





GIVEN BY

**PROCEEDINGS**

OF A

**PUBLIC MEETING**

OF THE

**CITIZENS OF PROVIDENCE,**

HELD IN THE BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

MARCH 7, 1854,

TO PROTEST AGAINST SLAVERY IN NEBRASKA;

WITH THE

**ADDRESSES OF THE SPEAKERS.**

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PROVIDENCE:

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1854.



# PROCEEDINGS.

## PUBLIC MEETING TO PROTEST AGAINST SLAVERY IN NEBRASKA.

THE citizens of Providence who are opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the admission of Slavery into the free territory of Nebraska, are invited to meet in the BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, on the evening of TUESDAY, March 7th, at 7 o'clock precisely, to utter their solemn and stern protest against the measure now pending in Congress. Let the united voice of our people be heard by their rulers, in favor of Liberty, and against the encroachments of the slave power.

Agreeably to the foregoing call, signed by 1500 citizens, and published in the daily papers, the people of Providence met in the Beneficent Congregational Church, on the evening named. The house was filled in every part—the galleries being reserved for ladies.

At the hour announced, the meeting was called to order by SETH PADEL-FORD, Esq., who as Chairman of a Committee appointed at a preliminary meeting of the signers of the call, proposed the following list of officers for the evening.

### HON. ALBERT C. GREENE, PRESIDENT.

#### VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. John Pitman,	Dr. Samuel B. Toby,	Orray Taft, Esq.
Hon. Henry B. Anthony,	Isaac Brown, Esq.	Robert Knight, Esq.
Josiah Chapin, Esq.	Sylvanus G. Martin, Esq.	Aaron B. Curry, Esq.
Rev. Dr. Crocker,	David Cady, Esq.	Tully D. Bowen, Esq.
Resolved Waterman, Esq.	Wm. A. Robinson, Esq.	Joseph Carpenter, Esq.
John H. Ormsbee, Esq.	Seth Adams, Esq.	William P. Bullock, Esq.
Mathew Watson, Esq.	James T. Rhodes, Esq.	Earle Carpenter, Esq.
Zachariah Allen, Esq.	Shubael Hutchens, Esq.	Pardon M. Stone, Esq.
Hon. Thomas M. Burgess,	Royal Chapin, Esq.	Philip Allen, Jr. Esq.
Rev. Dr. Caswell,	William J. King, Esq.	William Viadl, Esq.
Hon. William W. Hoppin,	Adnah Sackett, Esq.	Henry L. Bowen, Esq.
Hon. Amos C. Barstow,	Earle P. Mason, Esq.	David Barton, Esq.
Hon. Samuel G. Arnold,	Elisha Dyer, Esq.	George S. Rathbone, Esq.
Hon. Benjamin F. Thurston,	Amos D. Smith, Esq.	Billings Brastow, Esq.
Hon. Wm. S. Patten,	John Barstow, Esq.	Smith Owen, Esq.
Amasa Manton, Esq.	Walter S. Burges, Esq.	Daniel T. Goodhue, Esq.
Truman Beckwith, Esq.	Paris Hill, Esq.	

#### SECRETARIES.

Clement Webster, Esq.,	John Eddy, Esq.
Rev. R. H. Conklin,	Samuel Austin, Esq.

The report was unanimously adopted, and the officers elected entered upon the discharge of their duties.

Prayer was offered by the Rev. S. C. BROWN, Pastor of the Chestnut Street Methodist Church. An address was made by General GREENE, on taking the chair; Resolutions were introduced by Professor CASWELL, of Brown University, Chairman of a Committee appointed for the purpose at the preliminary meeting; and addresses were made by the Rev. Dr. HALL, Pastor of the First Congregational Church, A. PAYNE, Esq., Rev. Dr. WAYLAND, President of Brown University, Hon. J. WHIPPLE, and Rev. S. WOLCOTT, Pastor of the High Street Congregational Church.

The remarks of the speakers were received with frequent demonstrations of applause by the large and intelligent audience, which remained seated from half-past six until half-past ten o'clock; when the resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the meeting was dissolved.

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## ADDRESSES.

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### REMARKS OF HON. ALBERT C. GREENE.

FELLOW CITIZENS:—The subject on which this meeting is to act is one of the most interesting and important that has ever demanded the attention of the citizens of Providence.

It is but very recently that I have known I might be called upon to take part in the proceedings of this evening. I shall, therefore, ask your attention only long enough to remind you of some of the most prominent facts in the history of the slave question, as connected with the bill now before Congress, and against the passage of which we are here to protest, and I shall then leave the subject in the hands of those able and eloquent gentlemen who have been announced as the speakers who are to address you.

