of slavery, which is certainly less unrighteous, less shocking to humanity, than African slavery, did not receive the approval of conscientious heathen, even. Aristotle opposed it as unjust. Justinian, while he acknowledged it agreeable to the laws and the practices of nations, still condemned it as unjust and inhuman. The whole sect of the Essenes, as they were called, in Asia, and Therapeutæ, as they were called in Greece and Egypt, a very numerous sect, regarded slavery as a great injustice and sin.

II. The appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, the authorized teacher of the world, was the greatest event in the world's history. He introduced a religion destined to become universal. We profess to be believers in that religion. We profess to look to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith, and to receive his doctrines as our guide and rule of conduct. This all christians do. It is, therefore, important to examine the position that Jesus and the christian religion assumed towards slavery. I admit that there is no passage condemning slavery, in express terms. I admit that Paul exhorted servants, or slaves, to be obedient to their masters. But then it is a historical fact, that slaves were equal to their masters so far as the blessings and privileges of christian institutions were concerned, in the early ages of christianity.

1. In the first place, Christ never claimed to give a system of positive laws. He did not condemn such a law, or institution, as bad in itself. He condemned the principle upon which it is founded. He did not seek to make men better, by outward constraint, but by changing the inner man. He did not seek to bind and compel men's hands, but to give them willing hearts. He dealt with principles, and not directly with positive institutions, which are the outward manifestation of principles. We should not, therefore, expect any express prohibition of slavery. Christ did not wish to forbid it, until he had brought men to see the wickedness and injustice of it. This he sought to do, by giving them such principles and views of their fellow men as to make them regard slavery as the most daring outrage against the laws of God that man could commit.

2. Christianity makes no distinction between the races of men. 'God hath made of one blood,' that is to say, equal, 'all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.' Here the fundamental principle of negro slavery is directly contradicted by christianity. The Africans are not, as the slaveholder says, a race, inferior to ours, and made so to be slaves.

3. The fundamental principle of Christianity is declared to be, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and mind, and strength, and *thy neighbor as thyself*." Now, in the eye of the gospel, every one is your neighbor who is within the reach of your benevolence. Is slavery a manifestation of this brotherly love?

4. "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

Can the slave-holder pretend that he does this to his slave? If so, he will be willing to give the only convincing proof of his sincerity, by changing condition with his slaves for a while. If there must be slaves, as he pretends, let him alternate with the black man; one be slave one year, and the other the next. I'll engage that the black man will consent.

Here, then, is as much opposition to slavery, as there could, from the nature of the case, be. But christianity will not have done its perfect work, in this respect, when slavery is abolished. There are other violations of this principle of love, justice and equality, that must melt away. Abolition will not have done its work till it hath destroyed the distinction between the kitchen and the parlor. The day is not far distant when this last evil will be regarded as quite as unjustifiable and as inconsistent with christianity as slavery now is. God speed the happy day.

After Constantine, when christianity became the religion of the empire, christian captives were not made slaves. The slave-market must be supplied from the captives of heathen nations and tribes.

The northern tribes had practiced the same policy, of making slaves of their captives, long before they were known to the Roman conquerors, as Greece and Rome had done.

The clergy, during the period from this time to the Reformation, never ceased to inveigh against the evils and hardships of slavery, and to labor for its abolition. We find them urging, stoutly, that no master should have power to punish or correct his slave, without regular process in the courts of justice. Pope Alexander III. declared that "Nature having made no slaves, all men have an equal right to liberty." The clergy broke open the slave-markets of Bristol, Hamburgh, Lyons and Rome, to set the slaves free. Leo X. declared that "not the christian religion only, but nature herself, cries out against slavery," and Paul III. imprecated curses, in two separate briefs, on those who should enslave Indians, or any other class of men.

After christianity was fairly established in its connection with the state, then was presented another feature of slavery. The Christians seemed to feel, that in consequence of the peculiar relation which they supposed they sustained to God, they had a right to enslave all who were not believers in Christ. In the wars in which the Christians were engaged with the Mahometans especially, the Christians seemed to have no doubt that it was right to make the followers of the Impostor, as they called him, slaves. They pretty generally regarded it as a duty to carry on war against the unbelievers. In the wars of Ferdinand and Isabella, against the Moors of Grenada, it was considered a matter of public and religious rejoicing when they had succeeded in killing, and especially in making slaves, of the followers of Mahomet.

III. We have now arrived at a new and most important era in the history of slavery. Hence, afterward, the character of slavery among European nations, and their descendants, is materially and essentially

different from what it was before. I wish to call your attention particularly to this fact, as it deserves the most serious consideration, and is most significant, in meaning, to the friend of the slave. We have arrived at the origin of negro slavery; and that species of slavery rests upon a foundation entirely different from that of any other species.

Before this time, slaves were taken in war. They were a part of the lawful conquest. After this time, they were kidnapped in time of peace. Before this time, nations took their equals in fair and lawful combat, on the battle field. Their motive was not so much avarice as glory. Slaves were the trophies of war. A man kept them, not so much for the sake of enriching himself, as for insignia of his nobility and consequence. But after this period the case was very different. The innocent and helpless natives of Africa were hunted and kidnapped, as one hunts the deer of the mountain. They were carried to serve the avarice of masters too lazy to work for themselves. It now became man-stealing. The motive that actuated those who enslaved their fellow-men now became very much lower than it had been before. It was that base, unprincipled avarice, that sacrifices every thing to self. They engaged in reducing men to slavery for the sake of the profits of slavery. They bought and sold human flesh for gain. A motive so grovelling as this had not actuated the enslavers of the human race before. The difference between any of the kinds of slavery that existed before, and negro slavery, is the same as the difference between war and secret murder, in times of peace; it is the same as that between a duel, where the parties consent to risk their lives in equal combat, and midnight robbery, where the foot-pad murders the traveller for his money; it is the same as the difference between winning one's money at the gaming table, and stealing it in some secret and well laid plan of thievery.

It was now held that Africans were an inferior race, made so by their Creator, for the purpose of being slaves to us, their superiors.

We must expect that after this the character of slavery will be different, and much worse than before. Man, moved by avarice, in what he has persuaded himself is right, or rather has determined to do, whether right or wrong, is deaf to the calls of mercy and humanity. He will hardly hesitate before any extreme of suffering and cruelty. The thorny recollections of past injustice and wrong will embitter his hate for his victim, and, drunkard-like, he will drown the past in the greater cruelties of the present. O, what an epoch in the world's history was this! One portion of the great family of man, the most civilized, the most enlightened, the most highly favored of God, their common Father, the followers of his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, the professors of the only true religion, to whose care God had committed the reformation and salvation of the world, deliberately and coolly doomed their unfortunate brethren, for whose benefit they had been entrusted with so many blessings by their heavenly Father, to slavery; to drag out a miserable life, in toil, and groans, and all the unmitigated horrors of bondage. What mercy can we hope for the poor, defenceless African, now? Who shall deliver him from the cruelties of a master more dreadful than the wild beasts of his native forest? for into such hands he must sometimes fall. O ye thunders of Almighty God, why do ye sleep! Ye rocks, hills and mountains, why do ye stand in silence and see the

chains fastened upon the innocent, defenceless sons of God, your Creator and theirs! Ye surrounding deserts, why do ye not overwhelm the enslaving demons with your drifting sands! Old Ocean, how can you keep quiet! why not open and let down the slavers as they sail over your tranquil bosom! Man will not defend his brother man, and why, ye elements, why will not you? O Africa! why did not you sink at once to a watery grave, where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling?

This change in the character of slavery is enough to convince me that it has arrived at its last stage. The darkest hour is the last before the day dawns. The men into whose hands slavery has now fallen, with their views and motives, will carry it to such extremes as to call forth an opposition that will exterminate the evil. It is a doctrine of reason, and confirmed by the experience of all history, that when any institution or practice, which is not founded on the principles of truth and justice, has fallen into the hands of low, avaricious men, they always carry it so far as to shock and rouse the slumbering moral sentiment of the more virtuous and well-principled, till they commence an opposition to the evil which ends in its extinction.

I will give but two illustrations out of the hundreds that history affords. The sale of indulgences by the Pope of Rome, which was first introduced as a mere matter of convenience, was at last seized upon by the cupidity of Leo X. as a means of raising money to defray the expense of the extensive building in which he was engaged. His avaricious motives carried the evil so far, as to call forth Luther and the Reformation. The only other case I shall cite is that of England in taxing the Colonies. She had practiced upon the unjust principle of taxation without representation, until her avarice carried it so far as to arouse the inhabitants of the Colonies, as one man, to throw off the yoke which they had long worn, but had now become more heavy and galling.

This is now most obviously the case with slavery. It has fallen into the hands of avaricious men. The tendency of public opinion is towards liberty and equality, true democracy. Here slavery stands in this age, in the sunny days of liberty, intelligence and religion; having sailed down the current of time, like some ice-berg that has floated from the frozen regions of its northern home, into the tropics, where every thing around is opposed to it, and it to every thing. Those who are interested in retaining it still longer, draw tighter and tighter the bands of slavery, lest its diminished form slip out; not considering that the bands are so tight already as to be bursting and falling off.

The tribes of Africa have been accustomed to make slaves of the captives taken in war, from the earliest times of which we have any information. Slavery existed among the tribes of Africa, just as it had done among the tribes of Europe. Equals enslaved equals. But African slaves were not introduced into Europe until A. D. 1440.

Soon after the Portuguese conquests in the Barbary states, the love of gain and hatred for the infidels induced the Portuguese to visit western Africa. They sailed so far south as Cape Blanco. Antony Gonzalez, the leader of the expedition, took some of the natives and brought them home. They were not, however, treated as slaves, but rather as strangers, who were required to give information of their native country. They

were finally carried back, and their fellow-countrymen gave the Portuguese gold and African slaves in exchange. This was the first introduction of negro slavery into Europe; "and mercantile cupidity," says Bancroft, "immediately observed that negroes might become an object of lucrative commerce. New ships were despatched without delay." Spain also engaged in the traffic, and even claimed the honor of having first introduced it.

In 1492, Columbus discovered America, and carried back with him to Spain five hundred native Indians, for slaves. But these Indians were liberated by the humanity of Isabella. The same cupidity, however, that had so eagerly engaged in the African slave-trade, immediately commenced to take the natives of America for its victims. But they were not good slaves; they were too shy to be easily caught, so the project was finally abandoned. But the discovery of the new world opened an extensive slave-market. Thither the slavers directed their course, and by this means Europe has been saved being overrun by a slave population, as we are. The different nations engaged in the profitable traffic. They seemed to do remorselessly. Nations have no conscience.

The cultivation of sugar was now successfully begun in Hispaniola. It was found that one negro could do as much work as four Indians, and the mild and tender-hearted Las Casas returned from Hispaniola to plead with the Spanish court to relieve the Indians; and since he saw that they *would have some slaves*, he proposed that the more hardy Africans, who he had seen were better able to bear the burden, should be substituted for the Indians. This was in 1517, and the emperor, Charles V. granted a patent to certain persons to supply the Spanish islands with slaves. But even now there were some who opposed the slave-trade as unjust and iniquitous. Among them was Soto, the confessor of Charles V. Cardinal Ximines, whatever he might have thought of the justice of slavery, opposed the introducing of negroes into the Spanish islands, as impolitic. His predictions proved true. Hayti, the first spot to receive African slaves, was the first spot of successful resistance to the whites; and the first to establish a government of free blacks in the western world.

In 1562, Sir John Hawkins fraudulently carried a cargo of slaves to Hispaniola. This was the first of Englishmen's engaging in the traffic. The profits of such commerce attracted the attention of Queen Elizabeth. The English, ever bent upon gain, encouraged the business.

In 1645, Thomas Keyser and James Smith, the latter a member of the church in Boston, sent out a ship to Guinea, 'to trade for negroes.' This, I believe, was the first instance of any of the inhabitants of the Colonies engaging in this nefarious traffic. But Massachusetts could not approve of such injustice. The cry was raised against Keyser and Smith, as malefactors and murderers. After advice with the elders, the representatives ordered the negroes to be restored to their native country at the public charge.

In Virginia, there had from the first existed a species of servitude, brought over from England. The servant stood to his master in the relation of a debtor, bound to discharge the costs of his emigration, by the employment of his powers for the benefit of the creditor. This soon gave rise to oppression and cruelty. Persons in England decoyed the



unwary into coming over here, and then sold them for four, five and six times the cost of emigration. The condition of these apprenticed servants was limited to a certain time, and the laws favored their early enfranchisement.

In August, 1620, a Dutch man-of-war entered James river, and landed twenty negroes. This is the epoch of the introduction of African slavery among the English Colonies. The increase was at first slow. But the increasing demand for laborers, and the superiority in point of profit of the negro slaves over any other kind of laborers, tended to increase the number of slaves.

