[Read in Music Hall]

Hampton Va Jan 24 1863

Mrs Child

Dear Madam,

The invitation to the Subscription Anniversary is received, and it would give me the highest pleasure to to be present and join the cordial greeting, participate in the rejoicings for what has been acheived, and listen to the inspiring word that shall fall from the lips of those whose commission reads— Go speak my words in the ears of this people whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. I shall surely be with you in spirit; for though locally seperated, my heart has long been drawn in sympathy towards those who have been laboring for the Emancipation, of the bondman, for the regeneration of this nation, and the redemption of the world; and in the distance my spirit often looks towards you and says,

"For I to your Saviour belong,"

that Saviour who came to seek the lost, lift up

the bowed-down, deliver the oppressed — and say to the guilty friendless sinner, Go — sin no more.

Much has been acheived and it was meet that this New Year should be ushered in with rejoicings for the pre-advent of Freedom; and at your Anniversary you will perpetuate the Thanksgiving anthem. But never, I apprehend, did one of these annual gatherings occur at a more momentous crisis, never did you assemble to meet demands more imperative for receiness for vigorous action, and unflinching persistency in urging the claims of Justice and Humanity. How instructive to trace the analogy between us and ancient Pharaoh! At first he said haughtily and defiantly, Who is the Lord? I will not let you go. But Omnipotence said, We will see: — all the world shall know that I am the Lord. Stroke upon stroke fell upon the offender; he begins to relent, and the first concession is — But <u>who</u> shall go? Then another plague, and he says, go ye that are men, let all the rest remain. Yet another plague, and he says, Go yourselves and take your little ones, but

let your flocks and herds be stayed. Eternal Justice and Impartial Love said through Moses, You must serve the Lord with a feast, and not a hoof shall be left behind. To bring them to this point they had been three days enveloped in darkness, so that they saw not one another, nor rose any from his place. Now let us see how modern Pharaoh has done. For thirty years he has been proudly saying, "I know not the Lord that sent these abolitionists. I will not let the negro go — he's my property — God made him for a slave — fit for nothing else." But in the procession of events he learns that he is standing on a volcano, — that there is an eruption — the foundations are upheaving; — he feels the strokes of the Almighty, and begins to consider whether it is not better to let some of them go, — at least enough to meet a "military necessity." Little by little he yields as the plagues in succession one after another fall upon him, — disaster — defeat — and darkness. We now in our history seem to have arrived about to that point, where Pharaoh said to Moses, Go all of you — but not the flocks and herds. Liberty is now proclaimed to almost four millions of our bondmen, but there is a remnant still held —

the flocks & herds are staged; - without there the
feast cannot be served, — And the darkness —
are ~~were~~ we now enveloped in its folds? Where i
there light? Can any one see it? Is it light enough
for the President, the Cabinet, or the army to see t
way before us? How many days have they been se
in darkness - darkness which is felt, not any one r
from his place? Is this picture a mere fan
of a heated brain? If not, are these coincidence
accidental? Rather they show the presence and
working of an Almighty Deliverer. If this picture
rational, true, we may see that this is not the h
for misgivings, but from this hour of darkness we
learn something of our present position, of the futu
that is at the door, gird ourselves anew to watch a
wait, make ready for that night of the Lord, n
at hand which is to be observed in all generati
for when <u>midnight</u> is fully come, the Lord wi
go out and smite all the first-born of Phara
and execute judgement upon all the <u>God</u>
of Egypt. Let us not look for this deliverance in da
light, for at <u>midnight</u>, Behold the Bridegroom com
therefore as the darkness thickens and gathers around u
let us rejoice, for Behold he standeth at the door

I enclose two dollars to be appropriated as you think best. "There shall not an hoof be left behind". May this be the animating spirit of the meeting. May this be the text of every Lecturer and Laborer until it is taken up and reiterated from every pulpit, and every Legislative Assembly in our midst. Then shall we know that the hour of deliverance has come to God's poor, and they enriched with the jewels which he will, when the hour comes instruct them how to borrow, go forth to hold a feast unto the Lord in the wilderness.

Affectionately Yours.
C. G. Bles.