From that period negro slavery extended itself to nearly or quite all of the states. Massachusetts was the first to abolish it. That was the only state, in 1788, when the constitution was adopted, whose laws did not tolerate slavery. The northern states have, however, gradually abolished it, so that now it does not exist north of Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky. It was declared, by an ordinance of congress, on the 13th of July, 1787, recommended by Thomas Jefferson, that "there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the territory north of the Ohio river, after that time, except as a punishment for crimes."

Negro slavery still exists in this republic in the District of Columbia, all the southern states and territories; and to that we will direct our attention.

I now proceed to speak of the political relation between slavery and our country; and consider the position that the constitution assumed towards that institution.

When the convention assembled at Philadelphia, in May, 1787, the laws of every state except Massachusetts tolerated slavery. In this state of things it could not well be that the constitution proposed by such an assembly should not recognize slavery in some form or another. Yet nothing is clearer than that the heroes and patriots who had just been so much engaged in the struggle for their own liberties, expected that negro slavery would soon cease, and be out-rooted from our republic. During this struggle they had "remembered those in bonds as bound with them." They could not well raise their hands and hearts to pray God to assist them, without resolving, as soon as they should have succeeded in their cause, to commence a course of measures that should result in freedom for every man in the country, whether black or white. Persecuted sects always preach toleration; and so the oppressed preach universal freedom.

Accordingly the delegates, in framing the constitution which they hoped and expected would be perpetual, and remain as the bond of union between the different states long after slavery should be abolished, carefully avoided using the word "*slave*," as though they would blot out every thing that could tell to future generations that a nation of freemen, who had declared that "all men are born free and equal," and who had "pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor" to maintain that doctrine, had still continued to contradict that doctrine by their most solemn declarations, and still held their fellow-men in a bondage far more galling and degrading than that which they had shed so much blood to free themselves from. The great men of that day had been roused, by the exciting scenes in which they had been engaged, above that stupidity,

that heartless calculation, that indifference to all but self, that could think of holding any one in slavery, on any consideration, whatever might be his color, or however degraded he might be. We seem to be quite ignorant how much the great men of that time opposed slavery. It is a fact which we seem to overlook, that all the great men of that time were abolitionists. They all held the same, or nearly the same, views of slavery that modern abolitionists do.

What position then did the constitution proposed by such men assume towards slavery? I have already said that the word 'slave,' or 'slavery,' does not occur in that instrument. I now say, that there is not a word there that would not have an appropriate meaning, if there had been no slaves in the land. There are but three passages that have any direct bearing upon slavery; and no one who did not know that there were slaves in the country when the constitution was adopted, would ever infer from the instrument itself that there were any. This studious omission of the word 'slave,' and of any *exclusive* reference to the slaves, is to my mind most significant of the views and expectations of the framers of the constitution.

The first passage that can have any reference to slaves, is in art. 1, sec. 2, clause 3d: where it is said, that representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned to the number of the inhabitants of the states, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding the Indians, "*three fifths of all other persons.*" These six words, 'three fifths of all other persons,' refer doubtless to the slaves. But if one did not know that we had slaves, from another source, he could not infer from this language that we had any.

The next clause is in art. 1, sec. 9, first clause: where it is declared that congress shall not have the power to prohibit the importation of "such persons as the states now think proper to admit," before 1808.

The next reference to slaves is in art. 4, sec. 2, third clause: which provides for the sending back "all persons held to service or labor" in one state who may have escaped into another.

I cannot forbear remarking again upon the delicacy with which the framers of the constitution treated the subject of slavery. Those noble men could not speak the word 'slave' without a blush at the thought of their inconsistency, so long as slavery continued in our country. They very delicately avoided offending the freemen of our country, by using the word 'slave,' as though there were any *slaves* in this land of liberty, in the bond of union between the states.

They had not the shame-faced impudence to ask the people to consign one part of their inhabitants to hopeless slavery, by that very instrument by which they secured their own freedom and the protection of the laws. They wished to do no such thing. Yet it is said that the constitution guarantees the perpetuation of slavery,—that the men who fought, and bled, and prayed to God for their own freedom, consigned other men to slavery. Had such a proposition been made to the veterans of '76 they would have remonstrated with a vehemence that would have made our rock-ribbed mountains ring with their reverberations.

Yet the constitution did recognize slavery. This is an astonishing fact, and calls for an explanation. I offer the following:

When the convention met at Philadelphia, to frame a constitution, the necessity of something of the kind, by which the federal government could be more consolidated and efficient than it was under the old confederacy, was most pressing. Slavery existed, and the south felt that they could not emancipate all of their slaves immediately. Therefore it was necessary, if they would have any constitution, to adopt one that should tolerate slavery, for a while at least. The patriots of that age thought that by so modifying the constitution as to tolerate slavery, they should by no means perpetuate it, or retard its entire abolition, while they should secure the adoption of a federal constitution. A constitution that required immediate emancipation would not be received, and they could do nothing, by recommending such an one, to hasten the abolition of slavery. Under these circumstances they did the best they could, as they thought, and recommended the constitution that was adopted, and under which we live.

But there is evidence sufficient to prove to my mind that there was an implied promise on the part of the southern states, that, if we would adopt a constitution tolerating slavery, they would immediately take measures which should result in the emancipation of every slave, "at a period not remote." I give an outline of the testimony. I have already referred to the general expectation among the framers of the constitution, and all the distinguished men of that day, that the happy event would soon come. I quote from the discussions in the conventions of the different states, held about that time, and partly for the purpose of discussing and adopting the constitution that had been recommended to them.

Mr. Iredell, of N. Carolina, afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. said, "*When the entire abolition of slavery takes place, it will be an event pleasing to every generous mind and every friend of human nature.*" Here it is clearly shown that he expected that slavery would be entirely abolished. Judge Wilson, of Pennsylvania, one of the framers of the constitution, afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. said, that he "considered the clause relating to the slave trade as laying the foundation for banishing slavery out of this country. Yet the lapse of a few years and congress will have the power to exterminate slavery within our borders."

Mr. Tyler, of Virginia, when opposing that clause which forbids congress to prohibit the foreign slave trade before 1808, said, "My earnest desire is that it shall be handed down to posterity that I opposed this wicked clause." Mr. Johnson said, "The principle of emancipation has begun since the revolution. Let us do what we will, it will come round." Judge Daves, of Mass. said, "Slavery has received a mortal wound." General Heath said, "Slavery was confined to the states now existing; it could not be extended. By their ordinance congress has declared that the new states should be republican states and hold no slaves."

These are quotations from the discussions in the conventions of the states, and show clearly what was the expectation. We have seen that this expectation was not confined to the northern states. It prevailed at the south. I give one more quotation still more explicit. In

the Virginia convention of 1787, Mr. Mason, author of the Virginia constitution, said, "The augmentation of the slaves weakens the states, and such a trade is diabolical in itself and disgraceful to mankind. *As much as I value a union of all the states, I would not admit the southern states*" (S. Carolina and Georgia) "into the union unless they agree to a discontinuance of this disgraceful trade;" and 'a discontinuance of this disgraceful trade' was regarded as a 'mortal wound to slavery,' the beginning of a course of measures to result in the "banishing slavery out of this country."

If, then, the south encouraged such an expectation for the purpose of securing the adoption of the constitution as it now is, does it not amount to an implied promise that they would take measures to bring about the expected emancipation? Yet they have done directly the contrary to this. Now they have the impudence to come forward and say, that it is a breach of faith to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and the Territories. It is infringing upon their rights for us to talk about emancipation. We have no right to interfere. Shall we be duped by such things?

But let us look a little more minutely at the relation which the constitution sustains to the slave. I profess no great skill in the legal science, but I will undertake to prove before any impartial court, that the slave laws in the southern states are unconstitutional, and that the slave has by the constitution a right to his freedom. "In the language of the supreme court, 'There are acts which the general or state legislatures cannot do, without exceeding their authorities. There are certain vital principles in our free republican government which will determine and *over-rule* an apparent and flagrant abuse of legislative power; as, to *authorize manifest injustice* by positive law, to *take away that security for personal liberty* or private property for the protection whereof the government was established. An act of the legislature contrary to the great first principles of the social compact cannot be considered a rightful exercise of legislative authority.'" *Ely Moore's speech in the House of Representatives, Feb. 4, 1839.*

Here, I ask, are not the supreme court obliged, by this decision of theirs, to set aside, as unconstitutional, any law which upholds human slavery? or is human slavery no 'manifest injustice?' and does it not take away the 'security for personal liberty?' According to this decision, is not any law that acknowledges, or is founded upon the right of property in human beings, unconstitutional?

It is declared in the preamble to the constitution, that it was adopted "to establish justice," "to ensure domestic tranquility," "to promote the general welfare," "and to secure the blessings of liberty." But every law which has been enacted against the slave has done directly contrary to this. The laws of the southern states have made the condition of the slave a great deal worse, while they have done nothing to benefit his condition since this declaration.

Instead of 'establishing justice,' the slave laws have established injustice and oppression. Instead of 'ensuring domestic tranquility,' they have increased ten fold the fear of servile insurrection, and the

peril of living in the slave holding states. Instead of 'promoting the general welfare,' they have ground the black man into the dust, and subjected him to merciless cruelty. How has the constitution secured the blessings of liberty to one fifth of the people, who are now in chains? How has it secured the right of petition, and the freedom of discussion? How does it secure the blessings of liberty to any one who goes to the south, believing slavery to be a sin? Let those who have suffered by the Lynch law answer.

But if the constitution recognizes slaves at all, it recognizes them as *persons*, as men. Yes; if the constitution recognizes slaves at all, then it recognizes them as persons, and stands upon the ground, that all men or persons are born free and equal, and that they have certain inherent rights, which no legislation can deprive them of, such as life, liberty and property. If, then, the constitution recognizes slaves as persons, it does thereby secure to them all the rights of persons,—among which are a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and every law that makes the case of the slave worse than that of a town pauper, or an apprentice bound out by indenture, is unconstitutional.

If, on the other hand, the constitution does not recognize the slavery of a portion of the inhabitants of the country, then by the constitution and by natural right, they may demand their freedom, and we must grant it.

The constitution recognizes slaves as persons, but the southern slave laws deny that the slave is a person, and make him a thing, a chattel personal, in direct contradiction of the words of the constitution. Slavery, as it exists now, is a different thing from what it was in 1788. The southern people have changed its character, and thereby forfeited all the right to its protection, which they could once have claimed under the constitution. If, then, the constitution protected the slavery of 1788, it certainly does not that of 1838.

But there is a stronger argument yet. The Constitution, art. 1, sect. 9, clause 2, says, "The privilege of the writ habeas corpus shall not be suspended unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it." The constitution does not define what is the habeas corpus, and in all such cases the rule is to adopt the definition of the English common law. I give it as stated by Chancellor Kent, one of the best authorities upon the subject. Let us then look at the case and see what is the writ habeas corpus. "Every restraint upon a man's liberty is, in the eye of the law, imprisonment." *Kent*, vol. 2, p. 26. Therefore the slave, in the eye of the law, is held in imprisonment by his master. "All persons"—and the constitution calls slaves persons—"restrained of their liberty under *any pretence whatever* are entitled to prosecute the writ' habeas corpus, "unless they be detained, (1) by process from any court, or judge of the United States, having exclusive jurisdiction in the case; (2) or by final judgment, or decree, or execution thereon, of any competent tribunal of civil or criminal jurisdiction, other than in the case of a commitment for an alleged contempt." *Kent*, vol. 2, p. 29. Here, then, it is

declared by the constitution, that any person, black or white, who is restrained of his liberty, unless he be kept in prison awaiting a trial, or kept for the execution of the sentence of the court, has a right to the privilege of the habeas corpus writ. Hence any person who is a friend to the slave may apply to any court, having authority to issue this writ, and the court must issue it against the slave-holder, to come into court and show by what right he holds his slave. The slave-holder will say he holds him by the law of the state in which he lives. It will then be shown to the court that these very slave laws are a suspension of the privilege of the habeas corpus writ, which the constitution says shall not be suspended. A person who has sued out the writ habeas corpus "is to be remanded to imprisonment if he was detained; (1) by process of any court of the United States having exclusive jurisdiction; (2) by virtue of a final decree, or judgment, or process thereon; (3) or for contempt specially and plainly charged;" otherwise he is to be set free. The slave is not detained by any court awaiting his trial; he is not held for the execution of any sentence of a competent court of civil or criminal jurisdiction; nor for any contempt specially and plainly charged; therefore, by the privilege of the habeas corpus, he must be set free. It will be shown, further, that in the English courts, slaves can and actually have claimed the privilege of the habeas corpus writ, and it has been decided that they are entitled to their freedom by the privilege of that writ. Here, then, the American constitution has established a law by which slaves have actually claimed and received their liberty in England. It is not very probable, however, that any American court would grant the writ to the slave, or decide in his favor, especially in a slave-holding district.

I admit that I do not suppose that the framers of the constitution intended to secure the privilege of the habeas corpus to the slaves. The fact is, they did not think of making any constitutional provision for them in any way. It did not occur to them that any could be needed. There was such a universal expectation that the moral sentiment would induce all men to do what they could to hasten the emancipation of the slaves, that no one entertained a doubt that it would soon come. The framers of the constitution therefore avoided, so far as possible, any reference to the foul stain upon the nation's character,—and so deeply did they feel the evil of slavery themselves, that they did not suppose any provision in the constitution could be necessary to *bind* men, much less to give them *leave* to secure the blessings of liberty to all. So, when we speak of congress having the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and the Territories, and to prohibit the internal slave trade, we do not suppose that the framers of the constitution thought, or intended to give congress the special power to do these things. They did not give that power *intentionally*, for the best of reasons. They supposed that slavery would be abolished by other means, so that there never could be an occasion for the exercise of such a power, if it were given.

But their expectation has failed. Slavery is not abolished. Shall not congress have every power and the slave every privilege, that the

most liberal construction of the language of the constitution will allow? I know that it is a rule of interpretation, in law, that the intention of the law maker shall be met, and that be law, whatever language he may have used to express that intention. But it is also a rule of interpretation, and paramount to all others, that the language of the law maker shall be so construed as to make the law as consistent with right and justice as possible. By this rule the constitution must be so interpreted as to allow the slave the privilege of the habeas corpus writ.

Farther, all traffic in human beings appears unconstitutional when considered from another point of view. Not merely the internal slave-trade, but any bargain by which a man is sold, is unconstitutional. The internal slave-trade, and every bargain by which man is sold, goes upon the ground that he is property. But this is not the doctrine of the constitution.

By the constitution, no man can be owned, or bought and sold. It speaks of persons 'bound to service,' but never of persons that are 'owned.' It calls slaves, persons; and to consider a person, a man, as property, an article of commerce, is such an anomaly, so inconsistent with the whole tenor of our institutions, that it is not to be done without the most positive proof that the framers of the constitution intended it.

But there is positive and conclusive proof that the framers of the constitution did *not* consider the slaves as property. They allow three fifths of them to be added to the number of the free citizens, in making out the apportionment for the number of representatives in congress and electors for president and vice-president. Now in a government like ours, founded upon the polls and not upon the property of the citizens, and where all men are recognized as free and equal, and where the poor and the rich are to have an equal influence in making the laws and choosing the rulers and officers of government, it is certain that the south could not be allowed an extra number of representatives in congress on account of their slaves, if the slaves were considered as property. It is as inconsistent to allow the south an extra number of representatives on account of their having slaves, if their slaves are property, as it would be to allow the north to have an extra number in consequence of their sheep and cattle, their bank stock, their manufacturing capital, or property of any kind. The founders of our government would never have allowed the principle, that people were to be represented in proportion to their property, or for their property in any form. Yet this they did do, if they considered slaves as property.

But further; "in all our intercourse with foreign nations, in all our treaties in which the words, 'goods,' 'effects,' &c., are used, slaves have never been considered as included. In all cases in which slaves are the subject matter of controversy, they are specially named by the word 'slaves,' and if I remember rightly," and he appealed to the senate to correct him if he were wrong, "it has been decided in congress, that slaves *are not property*, for which compensation shall be made when taken for public use (or rather slaves cannot be considered as taken for public use) or as property by the enemy when they are in

the service of the United States." Senator Morris (of Ohio.) Speech in senate, February 9, 1839.

If, then, the constitution does not consider slaves as property, it considers them persons, and secures to them personal rights; and the first right, and the foundation of all other rights, is one's right to himself. If one has a right to himself, no one else can have a right to him to convey by sale—therefore he cannot be sold.

V. Let us now see what efforts have been made to get rid of slavery and do justice to the oppressed. These efforts are of two kinds: 1. Legislative action; and 2. Societies.

1. All the northern states have abolished slavery. It is worthy of remark, in this connexion, that the states of New-Hampshire and Vermont considered that slavery was abolished by their constitutions; and yet their constitutions contained nothing more from which such an inference could be drawn, than the constitution of Virginia or that of the United States does. This shows very clearly how different constructions can be put upon the same language, according to the interests and inclinations of people.

Let us now see what the national legislature has done with regard to slavery.

Before 1808, congress did all that it could to put a stop to the foreign slave-trade. By acts of March 22, 1794, and May 10, 1800, citizens of the United States were forbidden to carry slaves from the United States to any other country, or from one foreign country to another. In March 2, 1807, an act was passed prohibiting, under severe penalties, any person's importing slaves into the United States after the first day of January, 1808. Congress was forbidden by the constitution to have done this before.

At first sight this seems to speak well of the intentions of our country. But when we look a little closer it appears rather different. When we look at the condition of the slave population at that time, we see that the time had come when the slave-holders could dispense with the foreign slave-trade with very little, if any, sacrifice to the slave-holding interests; the time had come when we could raise our own slaves, so as not to need to import them. Then, forsooth, congress was ready to put a stop to the monstrous iniquity of bringing slaves into the country. Slaves that were raised here were acquainted with work, understood our language, and had been trained from infancy to the condition to which they were doomed for life; and could be raised, if the masters would take a little pains to encourage it, about as fast as they were wanted, and nearly or quite as cheap as they could be imported from Africa, considering the risk of a slaving expedition.

But notwithstanding we could raise our own slaves, foreign slaves continued to be smuggled into the country. In 1819, Mr. Middleton, of South-Carolina, estimated the number smuggled into the country annually at 13,000. Mr. Wright, of Virginia, thought that the number was as large as 15,000. Middleton and Wright were, I believe, both members of the House of Representatives at that time, and made the above statements on the floor of the house.



In April, 1818, congress went still further, and increased the penalties of being engaged in the foreign slave-trade, and forbid any citizen being engaged in the slave-trade on board any foreign vessel. The next year, 1819, congress sent out armed vessels to the coast of Africa, to stop the slave-trade. In 1820, congress passed an act declaring the slave-trade piracy. Yes; it is piracy by the laws of our land for a man to buy a slave on the coast of Africa and bring him here or carry him to any other country, but it is no crime, it is perfectly right, to buy a slave in one state and carry him to another. What makes such a mighty difference between the waters of the ocean and the soil of our own country, that what is right on one is a crime on the other? Wherein consists such a difference between the shores of Africa and the capital of this free republic, that what is there the highest crime that human laws recognize is here innocent and protected by the laws? 'Tis right to hold slaves upon *our* land, and within sight of *our* shores, but beyond them it is a crime of deepest dye. 'Tis right and proper to buy negro slaves at Washington, where the freest people on earth hold their national councils—but 'tis piracy to buy them in Guinea. Is this "to establish justice?" Is it not rather utter contempt for it? Is the moral sentiment clean gone from man, that he can discern right from wrong no better than this? Had the sable sons of Africa ever made such a mistake as this, there would be some ground for the opinion that they were not men, but a connecting link between man and brute. Slavery would not then be the sin that it now is, for no moral nature, no image of God, would have been marred and lost by it.

This act of 1820 is the last act Congress has passed. Thus far they have done as near right and justice as they could afford to. The next step would interfere with the interests of the country; it would require a sacrifice of gain and luxury that they could not afford the generosity and respect for the rights of others to make. Accordingly they have done nothing since but 'gag' the people, and declare that they would do nothing more.

It is worthy of remark, that the American vessels sent out in 1819 to put a stop to the slave trade, have not taken a single slaver. Why is this? While the English vessels have been constantly taking slavers, the Americans have taken none. Have they leagued with the pirates, and winked at their wrong doing?

2. Societies have been formed from time to time for the purpose of bettering the condition of the slave, or of "securing" to *him* "the blessings of liberty."

In 1785 there was an Abolition Society formed in New-York. The Hon. John Jay, afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court, was president. The object of the society was to "promote the manumission of slaves, and to protect such of them as have been or may be liberated."

A similar society was formed in Philadelphia in 1787. Dr. Franklin was president, and Benjamin Rush secretary. Two years after, one was formed in Maryland. Societies were also formed about the same time in Virginia, Delaware and Connecticut.

The principles entertained by these early societies were so nearly the same as those entertained and upheld by the modern abolitionists, that I need not here enter into a specification of them.

In December, 1816, the slave-holding state of Virginia, feeling that the presence of the *free* blacks was a nuisance, and made their slaves uneasy, increased the danger of insurrection, and decreased very much the value of slave property, requested their governor to correspond with the President of the United States, "for the purpose of obtaining a territory on the coast of Africa, or some other place not within the States, to serve as an asylum for such persons as are now free, or may become so."

About the same time a meeting was held at Washington, to take the same subject into consideration. Judge Washington was President. The result of the meeting was the formation of the American Colonization Society. The President and the twelve Managers of this Society were, it is believed, slave-holders. Their constitution declared that "the object to which the attention of this Society shall be *exclusively* directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing the *free* people of color now residing in our country."

There was not a word said about the evil, moral and political, of slavery. There was not even any design to benefit the slave; for the efforts of the Society were to be directed *exclusively* to the *free* blacks. Of these free blacks there are in the United States 319,467; and 2,122 have been carried to Liberia in the last eighteen years. This Society provides no means for emancipating a single slave, and in its constitution it does not even profess to aim at the emancipation of any. They would take all the slaves that were freely given them; and they actually did, in 19 years, carry EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINE manumitted slaves to Africa—JUST AS MANY AS WERE BORN IN FIVE DAYS AND A HALF on an average. They had, moreover, ceased operation, so that in 1834 they did not carry one single manumitted slave to Liberia. Judge Washington, the first president of the society, instead of freeing his slaves, sold them, fifty-four in number, to a slave-dealer for the New-Orleans market.

I cannot spend any more time upon the Colonization Society than to show that it cannot and does not aim to free the slaves, but rather to benefit the slave-holder's property in his slaves. This, I think, I have abundantly done.

\*VI. We have thus far examined slavery as it was. We have looked at its origin, and traced its history to the present time. It now remains to consider the present number and condition of the slaves: the influence of slavery upon us at the north: our right and duty to do something: what we can do and how to do it: the abolition enterprise: the objections to that enterprise: the principles and measures of the abolitionists: and finally notice the objections that are brought against immediate emancipation. This, with what has been already said, will cover the whole ground.

\* When this Discourse was delivered it was found too long for one evening, and what follows was delivered on the evening of Sunday, February 24.

When the constitution of the United States was adopted, there were something more than six hundred thousand slaves in the southern states, and about forty thousand in the northern states. Since that time all of the northern states have emancipated their slaves. But the slaves have increased so fast at the south that notwithstanding the decrease at the north, where the whites have been fast increasing, the increase of the slave population in our country has just about equalled the increase of the white population. Hence the slaves must increase much faster than the whites at the south. This is one of the most alarming features of slavery, in a political point of view. Soon the south will be full and overrun with the slaves, and what can they do with them? At present the property is working into the hands of a few, and the white population retiring before the blacks—and in a few years, we at the north may have to raise and pay a standing army to keep down the insurrections of the slaves.

The daily increase of the slave population is about ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE. Yes, there are *one hundred and seventy-five* human beings born into slavery in this land of liberty every day more than go from slavery in this world to freedom in the next.

In the northern slave-holding states, Virginia for instance, there is not so much demand for slave labor as in the more southern states. And so they raise slaves for the southern markets, just as we do sheep and cattle for our markets, and with about as little regard to chastity and the marriage contract among their slaves as we have among our cattle. The number of slaves annually transported from the northern slave-holding states to the southern, is about THIRTY THOUSAND. This annual traffic in thirty thousand human beings exists by our sufferance; is carried on by the sanction of laws that we at the north have helped to make, and mostly in the capital of our country, over which we at the north have joint control with the south. Our own government licenses man to sell his brother man within sight of the capitol of this free and christian republic!

Let us look at the condition of the slave. I do not wish to speak of individual cases of cruelty. These you must have heard to your heart's content, already. Beside, I do not wish to rest any argument upon such cases.

(1.) For the last fifty years the condition of the slave has been growing worse. Each state has continually been passing laws more and more severe, and in no case, so far as I know, have they relaxed their laws in the least.

(2.) The laws of the slave-holding states give the slave no protection against any white person whatsoever, any more than the laws of our state do our horses and oxen. To this there is one exception; if it can be proved that a master has wilfully, deliberately and maliciously killed his slave, he is punishable for murder as though his victim had been white, or free. But then, no black man can testify against a white man. Hence a man may murder slaves to any extent with impunity, if he only be out of sight of a white man. He may go on to his plantation and mow them down as he would weeds: the

blacks that escape cannot be heard, and if there is no white man present to prove the master's guilt, he may go unpunished. It is often said that the interest of the master would prevent his cruelty to his slaves. But we see that the interest of the northern farmer does not prevent his cruelty to his cattle; does not prevent his starving them, and whipping them to death in his passions, and killing them when they are unfit for service; no more will it prevent the southern slave-master from these things. The interest of the owner does not in fact so much protect the slave as it does the cattle: for the slave feels his wrong and oppression, and this unavoidably leads him to provoke the rage of his jealous master far more frequently than he otherwise would. Were the slaves as insensible to their wrongs as brutes would be, they would be so submissive as to call forth no more cruelty than the brutes. But the master sees in the eye of every slave an expression of his sense of his wrongs, and we may well imagine the effect this must have upon the master's feelings. The drunkard must get drunk again to drown the shame of his former beastliness. The master who has been cruel and made his slaves feel their wrong, must continue to be cruel to blot out the recollections of former sufferings by pains of the present and the fears of the future. It is only by adding wrong to wrong, cruelty to cruelty, that he can keep his own mind from realizing how cruel he has been and prevent the slaves from plotting any scheme of revenge or release.

(3.) I give here an outline of the slave laws.

(a) Slaves are the property of the master to all intents and purposes; just as the horses, oxen and sheep of the northern farmer are the farmer's property. He, or she, is subject to the will, caprice and lust of the master. They can have no property. In many states there are laws expressly forbidding the slave to have property, and thereby making it impossible for them to *buy* their liberty, and that is usually the only way they can get it.

(b) The slaves are not only subjected to their own masters, but to other men. A man may whip or abuse another's slave with impunity, unless he unfit him for labor; and then his master can recover damages for loss of services. The slave gets nothing. In Louisiana, if a man by his cruelty forever unfits a slave for labor, he must pay his master the value of the slave; but the unfortunate slave, crippled and maimed, and suffering to the end of his miserable life, can get no compensation whatever.

(c) The laws inflict the severest penalties for what in the white man is no crime. In Georgia, any person may give a slave twenty lashes, (which would kill many a white man,) for being found off the plantation to which he belongs, for any purpose whatever, without a license. In South-Carolina, any person finding more than seven slaves together in the highway, without a white man with them, may give each slave twenty lashes. In North Carolina, a slave travelling without a pass, or being found in another person's negro quarters, or kitchen, may be whipped forty lashes, and every slave in whose company he may be found, twenty lashes. In Louisiana, a slave for being found on horse-

back, without written permission, incurs twenty-five lashes. These are but a few, but I have time for no more.

(d) The laws forbid mental and religious education. In South Carolina, any slaves that may be found assembled in a confined or secret place, for the purpose of mental instruction, even though in presence of white persons, may be whipped with twenty lashes. Another law imposes a fine of £100 upon any person who may teach a slave to write. The Virginia laws declare that any school for the instruction of slaves, is an unlawful assembly, and any justice may inflict twenty lashes upon any slave found in such a school. In North Carolina, to teach a slave to read or write, or to give him any book (the Bible not excepted) is punishable with thirty-nine lashes, if the offender be a free black, but if a white, with a fine of \$200. The reason given for this law is, that teaching slaves to read and write tends to excite dissatisfaction, and to produce insurrection and rebellion. In Georgia, if a white man teach a free negro even, to read or write, he is fined \$500. In Louisiana, the punishment for teaching a slave to read or write, is one year's imprisonment. In Georgia, any justice of the peace may, at his discretion, break up any religious assembly of the slaves, and order each slave present to receive twenty-five stripes of a whip, switch, or cow-skin, on his bare back. In South Carolina, slaves may not meet for religious worship before sunrise or after sunset, unless a majority of the meeting be white, without incurring the penalty of twenty lashes, well laid on. In Virginia, all evening meetings for slaves, at any meeting house, are forbidden. In Mississippi, a master may *permit* a slave to attend the preaching of a *white man*. In South Carolina, the law forbids the master's compelling the slave to work more than fifteen hours a day. The necessity for such a law does not speak very much for the humanity of the masters, or of his interest being a sufficient protection to the slave. In Tennessee and Arkansas, the constitution forbids the legislatures to emancipate the slaves. In some of the states, Tennessee for example, a man cannot free his own slaves if he would, without permission of the legislature.

Now does not the existence of such laws forbid us to believe that the slaves are treated kindly as a general thing? If 'they are treated with kindness,' and 'are contented with their condition,' and 'as well off as the poor laborers of the north,' why are there such laws? In a community where such laws are demanded and upheld by public opinion, the slaves cannot be universally well treated. Those men who have been to the south, and say that the slaves are not cruelly treated, must be listened to with caution. It may be that they do not consider such treatment cruelty. But their testimony in any case can only prove that *they* have never seen the cruel treatment of the slave. It cannot prove there is no such treatment. They do not see all that there is. The testimony of one credible witness who has seen a thing is worth more than that of a thousand who merely have not seen it; especially if we can easily account for their not having seen it. The house servants are the best, and they receive the best treatment; and these it is for the most part that travellers and sojourners at the south see. Hence they see the best treatment of the best part of the slaves; and this they report as a fair representation of the condition of the slave! Contrast their account with the account

of those who give the worst treatment of the worst part of the slaves, and a medium will probably be about a fair estimate.

But I do not wish to rest any argument upon individual cases of cruelty. I wish merely to give you an outline of the system. This I have done by quoting from the slave laws—public documents that cannot be questioned. From these you may infer what the condition of the slave must be. It is enough that he is a slave, even in the mildest form of slavery. We need not appeal to individual cases of cruelty, to show us that he ought to be free.

It was from a view of this state of things—three millions of their fellow beings, about one-fifth of the population of the country, in a condition like what I have described, and the number increasing at the rate of one hundred and seventy-five every day, and with no one doing any thing to alleviate the condition of the oppressed, or save the country from the precipice over which it seemed to be rushing,—it was, I say, from a view of this state of things that some benevolent, justice-loving persons at the north raised their voices against this monstrous evil.

I wish to call particular attention to this state of things; for it is some times said that the abolitionists have retarded the emancipation of the slaves; that there were means in operation that would have abolished slavery sooner than it can now be done, if the abolitionists had been silent. This is entirely false. There were no means in operation that even looked towards emancipation. The whole tendency of all the legislative proceedings of the slave-holding states had been for twenty years last past, before the abolition enterprise, to make the condition of the slave more abject, more wretched, and to increase the difficulties of emancipation. The constitution of Arkansas was so formed as to withhold the power to emancipate the slave by legislative action. The constitution of Tennessee was altered so as to take the power of emancipation from the state legislature. Louisiana once had a law prohibiting slave-merchants bringing slaves into the state with a view to selling them. But this law was repealed. Turn over the statute books of the south as you will, and you will find it universally the case that the most diabolical laws were the latest ones that were passed, & every year the laws that were passed become more and more so. Thus there was nothing by way of legislative action that afforded the least hope, or encouragement to a hope, that slavery would be abolished in the southern states by a regular course of legislative actions. Every thing tended the other way.

Neither was there any more encouragement from societies or individuals using moral means. Immediately after the Revolution, the people felt so much gratitude for their own success that they determined to do something for the slaves, and secure eventually their freedom. But their gratitude soon grew cold, and there seemed to be, year by year, less inclination to do any thing to hasten the freedom of the slaves. No; it was because nothing was being done that the abolition enterprise was set on foot; and whether that enterprise hasten the emancipation of the slaves or not, it certainly cannot retard it.

After it was determined that something ought to be done, the question arose, Can we at the north do any thing? Does slavery injure us so as to give us reason to do anything? These questions need to be answered to the people now as much as they did then.

VII. What then are some of the evils that we suffer from slavery?

The slave-holding states have twenty-five representatives, and twenty-five electoral votes in choosing the president and vice-president, to which they have no right on the ground that slaves are property. According to the present apportionment, 47,700 inhabitants constitute the representative number, and each state may send a representative to congress for every 47,700 inhabitants it may have. Now in making out this apportionment, three-fifths of the slaves are added to the free population; and by this arrangement the slave-holding states have twenty-five representatives more than they would have if three-fifths of the number of the slaves were not added in making out the apportionment. Now if slaves are property, as the slave laws declare, the slave-holders have no right to these twenty-five representatives on account of their slaves, any more than we at the north have to representatives on account of our sheep, cattle, bank stock, or any other property. The expenses for paying these representatives is at least 30,000 dollars each year, and this sum we help to pay. But our proportion of this sum is but a small part of the evil.

We thereby submit ourselves to the influence of southern legislation. We allow the slave-holding states to have the influence of TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND legal voters, (and the number is constantly increasing,) which they have not got, in the choice of the president and vice-president; and of course in every executive measure and appointment, and in every law, resolution or measure of congress. This influence, I say, we allow the south to have which they have no just right to if their slaves are property as they consider them. Consider further the character of this influence. Gov. M'Duffie, in a message to the legislature of South Carolina, said: "No community ever existed without domestic servitude, and we may confidently assert that none ever will. In the very nature of things, there must be classes of persons to discharge all the different offices of society from the highest to the lowest. Some of these offices are regarded as degrading, though they must and will be performed. When these offices are performed by members of the political community a dangerous element is obviously introduced into the body politic." We, my hearers, we farmers and mechanics, who labor with our hands, are 'a dangerous element in the body politic'! It is dangerous to allow us to vote, and therefore we ought to be slaves and let our rich neighbors vote for us. This is 'democracy'! But let us follow the Governor a little further. "It will be fortunate [?] for the non-slaveholding states if they are not, in less than a quarter of a century, driven to the adoption of a similar institution," [to slavery] "or to take refuge from robbery and anarchy under a military despotism. \* \* \* In a word, the institution of domestic slavery supersedes the order of nobility" by creating the slave-holders themselves a nobility and the laborers the slaves, or serfs, I suppose must be added, to make the sense clear. Mr. Leigh, of Virginia, said, in 1829, "I ask gentlemen to say whether they believe that those who depend on their daily subsistence can, or do ever, enter into our political affairs? They never do, never will, never can." "How can he get wisdom, that holdeth the plough, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in the labors, and whose talk is of bullocks?" asks Professor Dew, of William and Mary's College, Virginia.

Are these *our* principles, or have we so much sympathy with and love for them, that we wish to have those whose exalted notions may aspire

to and adopt such principles and feelings, make laws for us? Are we submitting to southern legislation already? Are we resigning the legislative power into their hands from a conviction of their superior wisdom and patriotism? We give them twenty-five representatives, the influence of two hundred thousand legal voters, as a consideration for such views, for such superior political wisdom, for such elevated, humane democracy!

The Hon. Charles Shepard, member of congress from North-Carolina, in a letter to his constituents, December 20, 1838, says, if the slave-holding states will be true to themselves "they can give laws to the government." Yes, brethren of New-England, whose fathers fought and bled for our liberties in the Revolution, the aristocratic slave-holding south, who hold that all labor is disreputable, and that every laborer, every farmer and mechanic, are, or should be slaves, subject to the will of the monied few, boast that they 'can give laws to the government.' Such men boast that they can make laws for us. Good God! shall it beso? Are we willing to wear the yoke and the chain? Will you dance to the cracking of the master's whip? Are we prepared to see our wives and daughters prostituted before our eyes—as the wives and daughters of the Africans now are at the south? Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, will you consent to be torn from one another, and be subjected to the avarice, the cruelty, and the lust of a merciless owner? This is what the Africans now suffer, and this is what the southerners think ought to be our condition, and boast that they can make our laws. It is no wonder that they call us 'dough-faced northerners' while we are insensible to such threats. They turn to us, and say, 'Don't stir; if you do we'll dissolve the Union': they then turn to the south and say, 'Come on my boys, we'll chain every one of the northern dough-faces; we'll give laws to the government; we'll be lords and they shall work for us.

Again, we are bound by the constitution, to go ourselves to-morrow or any day when we may be called for, to uphold slavery by force. Southern men have boasted that we are obliged to go and put down their slaves if they should rebel. Herein, they confess, is their only hope of safety. They cannot take care of themselves without us. It is strange that our fathers, while they were yet smarting from the wounds of the Revolution, should have bound themselves to assume a more unjust position to the Africans than England had assumed to us—and that they should have bound themselves to go and butcher the Africans for acting the very same part against oppression which they themselves had won so much glory in acting.

Slavery interferes with our representatives in congress. It exposes them to assassination and duels for discharging their official duties. The Hon. John Q. Adams said, in the house of representatives, that he had received threats of assassination and challenges to a duel, as often as once a day for a number of weeks, and this too for discharging his duty as a representative. Say, New-Hampshire, does slavery do you no harm, when it has made one of your representatives, one of the men you had trusted with your honor and your rights, condescend to an act that will make the name of Atherton stink till 'tis forgotten? Ask the wife and children of the murdered Lovejoy if we suffer nothing from slavery? Ask the many who have been mobbed and whipped, tarred and feathered,



and murdered even, for being, or being suspected of being, abolitionists—ask them the question, Do we suffer nothing from the existence of slavery at the south?

The very fact that persons at the north *dare* not, or cannot with safety, speak their opinions, proves that we do suffer more evils from slavery than we who are in the midst of them can specify. Did we suffer nothing from slavery there would be no opposition to a free discussion of the subject. It is the *wounded* bird that flutters. So great is the opposition to a discussion of the subject, that one may not breathe the word 'LIBERTY' to the north wind even, lest it whistle tones of freedom on the southern plantations. The fact that congress dares not, or will not, permit among themselves the discussion of a question of the most vital importance to our government, nor allow the people to petition them upon it, is the most alarming thing to every good citizen that could well be presented.

I will not undertake to specify the evils we suffer from the existence of slavery in our country. It would be like counting the sands of Sahara to prove that they are numerous.

It is no uncommon thing that the free black citizens of the north are taken, under false pretences, and sold into slavery. Every black citizen that may go on board a vessel, in any capacity whatever, is imprisoned, fined, sold into slavery, one or more of them, whenever the vessel touches upon the coast of a slave holding state. The pretence for these laws is, that the presence of free blacks makes the slaves discontented (what, the 'happy,' 'contented' slave discontented!) and exposes the southerners to an insurrection of the slaves. We have in our free states many black merchants who own merchant vessels, manned completely by free blacks. Now, one of these vessels cannot trade with any southern port. If one of them should be driven into a slave holding port by storm, or from any necessity whatever, every man on board would be sold into slavery.

Any one must be very ignorant of the political history of this country not to see the influence of the domineering spirit of the south. When they cannot carry their measures by fair and reasonable means, they will resort to any means to carry their point. Take an illustration. In the house of representatives, on the 21st of Dec. 1837, when Mr. Slade of Vt. was speaking upon slavery, and dissecting it before the eyes of the house, the southern members determined to put him down through the instrumentality of the speaker, and after resorting to every means to put him down with a show of order and respect for the rules of the house, and failing in that, several southern members demanded the southern delegations to retire from the hall. The speaker was driven to suspend the rules of the house, and the discussion was stopped by a mob of the southern members of the house of representatives. On the next morning was presented and carried Patton's resolution against 'reading, referring, printing or acting upon petitions' concerning slavery.

Thus when the southern delegations in the house could carry their point by no other means, they would resort to a mob. Some of our northern men, wishing to have the south lie quiet as a stepping stone for them to ascend upon to office, have mortgaged themselves to the south and to slavery. Others are too quiet, too much lovers of order and the Union, to make any resistance. The south are united upon the subject

of slavery, and are determined to sacrifice everything that will not with itself involve them in ruin, to slavery. It is not so much an idol that they worship as a mistress that they keep, and by whose charms they are bound and made willing to do any desperate acts, to sacrifice principle, humanity and all, whatsoever she may demand. We, rather than have any '*fuss*' about it, while we are the majority, consent to a political non-existence, or exist only to subserve them. The child rules the tame submissive father.

It is sometimes said that the agitation of the subject of slavery will be dangerous to our country. It may be. It is sometimes the case that the amputation of a limb kills the patient. But then he could not have lived long without the operation, and in that was his only hope. But so far from considering the agitation of this subject dangerous to the country, an I, that I believe it will be one of the most effectual means of saving it. It will be assault to the corrupt and corrupting mass of public sentiment. I do verily believe that the amount of moral sentiment that will be called out and nurtured into being by the abolition enterprise will be a prop, and so far as I can see, almost the only prop to our tottering republic. Great subjects call forth great men and all the greatness of little men. If there be not something set on foot to call out and exalt the moral sentiment of the nation and raise us above political intrigue, selfish grasping, and the gambling speculations so rife in this country, it is as sure as fate that the doom of our country is sealed. Who has witnessed the progress of affairs for the last few years without being sick at heart from seeing so much deadness of the moral and religious sentiment? We have confidence in the honesty and integrity of men no farther than it is for their interest to be honest and upright; and there are hardly any men in whom it would be safe to put any further confidence. Unless something can be done to arrest this downward onrush of the people, the days of our republic are numbered. Unless something can be done to purify the moral atmosphere and restore integrity and patriotism, we may prepare the dirge of our institutions, for it must soon be sung.

Now there is no subject before the American people that reaches down so deep into principle and righteousness, and will interest so deeply so many people as abolition. I hope and trust this subject will take such hold upon their hearts that it will raise them above selfishness, above avarice, above grasping at the spoils of political victory, and the bribery and corruption that is everywhere practiced upon the franchise of this people, to something near the virtues of the fathers of the Revolution. If this or something else does not raise us, as a people, our fate is certain. As sure as day follows night, and the revolving earth brings round the hasty years, so sure scenes of dissolution, anarchy and bloodshed from which the sickened imagination turns gasping for breath, must come upon us, unless something be done to exalt & purify the moral & religious sentiment of the people. And if these scenes do come, woe to those who must witness them. Extremes meet, and we shall go to despotism more absolute and galling than the sun now shines upon. All the noble and virtuous in the land will prefer liberty in heaven to slavery on earth, and will rejoice in an occasion to fall honorably beneath the destroying sword, while the more timid and weaknerved will have their lips sealed and their

hands bound till the fires of resentment smoulder their hearts to cinders, and their souls are freed by death. Oh! that I had a voice that could be heard the length and breadth of the country, I would not cease day nor night to sound the alarm. Every word should be a dagger-thrust at the heart of the monster slavery, that has tapped our veins and is sucking the life-blood of our country. Yet, notwithstanding all these evils that we now suffer, and all that the lowering prospect threatens, we hug the porcupine slavery to our bosoms while the blood is streaming from an hundred wounds. Said the Greek poet, "whom the gods intend to ruin they first make insane"—and is not the insanity of our nation upon this subject but the prelude to coming ruin? When I look at this state of things, I rejoice to know that Washington, Franklin, Jay, Pinckney, Henry and Jefferson are in their graves. I rejoice to feel sure that they have finished their voyage of life in safety; that they are beyond the danger of corruption; that their sainted names cannot be tainted by the meanness and corruption of our age. But my joy has somewhat of sadness; for it does seem that if those noble spirits were with us, corruption would blush and flee their presence. It does seem that they might again breathe life and energy into our sick and shattered institutions. It does seem that they might raise us from wallowing in corruption. But well for them the grave will not give up its dead. Their bodies must sleep in silence and peace; and if one ever wishes that the dead should not know what the living do, it is now. When I contemplate the statue of Washington, as it stands in simple majesty, witnessing these things that are now witnessed in our country, I seem to see a bloody sweat roll down that pallid face—I pause—and wonder that the very marble does not break silence and shake the Capitol with the thunder of its rebuke.

I do not wish to be a prophet of evil. I do not wish to disturb the silence and quiet that hangs over the unknown future; else I could draw a picture, which should want nothing of probability, that would make your blood curdle in your veins. But the future is all uncertain. We commit it to God. It will be, under his providence, what we make it. *Now* is ever the pivot upon which the whole future turns at our will. It is for us to decide whether we will have the south a slaughter-house for our friends and neighbors. It is for us to decide whether the south must be drenched with blood, and its fair fields become a pool of bloody mire, stagnating in voiceless desolation.

Now, will any one say that we must suffer all these things—see all this crime and cruelty, and can do nothing? Will any one say that we, citizens of this free country—we who make the laws, must suffer such things by the laws, and can have no redress, we *free* men? Are we then free, or the subjects of despotism? It matters not whether it be a man called 'Despot,' or a piece of parchment called 'Constitution,' or an institution called 'Slavery,' that binds us, if so be we are bound. But the case is not so bad as that. We can do something. We have both political and moral rights to exercise in the case.

And have justice and humanity no claims upon us, that we wait to be moved by considerations of self interest to take the part of the oppressed and do him justice? Are we absolved from the obligation to "remember those that are in bonds as bound with them; and those who

suffer adversity as being ourselves yet in the flesh," and therefore capable of a fellow-feeling for their sufferings?

VIII. It is the common understanding, that the slaves are, by the constitution of the United States, recognized as rightful property, and that the slave laws are agreeable to that instrument. I hardly hope to carry my audience with me, in the attempt that I have made to prove that the slave laws are unconstitutional. It seemed too much for me to believe at first myself. But I could see no defect in the argument, and was obliged to yield my assent. But this is not the common opinion. I will therefore waive that consideration for a few moments, and take the subject upon the common understanding of the matter, and ask the question, What can we do for the emancipation of the slaves?

We are slave-holders ourselves, and we can free those we hold. We hold twenty-six thousand slaves ourselves, by the laws that we make, in the District of Columbia, and in the United States' territories. These twenty-six thousand slaves, I say, we hold in bondage ourselves by the laws we have made and can repeal. They are held by the laws of congress. Now majorities always rule, and the free states have and have always had a majority in congress—therefore they could have prevented or enacted any law upon which they should be united in their action. Thus it is that the free states and every voter of the free states are individually responsible for holding these slaves; therefore it is that every citizen of us is a slave-holder. Now the free states have a majority in congress, and congress can abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and the Territories, and the internal slave trade, and therefore the free states are responsible for the sin of holding these twenty-six thousand slaves, and for the traffic in thirty thousands of our own inhabitants every year.\*

We can abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. The constitution says that congress shall "have exclusive power to legislate in all cases whatsoever" over the District of Columbia. If now the abolition of slavery be within the sphere of legislative action, the power to abolish it is here granted to congress. Now to prove that the abolition of slavery is within the sphere of legislative action, we have the authority derived from all the northern states, the South American republics, and the kingdoms of Europe. If congress cannot abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and the territories, then no legislative body can—it cannot be done—and here we have the anomaly of the people, where the people are sovereign, suffering an evil which they, the sovereign authority, cannot remove—and are not allowed to act upon.

It is sometimes said, that Maryland and Virginia may have made

\* If a bill should be passed abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia and the United States' territories, and the internal slave trade, the president would have the power of veto upon it, and that would probably defeat the bill if he should exercise it, since the bill could not be carried by a majority of two-thirds of both houses. I take no notice, however, of president Van Buren's pledge to oppose any such bill, as he would doubtless change his mind when he saw a majority of the voters in the nation were in favor of the bill. He is a democrat, and has too much respect for the opinion of the people ever to oppose it.

some reservation of the control over slavery in this territory when they ceded it to the general government. But they made no such reservation. They could not; for congress had no right to allow it. It would have been a violation of the express language of the constitution to have allowed any reservation of legislative authority whatever, or to have consented to any condition by which the authority of congress should be in any way abridged.

It is further said, that it would be a breach of faith to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while Maryland and Virginia are slaveholding states. But there certainly is no breach of faith in the exercise of power given knowingly, and with the expectation that it would be exercised if there should be occasion. When Maryland and Virginia resigned into the hands of congress all legislative authority over the District of Columbia, they knew that they were giving them authority to abolish slavery in that District, if congress should see fit to do it; and it certainly can be no breach of faith to exercise that authority.

2. Again, congress has the authority to abolish the internal slave-trade. The constitution says that "congress shall have power to regulate commerce between the states." Now while slaves are considered as property, they are articles of commerce. It is said that congress may *regulate* commerce, but not abolish it. True. But then to abolish or prohibit the traffic in *one* article—and slaves are but one article—is not to abolish commerce itself, but to regulate it. Had the language of the constitution been such as to give congress the power to regulate the slave trade between the states, there might have been some room to say that congress might regulate, but could not abolish, the slave trade. But while the slave trade is only a part of the commerce between the states, which congress has power to regulate, congress may regulate the whole by abolishing or cutting off a part.

Congress has precisely the same power—it is given in the same language and in the same clause of the constitution—to abolish the internal slave trade that it had to abolish the foreign slave trade. The nation promised that congress should not abolish the foreign slave trade before 1808. But by this very promise they declared that congress would have had the power to have done it, if there had been no such promise. When the promise was out, they did exercise their power and forbid the importation of slaves. Here congress have virtually declared by their own act, that they understand that they have the power to abolish the internal slave trade.

Here, then, in these two ways, we, every citizen of us, have the unquestionable political right to do something for the abolition of slavery. I know that men are exceedingly fond of insisting upon our national legislature's being one of 'limited powers' when the subject of slavery is brought before them. But they may deceive themselves, or the people, to their own infamy, so long as they please. The light is streaming abroad over the country, and we trust that 'the sober second thought of the people will be right and efficient.' Time will bring the matter straight, and well is it for him who is beforehand with time in this matter.

But I do not feel content—it will not be doing justice to my own conviction, to leave the matter here—to leave our sphere of political action thus circumscribed within such narrow bounds. I will not go about to prove that congress has the power to abolish slavery in the states; for that would be granting that slavery is constitutional. I will enter into no argument to prove that it is right for the national legislature—that it has the power—to do justice—to give the inhabitants their dues. If the slave-laws and slave trade are unconstitutional, as I believe and think I have clearly shown above, then we through congress not only have the power to abolish slavery in the states, but it is our duty so to do. If the masters oppress the slaves unconstitutionally—if they have taken away their constitutional rights and privileges—then we are bound as citizens to take the part of the slave, and see that that justice which the constitution guarantees to him be done him. No one will deny but what we are bound to go and suppress an insurrection of the slaves, if there should be one. No one will deny but what we are bound to go and protect the master against the slave, and are we not as much bound (I speak politically) to protect the slave against the master, and see that the master does not take away his rights? How exceedingly fond people are of speaking of their limited powers and means when they are indisposed to use them! I do most sincerely believe, that we, as citizens, are bound, by a fair interpretation of our political duties and the engagements made by the confederative constitution, to go and demand that the slaves should have every right and privilege secured to them, either expressly or impliedly, by a fair construction of the language and principles of the constitution, and that until we do this the sin of slave-holding in all its magnitude is chargeable upon us.

We are just as much bound to protect the inhabitants of our country from illegal oppression within the borders of our own country, as we should be if they were thus oppressed in a foreign country. When some three score of our citizens were enslaved in Algiers, we waged war against that power to protect our citizens; but now, while three millions are enslaved in our own country, we are not ready to do any thing, and are told that we can do nothing. But be not deceived, God will not judge according to men's judgment.

But for those who are not prepared, as yet, to go the length of the above statement, I would say that we have an undoubted moral right to think and speak and exert our moral influence. We have an undeniable right to convince the southern slave-holders that they are committing a sin in holding their fellow beings in bondage.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in August, 1785, to Dr. Price, of England, to have him interpose and exert all the moral influence he could. "Could you," says he, "trouble yourself with our welfare, no man is more able to give aid than yourself." "Be not discouraged. Northward of the Chesapeake you may find here and there an opponent to abolition, as you may find here and there a robber and a murderer, but in no great numbers." He calls the abolition cause "an interesting spectacle of justice in conflict with avarice and oppression." I take

pleasure in quoting an authority justly held in so high an estimation. If, then, it was right for a foreigner to interfere and exert a moral influence, it certainly must be so for our own citizens.

If we have no political right or duty to interfere with slavery in the southern states, we certainly have a moral and religious right. We have the same right that Jesus had to cleanse the temple, which the Jews had made a den of thieves. We have the same right that Paul had to preach against the fornication of the Corinthians and the idolatry of Ephesus and Athens.

It would be much better for us to go to the south and preach our doctrines there. But they will not hear us. They will not allow a word to be said in public against their favorite institution.

Senators White and Grundy, from Tennessee, declared in the senate chamber that they would encourage the Lynch laws being executed upon every abolitionist found in their state. White defended the whipping, with twenty lashes, one Amos Dresser, without any law to justify it, and without trial by jury, merely for being an abolitionist, when it was not proved and could not be proved that he had said, or that he intended to say, a word upon the subject in the state. Senator Lumpkin, from Georgia, said that if abolitionists went to Georgia "*they would get caught.*" Preston, of South-Carolina, said that "if an abolitionist came within their borders, they would hang him, notwithstanding the opposition of the United States and all the governments on earth." If, then, we cannot apply our remedy to the diseased part, it must be taken into the system by the mouth, and we must trust to the general circulation to carry it to the diseased part. But we are by no means free from the disease ourselves. There is no such thing as the hand or the foot being completely decayed and the man suffer no harm. All the members sympathize with the diseased part.

But although the south will not allow one to preach against slavery there, there are a great many abolitionists at the south. Their number is increasing fast. Some of the most zealous and effective abolitionists were once southern slave-holders,—men and women of the highest standing among their citizens. Among them are James G. Birney, formerly Solicitor General of Alabama; A. E., and S. Grimké, whose brother, the Hon. Thomas S. Grimké, was one of the most prominent men of South-Carolina. There are hundreds of others at the south. Their names are not given to the public, for that would expose them in their lives and property. No, it is not safe for one to think as he pleases, on some subjects, in this *free* country.

IX. Perceiving these spheres of influence open to them, some friends of liberty, justice and humanity, commenced the abolition enterprise; and although it seems, to the impatient hopes of the zealous, to be a slow movement, yet its rapidity and success are hardly equalled by the rapidity with which any other cause of any thing near its importance has progressed, in the world's history. I am not able to fix upon any date or event which I could regard as the commencement of the enterprise—whether to consider the imprisonment of Garrison, at Baltimore, or the establishment of the *Liberator*, in Boston, in the winter of 1831,

or something else, as the commencement of the abolition enterprise, I know not. But it is of very little consequence. The enterprise commenced about that time.

In 1832, the New-England Anti-Slavery Society was formed at Boston. It consisted then, I believe, of only about a dozen young men, who were termed, by way of scorn and reproach, 'ardent young men'—'incendiaries'—'fanatics'—'hot-headed zealots'—'disorganizers,' &c., &c.

In December, 1833, a convention of about sixty delegates, from various parts of the country, met at Philadelphia and formed the American Anti-Slavery Society. There are now auxiliary societies in most of the northern states, and also one in the slave-holding state of Kentucky.

I have not time or material here from which to give you a full history of the progress of the abolition cause. I will only notice a few things. In the winter of 1834 and '35, the prejudice was so strong against the abolitionists in Boston, that they could hardly get a place to hold a meeting through fear of a mob. They have since gradually won their way, until they have now about fifteen hundred societies, and probably not less than two hundred thousand persons who have, or are ready to subscribe to their principles, and join with them in their measures.

The cause was never increasing faster. Such success in what Jefferson called "the interesting spectacle of justice in conflict with avarice and oppression" is most encouraging to its friends, and should warn all who are not its friends to "refrain from opposing these men, lest haply ye be found to even fight against God. If this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought of itself; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow them."

The discussion of slavery and the determined perseverance of the abolitionists soon called forth a good deal of bitter and angry opposition. The evils which appeared to be necessarily consequent upon an agitation of the subject were so great as to intimidate many. I will notice some of these objections to the abolitionists, and to agitating the subject in any form at the north. I have already considered our *right* to do something; but many who would assent to the right would still question the '*expediency*' of exercising it. Do they "remember those in bonds *as bound with them*"? Others doubt if the course the abolitionists are taking will produce any beneficial effects to the slave or to the country.

It is said that a discussion of the subject of slavery may dissolve the Union. The south threaten it. It is neither certain nor probable that a discussion of the subject will dissolve the Union. The south dare not dissolve the Union, and if we would retort the threat they would stop their mouths and tremble. The south, knowing our attachment to the Union, and our timid, submissive tempers, would make use of these things to promote their own ends. But among themselves they turn pale, and the lip quivers at the thought. Men threaten others with what they most dread themselves. Had I time, I could bring an overwhelming amount of proof to show that the southerners, when out



of the hearing of northern ears, confess that they dare not dissolve the Union. The editor of the 'Maryville (Tenn.) Intelligencer,' in his paper October, 1835, says of the slaves at the south, "*their condition is second only to that of the WRETCHED CREATURES IN HELL.*" In a subsequent number, he says, "We of the south are surrounded by a dangerous class of beings, who, if they could but once entertain the idea that immediate death would not be their portion, would re-act the St. Domingo tragedy. *But a consciousness that a ten-fold force would gather from the FOUR CORNERS OF THE UNITED STATES and slaughter them, keeps them in subjection. BUT TO THE NON-SLAVE-HOLDING STATES WE ARE INDEBTED FOR A PERMANENT SAFE-GUARD AGAINST INSURRECTION. Without their assistance the white population of the southern states would be TOO WEAK to quiet that innate desire for liberty which is ever ready to act itself out.*" Yet these are the slaves of whom the Reverend J. C. Postell, of South-Carolina, said: "Contrasting the condition of white slaves in New-England with our slaves in the south, is like comparing Egyptian bondage under Pharaoh's taskmasters with millennial glory—Mild slavery at the south *is heaven on earth to the tyranny of the spindle at the north.*" A southern member of congress was over-heard to say, immediately after the house adjourned on the ever memorable 21st of December, 1837, when Mr. Slade, of Vermont, was put down whilst speaking against slavery, "We have seen our weakness, we have seen \* \* \* the *unconquerable* attachment of *all* the south, except one or two men in South-Carolina, to the Union. Let slavery be abolished in the District of Columbia, let the capital be given up to free negroes, the District of Columbia sunk, and I shall never give up the Union but with my life." These are the men—these who look to us for 'a ten-fold force to slaughter the slaves' if they should rise against their oppressors, as our fathers arose against Great Britain—these men who have an 'unconquerable attachment to the Union'—these men who 'will not give up the Union but with their lives,' are they, who threaten us with a dissolution of the Union. These men, who have every thing to lose and nothing to gain by the act, threaten us, who have nothing to lose but much to gain, with a dissolution of the Union! and we are scared into silence by the threat!

"Be stirring as the times; be fire with fire,  
Threaten the threatener, and out-face the brow  
Of bragging horror."

But, then, if it come to the worst, we are not bound to dissolve the Union, or any thing else, rather than do injustice? Are we not bound to 'leave all,' if need be, for righteousness' sake? They'll dissolve the Union, they say: would it not be better to dissolve the earth itself into misty vapor, than to disobey God? It would be better to have the whole south sink, and the huge monsters of the briny deep gambol over their cotton fields; yea, it were better that the earth itself should fly from its orbit into the wintry regions of everlasting night, than that its inhabitants should continue to insult the God of heaven by enslaving his children.

But are the abolitionists responsible for the evils of agitating the question, be they what they may? Is it not rather he that has done the wrong who is responsible for its consequences, than he who discovers and reproveth it?

It is frequently said that we at the north do not know anything about slavery; we have never seen it, and know nothing about it except by report. The people of the south, who live there in its midst and have the best opportunity of knowing its character, do not regard it as a great evil. Northern men when they go there become slave-holders themselves, and lose all their prejudice against the institution when they become acquainted with it.

It is true that northern men do frequently lose their abhorrence of slavery and become slave-holders themselves, when they go to the south. It is true that many of the southerners regard, or pretend to regard, slavery as no evil, but a blessing,—“the corner-stone of our republican edifice;” but they do not all so regard it. The opinion of the southerners is so different in different individuals, and at different times, to suit the occasion and purpose that the speaker or writer may have in view, that we can hardly say what it is. It is one thing or another, just as you may happen to quote from one man or another, or from opinions expressed on one occasion or another, by the same man even. But suppose it to be true, as it is assumed in the above statement, that the south do not regard slavery as an evil, moral or political—that they do not regard it as injustice and cruelty—that they do not regard it as sin against the most High God: what follows? what inference will you draw? Who are of this opinion? What part of the population of the south have you consulted, to receive this opinion from them; those who reap all the benefits of slavery, or those who drink the cup of its bitterness? When in the world’s history has it been known that tyrants have preached liberty and democracy? When has the oppressor thought oppression an evil? Ask the oppressed and enslaved if slavery be no evil. Let their voice be heard in a thing that so nearly concerns them; and if they confess, as you may find now and then a case when one will confess that slavery is no evil, we must feel that we have imbruted them beyond having a sense of their wrong; we have clean quenched the candle which the Lord lighted up in their souls at their creation. We shall then see how much greater is the sin of slavery than it otherwise would be, and how much more urgent the necessity for doing something. But the case is not so bad as that, as is proved by the fact that hundreds risk life and suffer the extremes of hunger and fatigue every year, to cross the free states to Canada, where oppression cannot reclaim them.

But what inference do you draw from the fact that northern men become slave-holders? Do we not know that vice is a monster which

“seen too oft and familiar with its face  
We first pity, then endure, then embrace”?

Have not many of us, who have not been to the south, grown so ‘familiar with its face’ that we not only endure, but pity, and are

almost ready to embrace? It is this very deadness of the moral sentiment, not only at the south, but also at the north, that is the greatest discouragement to the friends of the slave, and the strong hold of hope for the slave holder.

The violent opposition that the subject meets with from the people of the north is, in the estimation of many, a further objection to agitating the subject here. It verily seems to me a reason why we should agitate the subject, and shake off the oppression that would stop free discussion, and dam up the channels of intelligence. It is time that the right to free discussion were established beyond fear of mobs. It is time that people should be convinced that brute force cannot put down the truth, or shut its light from shining in upon the dark scenes of their guilt and shame. Every citizen should come forward to sustain the right to free discussion, which is threatened and assailed, even if he do not care anything for the subject discussed. It is time that force and the animal passions should give place to argument and conscience, upon the world-arena, where the great questions of right and duty are decided for society. Therefore it is that every thoughtful and reasonable man should favor the agitation of this question; at least so far as defending free discussion from the violence of mobs is concerned. Meanwhile this violence does not, after all, appear to the abolitionists as the most discouraging symptom that could be. It shows that we are deeply interested in slavery. It shows that we are doing wrong in upholding it, and that we are determined to do wrong so long as we can profit by it. It shows that we suffer from slavery, otherwise there would be no opposition to discussing the subject. But this very violence, like the sick man's pain, is a favorable symptom. It shows that there is life yet in him. We must expect that the patient will be worse while the medicine is operating than he appeared before he took it.

I will now state the principles of the abolitionists, and the measures by which they propose to accomplish their object—entire emancipation.

The fundamental principle of the abolitionists is, that slavery is a sin; it is contrary to humanity and justice, and therefore contrary to the laws of God. It is making slaves of God's freemen. It is therefore rebellion against his almighty sovereignty. Our slaves are children of the same heavenly Father with ourselves. We have taken them from the work God gave them to do, and put them to do ours, to bear our burden, that we may be idle and enjoy the luxuries that their labor can procure. We have robbed the slave of his divine patrimony; we have taken from him the portion of the good things of this life, which God gives to all his rational creatures, and given him, instead thereof, bonds, stripes and unrequited toil. We take, so far as we can, all the joy from *his* cup of life, and give him instead thereof, all the bitterness of *ours*. We spoil our brethren that we may enrich ourselves with their goods. Some of the abolitionists hold that the Africans are by nature equal to ourselves; and are now inferior only through the influence of education and circumstances. But it is not on that

ground that they claim for the slave that freedom which God gave him, and we have robbed him of. They demand his freedom, not because he is our equal, but because he is a MAN—a being whom God made free, capable of knowing good from evil, and so a moral, responsible and immortal being, capable of progress in everything that is good and holy,—and because that by enslaving him we take away the means of that progress, and thereby prevent him from accomplishing the purpose of his being here on earth: we defeat, so far as we can, God's plan in creating him.

This is the fundamental principle of the abolitionists, and from this all the rest is derived.

Their aim is the emancipation of the slaves, and they hold to *immediate* emancipation, not only because they believe it safe and expedient, and that it would be better for both master and slave; but because it is RIGHT; it is a dictate of that moral sentiment, which to disobey is to disobey God. Believing in the perfection and entireness of the retributions of God, they feel assured that no evil so great can result from doing right, and *when* it is right, as must result from continuing to sin, and insult the Majesty of heaven by stealing his freemen and impressing them into our service. They tremble when they think of this high-handed rebellion against the King of heaven. They raise their voices and cry aloud lest the almighty Justice, whose retributions slumber not, sweep them and their fellow-countrymen with the besom of destruction.

The measures of the abolitionists are such as the nature of the case dictates. The slaves are held by law; therefore the abolitionists seek to produce such a change in public opinion, and elect such men to office, as will effect such a change in the laws by which slaves are now held, as that they shall be no longer held by law. Here is their chief measure; and so far as this measure is concerned, abolition is a political thing, and no farther. There is no design to advance the interests of one or another of the present political parties. In so far as emancipation is to be effected only by a modification of the laws to that effect, abolitionists must carry their principles to the ballot-box. This is one of their legitimate and necessary means of effecting their object. And we northerners, who have consented, and even helped to fasten the chains upon the slave, are in duty bound to help unloose his bands and let him go free.

Hence the great work the abolitionists have to do is to change public opinion upon the subject of slavery. This they seek to do by lectures, pamphlets, papers, societies, reports, and all the ordinary means used to effect the public mind. When this is done, and as fast as it is done, they will change the views and policy of legislative bodies, so that they will act upon the subject and enact such laws and adopt such measures as may be most conducive to the freedom of the slave.

Believing that congress has authority over slavery in the District of Columbia and the United States territories, and over the internal slave-trade, they aim to take every fair and lawful means to get abolitionists

into congress, and to use every fair and lawful means to influence them, and the body generally, after they get there.

Beyond the District of Columbia, and the territories, and the internal slave trade, they do not, I believe, generally claim any political right to act. Their only measure then is, to operate upon public opinion in the southern states, so far as they can, and thus bring them to do, themselves, what the northern abolitionists claim no political right to do.

It is one of the uniform principles of the abolitionists, to urge the slave to bear his slavery with patience and meekness until the day of his deliverance come. While they have no doubt that if the slaves should rise, and some one place himself at their head and gain their freedom by force of arms, he would thereby earn for his name a place beside our own immortal Washington's on the rolls of fame, still they discourage insurrection, and mostly because they believe with the Quakers, that a resort to physical force, even in self defence, is unjustifiable. It is sometimes said that the abolitionists seek to provoke the slaves to insurrection. Nothing is more false and calumnious. The abolitionists are mostly 'peace men,' as they are called, and regard war, even defensive war, as contrary to the command, 'resist not evil.' No; they seek the peaceful emancipation of the slaves, and that only.

It is frequently said that the professed abolitionists carry things too far—that they are fanatical. But do not people perceive that this is in consequence of the opposition they meet with? If the river be obstructed it must rise till it can carry all before it. It is unavoidable that men who feel an undoubting confidence in the justice and righteousness of their cause, should be provoked to extremes by violent opposition. This is always the case. The people always think that the reformers of their age carry things to extremes. Yet it is almost always the case that future ages reverse this decision. The influence of opposition and persecution is irresistible; and while we have men, and not angels or gods, to preach up our reformations, they will be driven by these influences to do and say many things that they otherwise might not have said. The persecutions that the abolitionists have suffered for opinion's sake, are beyond what you would believe, if I should relate them to you. They will form one of the darkest and most disgraceful pages in our country's history. They have been cast out of society, insulted in the streets, slandered and maligned in public prints, denied all places of assembling for their meetings, had their meetings disturbed by mobs and the houses in which they were held burnt down; they have been whipped, tarred and feathered, dragged through the streets by mobs—they have had their dwellings forcibly entered, torn down and burnt with all their furniture before their eyes, and finally they have been murdered in the streets, and all this for doing what the law allows every man to do, and has engaged to defend him in doing it. The abolitionists have never provoked this lawless violence by first transgressing the laws themselves. No instance of this can be found.

When we consider that the abolitionists have persevered, in the face of all this opposition and lawless persecution, does it not prove to us that they are no hypocrites, no self-interested partizans, but are honest and in earnest? Does it not prove that they are moved by an irresistible spirit? Can we wonder that they have sometimes gone to extremes and

taken violent measures, when such extremes of violence have been used against them? But, be it remembered that the abolitionists did not resort to violent and uncharitable measures and epithets first; they did not resort to such things until they were driven to it. It is no part of their plan. Their plan was to enlighten the public mind concerning the great sin they were committing, and appeal to the consciences of men and set public opinion against slavery.

The most sharp-sighted southerners saw their aim. They complained that "the moral sentiment of the world has been armed against them." John C. Calhoun says, "Do they (the south) expect the abolitionists will resort to arms, will commence a crusade to liberate the slaves by force? \* \* \* Let me tell our friends of the south who differ from us, that the war which the abolitionists wage against us is of a very different character and FAR MORE EFFECTIVE; it is waged, not against our lives, but our CHARACTERS." Governor Hamilton, in his report to the legislature of South Carolina asks, "Are we to wait until our enemies have built up \* \* \* a body of PUBLIC OPINION against us WHICH IT WOULD BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST WITHOUT SEPARATING OURSELVES FROM THE SOCIAL SYSTEM OF THE REST OF THE WORLD?" Duff Green, editor of the United States' Telegraph, printed at Washington, said in that paper, in November, 1835, "We are of those who believe the south has nothing to fear from servile war. We do not believe that the abolitionists intend, or could if they would, excite our slaves to insurrection. The danger of this is small. We believe that WE HAVE MOST TO FEAR FROM THE ORGANIZED ACTION UPON THE CONSCIENCES *and fears of the slave-holders themselves*, from the insinuations of their DANGEROUS HERESIES (!) into our schools, our PULPITS and our domestic circles. *It is only by alarming the consciences of the weak and diffusing among our people a MORBID SENSIBILITY on the question of slavery*, that the abolitionists can accomplish their object. Preparatory to this, they are laboring to saturate the non-slaveholding states with the belief that slavery is a sin against God. We must meet the question in all its bearings. *We must satisfy the consciences*, we must allay the fears of our people. *We must satisfy them that SLAVERY IS OF ITSELF RIGHT; that IT IS NOT A SIN AGAINST GOD; that it is not an evil, moral or political.*" In another paper the same editor says, "We hold that our sole reliance is on ourselves; that we have most to fear from the gradual operation on public opinion among ourselves, and *that those are the most insidious and dangerous invaders of our rights and interests, who, coming to us in the guise of friendship, endeavor to persuade us THAT SLAVERY IS A SIN, a curse, an evil.* It is not true that the south sleep upon a volcano, that we are afraid to go to bed at night, that we are fearful of murder and pillage. OUR GREATEST CAUSE OF APPREHENSION IS FROM THE OPERATION OF THE MORBID SENSIBILITY WHICH APPEALS TO THE CONSCIENCES OF OUR PEOPLE, and would make them the voluntary instruments of their own ruin." What confessions are these! The south knowingly arrays itself in opposition and hostility to men who they acknowledge appeal to the consciences of men. The south, by their own confession, array themselves against the moral sentiment of the world; against the consciences of men, and against God! Oh! who does not tremble for them, and cry, God be merciful and spare them canst thou forgive them? they know what they do.

It is sometimes asked if the course the abolitionists are now taking, is the best, and is a going to effect any thing. I confess, not only that I can see no better course than the one they are taking, but that I can see no other possible course. There are many who object to this course, but I have never seen one who could point out a better, or even another, course. And making due allowances for the extravagances and improper things of all kinds that unavoidably accompany such movements against public opinion, I think there will be nothing in the course of the abolitionists that even the most fastidious can object to, unless he be really in favor of slave-holding, either for itself or its subserviency to some of his selfish aims.

The success and effects thus far, of the enterprize, have been what were foreseen. It is sometimes asked, What have they gained? Much; very much. Two hundred thousand complete abolitionists, and two or three times that number thawed and tamed down so as to be considered more than half converted. They have got the public ready to hear without mobbing them. They have gained access to meeting-houses, and other places of public meeting. They have, in fine, got things into successful operation at the north, the only spot that will receive the leaven that is to leaven the whole lump.

The effect upon the south has been what might have been expected. Slave-holding is founded upon the lower, animal nature—it receives no countenance from reason and conscience. That person who determines to hold a slave must be under the influence of his lower nature; hence when you oppose slavery you call forth all the fury and foam of the boisterous animal nature. When the slave-holders see that the abolitionists are by no means intimidated by their rage, but receive all as a matter of course, things that they had foreseen and provided for, they will think more seriously of the matter and change their position. Their animal nature is overcome by the undisturbed self-possession of the abolitionists, as the wild beast of the forest, or the scarcely less animal highwayman, is completely disarmed and overcome by the calm, self-possessed dignity of the higher moral nature. The south, seeing that the north are not to be scared by ‘sound and fury, signifying nothing,’ will take another course. When all else has failed, and the abolitionists are pressing upon them with constantly increasing numbers, the slave-holders will be obliged to discuss the subject upon moral grounds, and in the light of conscience. When they do that, slavery falls at once, and the object of the abolitionists, emancipation, is attained. They may disband their forces, and repose upon their laurels.

At present, the southerners do not, generally, understand and appreciate the motives of the abolitionists. They cannot see what we are going to gain by emancipation. They flatter, beseech, threaten, just according to the mood they happen to be in; or the mode they think will be most successful. They hear certain strange, fanatical things spoken of by the abolitionists, called justice, humanity, and conscience; but they cannot see why they should value these so much more highly than the advantages, conveniences and luxuries of unpaid, permanent, hereditary ‘help’; who are, withal, so very submissive and obedient, as to seldom attempt to have a will or an opinion of their own.

X. I will tax your patience no farther at present than to notice a few

objections to the object that the abolitionists have in view. These objections arise from a consideration of the evils that it is *feared* may come from immediate emancipation.

We expect that evils will result from emancipation. It is not to be expected that two hundred and twenty years of injustice, cruelty and sin, can be atoned for without suffering. But, then, of what kind are the evils that will result from immediate emancipation? Are they sins, or merely inconveniences? They are merely the evils—the inconveniences—brought upon us by our passed sins. They are no sins, to be followed by the unslumbering retributions of justice. We commit no sin by freeing the slave. Is it not, therefore, better to suffer all the evils of immediate emancipation, be they what they may, than to continue to sin by continuing slavery? Every day that we delay emancipation, the difficulties in the way of it, and the evils of it when it shall have come, increase. The evils attending the abolition of slavery are great; but we have brought them upon ourselves. The Africans did not come here of themselves, and inflict themselves upon us. No, we brought them here against their wills. They have done us no wrong. We have brought the evil upon ourselves. Shall we then delay to do justice because it will be attended by deserved punishment, and yet pretend to be lovers of righteousness?

Slavery is not merely an evil that we must remedy some time; but it is an evil that we are guilty of increasing every day until we do remedy it. While we delay, we are not like the band of robbers who have repented of their course and said, We will cease to do evil and restore to every man what we have taken from him, by and by, as it may suit our convenience; but we are like the band who resolve to go on to rob and plunder until they have enough, and can spare enough to make restitution. For, even now, while we are deliberating, we are adding to the evil. There is no standing upon neutral ground; no, not so much as long enough to decide what to do. We not only hold those in slavery who are now enslaved, but we reduce eight or nine freemen to slavery every hour in the day. Every day, we part husbands and wives; parents and children; brothers and sisters. Do not say that the Africans do not feel this evil, for they are remarkable for the strength of their personal attachments. The husband sees his wife, the parent his children, taken and carried, they know not where—and sold, they know not to whom. They only know that bonds, and stripes, and servitude await them till death comes to their relief. So deeply do they feel this separation, that they often commit suicide rather than endure it. Yet, probably not less than an hundred such separations occur every day; and that too by laws which every one of us, my hearers, have a voice in making or repealing?

But we admit that there will be evils attending the emancipation of the slaves. They may come before emancipation takes place. Do we not see them around us now? What else are the sufferings and blood of the martyrs to the cause of emancipation? the mobs and riots that disturb and disgrace our country? the dangers to which our public officers are exposed for a conscientious discharge of their duty? What are these but the evils attendant upon emancipation? There may also be evils consequent upon emancipation. It is hardly to be hoped that there will not be. But there have been none of the evils that were expected to follow the abolition of slavery, in Antigua, where the experiment has had its



fairest trial. I refer to Antigua, in particular, because we have more definite information concerning that island than any other of the West Indies, where slavery has been abolished.

Two of our own citizens went to Antigua to examine into the success of the abolition experiment there. I extract the following statements from their work. I do not know that its credibility or accuracy has ever been questioned.

On the first day of August, 1834, there were thirty thousand slaves emancipated. It was an experiment of *immediate* emancipation. There had been no 'gradual preparation,' which we are sometimes told must precede emancipation. They were all set free at once. They received the boon with religious rejoicing and devout thanksgiving. I give the following particulars concerning the experiment in Antigua.

1. The liberated slaves have been perfectly peaceable, and manifested no disposition to revenge their former wrongs.

2. They have been more industrious than they were before they were free; so much so, that it is found that they will do so much more work and do it so much better, that it is more profitable to hire them and pay them wages when they are free, than to own them and merely feed and clothe them.

3. They are obedient to the laws and are easily governed by them; and thereby they show, not only that it is safe to set them free, but that they are capable of governing themselves.

4. There are schools for the freed slaves, (established on purpose for them, I believe,) and they manifest a disposition to learn, and improve their moral and intellectual character.

5. They are far more moral than they were before they were free. They seem to take a pride in having neat dwellings, and quiet, comfortable homes.

6. And finally, the planters who opposed abolition, just as we do, and on precisely the same ground, now confess their error, and recommend abolition as safe, expedient and profitable.

The value of property has greatly increased. Men who dared not sleep, while they had slaves, without their doors barred and bolted, and arms by the side of their beds, now feel no necessity for these things. The negroes are as peaceable, industrious, and moral, as any citizens. They have mostly gone to work on the same plantations where they were held as slaves. In a very few cases, where the master had been very cruel, they refused to work for him and have gone to work somewhere else.

Now there is no reason why emancipation should not succeed as well here as it did in Antigua. Many men, who certainly know, have said that there are some things here more favorable to a successful experiment of abolition than in the West Indies, and nothing that is less favorable than it was there.

But we admit that there will be evils—inconveniences—attending the abolition of slavery. We dare not hope for the contrary. But it seems to me that every objection to immediate emancipation, arising from a consideration of its attendant inconveniences, betrays a great want of faith in God, certainly much greater than we should expect to find in any christian country. It betrays a great distrust of God's overruling Prov-

idence, or a very low and inefficient sense of justice in people, to choose sin rather than righteousness through a fear of the consequences of doing right.

Is it not a fundamental axiom in justice that the punishment of crime shall be greater than the profits of crime and the evils attendant upon doing right? If the punishment for horse-stealing were only a fortnight's imprisonment to hard labor, horse-stealing would be a pretty good business. One could hardly make money so fast in any other way. But then the law that assigned such a punishment to such a crime would be unwise and unjust. It is the object of punishment to prevent crime; therefore the punishment must be greater than all the inducements to crime; otherwise they are of none effect. They will not prevent crime and restore justice. Human minds may not presume to fathom the depths of divine justice; but then we may be assured, that, if there be a God of justice in the heavens, the punishment for continuing slavery must be greater than to counterbalance the profits of slavery, and the evils of immediate emancipation. This I should consider a sufficient answer to every objection that can be brought against immediate emancipation. Were the moral sentiment of the people so high as to enable them to understand clearly the principles of justice and right, and consequently to make them feel willing to obey its dictates, even when they could not see, from a calculation of the consequences, that it would be safe and profitable so to do, there could be no objection to immediate emancipation, arising from a consideration of its evils, sufficient to clog the mind for one moment in coming to a decision as to what course to take. But the moral sentiment—the sense of justice in the majority—is not high enough to give them this faith. I will therefore speak of a few of the objections to immediate emancipation.

1. It is said that emancipation would be infringing upon the slaveholder's right to property, one of man's most sacred rights. According to the slave laws, the slave is the property of the master. This is a legal question and should be met upon legal grounds. How then stands the slaveholder's right to property in the slave. The man who has made a slave of a freeman has just the same right to property in the slave that the thief has in the horse he has stolen, and no more. The master has stolen the freeman and made him a slave. Freedom is every man's birth-right, therefore every slave is stolen property; and because the thieves, the man-stealers, say that what they have stolen is their property, is it therefore their property? The laws decide not. The man who has bought a slave or received him as a present or inherited him, has no more right to property in that slave than the man who has bought the stolen horse of the thief has in the horse. The thief did not own the horse and therefore could not sell him, and the buyer could obtain no right to property in him by the bargain. Again, we have seen that the constitution of the United States does not consider slaves as property, and therefore the statute laws of the slave-holding states are unconstitutional. It is of no consequence that they declare the slaves property; a greater than they say, slaves are not property.

Here, then, the slaveholder has no *legal* right to property in the slave. Much less can he have a moral right. There is probably no slaveholder whose slaves have not earned him more than they cost him. They have

more than earn their freedom. But supposing they had not; supposing that emancipation would be taking away the master's property, had not men better be poor, than be rich when they must be rich by sin and rapacity? Shall men steal and rob and enslave, rather than be poor? Is God dead that ye will go on to rob and plunder and enslave? Is the arm of almighty justice withered that ye will dare its vengeance?

Man cannot be owned. You may claim the sun, moon and stars, if you will; but do not pretend to own your fellow-man. The sun, moon and stars shine but for him. They shall one day sink to everlasting night and be no more; but the man thou claimest for thine, shall be a son of God, an angel to shine like a star in the firmament when earth and created things shall have sunk back to nothingness, from whence they came. Yes; the man you claim and whip and tread upon, shall one day be an angel of light, and serve the Most High through the endless ages of eternity; and think, O slave-holder! how wilt thou feel to stand by his side in the presence of thy God and his God, thy Father and his Father, and see him, it may be, more honored than thou thyself!

2. It is said that the slave, if freed, will be immoral and vicious; that they are not capable of taking care of themselves. The success of the West India experiment is a sufficient answer to this. The slaves there, instead of becoming more immoral, have become more moral and virtuous. They have also shown that they can take care of themselves; that they are capable of being governed by the laws. The plea that it is better for the slaves to remain as they are, in any of its forms, is false. It is suggested by no desire for the slaves' good. What would a parent say if one of his children, to whom he had given no authority over the rest, should beat and bind them, and compel them to leave the work that the parent had set them about and do his? and then should offer as an excuse that it was better for them, he had done it for their good? Would this be considered a good excuse? Would any parent receive it as a sufficient excuse? Will God?

3. Again, it is said that if the slaves are freed, we shall be overrun with them here at the north. But suppose we are; had we not rather be overrun with negroes, than with the judgments of almighty God? Had we not better do right and commit ourselves in our innocence into the hands of him who loveth righteousness, than to dare his vengeance by continuing to insult and rebel against his overruling majesty?

But the fear of being overrun with slaves is a groundless fear. At least there is no more, nor in fact so much, ground, to fear being overrun with them if they are emancipated as there is if they are not. The slave-holding territory must sometime become full of slaves. What will the masters then do? They cannot export them; they will send the old, the infirm, the indolent and the vicious, to us in the free states, and we must receive them. In that case we shall have the worst part, the very offscouring of the slave population; but if they are freed we stand an even chance to get the best of them.

There are many and weighty reasons for believing that the negroes when freed will remain at the south. They are there, and their attachment to their native soil is uncommonly strong. The climate suits them far better than the colder climates of the northern states. The

masters, who now own them as slaves, will need to employ them as laborers to do the same work that they now do. When we consider all these things we see but very little reason to fear that the north will be overrun with negroes, if they should be freed. But if there were ever so much reason to fear that the blacks would flock to the northern states, as thick as bees to the hive, would it not be better to have it so than to keep them in bondage? Will you shut a man up in a prison, because his appearance, the appearance that God has given him, is not grateful to your eyes? Will you murder a man, to get him out of your way? You had better do so than to keep him in hopeless slavery. No, we had better have them so thick around us that the day should be dark with their sable visages, than to keep them as they are.

But I will enumerate no more objections. It is not worth our while to stop pleading with every man we may find by the way, especially if we see, as we but too often do see, that his opinions are disposed of. He can no more convey himself to our ranks, than the slave on the southern plantations. His opinions are sold, or mortgaged, to party, to avarice, or something else, so that he has but a show of possessing them. This, I say, is the case with many; am I uncharitable when I say, with all, who urge objections like those I have now been considering? But the day of emancipation hastens on. It comes moved by an almighty hand. Do not oppose the abolitionists, if you will not help them. Do not charge them with the evils of emancipation, be they what they may. They are but an instrument in the hand of God. The evils attendant upon their course are to be charged upon the sin against which they preach, the disease they would cure. You may cry peace, peace, but there is no peace for the wicked. You may say peace, be still, to the abolitionists, but if they should hold their peace the very stones would cry out, for God will be heard. You may say peace, peace, but there is no peace for the heart-broken, chain-galled sons of God, whom you hold in bondage. You may cry peace, to the volcano, to the whirlwind and the hurricane; you may command silence to the muttering thunder, the rumbling earthquake, and the fury of foaming ocean's rage, but O! do not presume to say 'peace,' be still, to the God of heaven, for the retributions of almighty justice will not keep peace while man doth wrong.

I have thus accomplished the work I proposed. I have endeavored to give an account of the origin, history and changes of human slavery, and to state especially the number and condition of the slaves in this country, and the means we may use for their release. We have seen that here, in this country, where the citizens are the freest of any on earth, the slaves are in the worst and most hopeless slavery. "Among the ancient nations their great rights of property and personal immunity, were with greater or less fullness recognized and protected. Our own slave-holders totally deny them. The Athenians and Romans oppressed with an iron heel; they insulted and wronged humanity, but that great and notable principle which annihilates it, and pronounces the slave a *thing* only, is altogether the discovery of men of a christian and democratic country." This is carrying things farther than hu-

manity will bear long, and affords a good ground to hope that slavery will soon be among the things that are passed.

I have also endeavored to point out the ways in which we may exert an influence upon the subject. Slavery is a political evil. It is sapping the very foundations of our republic. It is a practical contradiction of our fundamental axiom, that all men are born FREE and EQUAL. Therefore, as citizens, we are called upon to do away this great national evil. By our love of our country and its free institutions, we are called upon to free it from this corrupting gangrene, before which every thing pure, liberal and democratic, writhes and dies out; we are called upon to cut off this diseased limb, lest the disease infect the whole system, and the hopes of the world be blasted in our expiring republic. Slavery is an injustice, a sin against the laws of God. Therefore, as Christians and preachers of righteousness, we are called upon to raise our voice against this daring outrage of our Maker's laws. As we believe in a God who will reward the righteous and punish the wicked, we must exert an influence to save our country from that sin that is a reproach to any people, and which most assuredly will call down upon us severe judgments. As believers in the immortality of the human soul, we are called upon to secure to those to whom the 'lamp of life' is denied, the means of preparing for that immortality. The sufferers are our fellow men, our brethren; and therefore, as philanthropists, we are called upon to bind up their broken hearts, to alleviate their woes, and pour the balm of consolation into their wounds. In whatever light we regard it, there seems to come a long, loud cry for help. God, in his providence, seems to say, 'son, go work to-day in this my vineyard; dig up the noxious weed of human slavery.' Let us not be disobedient to the call. Let us be up and a doing, for the night of death comes, in which no man can work. Put away your hesitating doubts. Rise to action. Take the first step, and the second will then become plain. Rise, and let action convert your doubts into belief or certainty. The work is arduous. The struggle will be long. It will call forth all your best thoughts and energies—but it will thereby make you wiser, better and holier beings. By doing righteously, we grow in righteousness and earn our place in that mansion which Jesus has gone before us to prepare.