The revolution found the institution of slavery legalized among us. The attention of the Christian world had not then been fully awakened to the evils of slavery and the enormities of the slave trade.

The constitution of the United States was the work of patriotic men who had recently been most actively engaged in our great struggle for liberty, and who were deeply imbued with the spirit of that declaration which had proclaimed as self-evident truths "*that all men are created equal,*" and that among their inalienable rights are life and "*liberty.*" It was in this spirit that the use of the words "*slave*" and "*slavery*" were studiously avoided in the framing of that instrument. It was that same spirit that gave rise to the great ordinance of 1787, which was coeval with the constitution, and which is declared "*unalterable but by common consent*"

By that ordinance slavery was forever prohibited in all the territory over which Congress had power to legislate in relation to that subject. This act only embodied and carried out the general sentiment of the wise and patriotic men of that day, at the South as well as at the North, by whom slavery was regarded as a great moral, social and political evil. On this subject some of the greatest and best men of the South spoke freely, openly, with deep feeling and in strong language, deprecating its existence and looking with hope and faith to its eventual extinction.

An addition to the territorial limits of our Union which should extend the area of slavery was never contemplated by the framers of the constitution. When, in 1803, the purchase of Louisiana was made by Mr. Jefferson, strong doubts were entertained by him of the constitutionality of that proceeding, and he justified, or rather excused it, on the ground of *necessity* only. His doubts and those of other eminent statesmen of that day were, however, practically overruled or disregarded, and a precedent was thus established for the incorporation of foreign territory into our Union by the treaty making power. This precedent was afterwards followed by the purchase of the Floridas, in 1819, by treaty with Spain.

By these treaties vast territories, in which slavery was recognized by law, were brought under the jurisdiction of the United States; and out of these new States might be formed.

The future admission of slaveholding States to be formed from these territories was viewed by the free States of the Union as a clear infraction of the spirit of the constitution. It was regarded not merely as a moral, but as a political question. One of the subjects most difficult of adjustment in forming the constitution was the distribution of the political power. The rule finally adopted gave to the slaveholding States a proportion in the representation based upon the addition of three-fifths of their slaves to their whole free population.

When, therefore, it was asked that Missouri should come into the Union as a slave State, it was strenuously resisted by the North, as unjust and as violating the great principles on which the Constitution was based. In the memorable debates which arose out of this controversy your own BURRILL most nobly distinguished himself. It was when about to address the Senate in vindication of the rights and the principles of freedom, in one of the ablest speeches delivered on that question, that he made his happy reply to one of the Senators from Virginia. As he rose, his foot became entangled in his cloak, and he appeared to be in danger of falling. "That is ominous of defeat, Mr. Burrill," said Gov. Barbour. The answer was a quotation not more readily made than appropriately applied. "*I fear no omen in my country's cause.*"

The result of this controversy, which had threatened the most serious consequences to the safety and stability of the Union, was the Missouri compromise act of 1820, which it is now attempted to annul.

This was a Southern measure and was carried through mainly by Southern votes. The great influence and acknowledged patriotism of Henry Clay, and the unsurpassed eloquence of Pinckney, had greatly contributed to its success.

It was received by the North not as conceding all we had a right to ask, but as a measure of peace; and one forever securing to freedom, an immense extent of country. As such it has ever since been fully acquiesced in and sustained.

By this act a partition of the Louisiana purchase was made. In all that portion of it lying south of the line of 36 deg. 30 min. slavery was permitted, Missouri; lying north of the line was admitted without restriction; but all the residue of that territory on that side of the line was forever consecrated to freedom.

Under this agreement Missouri and Arkansas have been admitted into the Union. Iowa alone has been added to the number of free States.

I have said that the acquisition of Louisiana and the Floridas, was by treaty, which of course could be made only by the President, with the advice and consent of *two-thirds* of the Senate, a body especially representing

the States, and in which each State without regard to its extent or population has equal power. This had been considered as the only manner in which foreign territory could be acquired, until the question of the annexation of Texas arose.

When the acquisition of that country, where slavery had been re-established, became a favorite measure with the South, as one that would add to her security, and increase her power, it was found that the project could not obtain the sanction of the requisite number of Senators. The necessity of such sanction was then denied, and the right claimed and exercised to annex to our Union a foreign country not by the treaty power, but by joint resolutions of Congress, requiring only a bare majority of each House.

Here again was a new construction of the Constitution, by which a foreign, independent, slave holding State was made a member of the Union, and by which the foundation was laid for the admission of other States, as they might afterwards be carved out of that country with her assent.

In this manner the spirit of the Constitution has been lost sight of or disregarded, and the barriers in the way of the extension of slavery, and the increase of the slave power, have been removed as fast as the necessities or the wishes of the Southern States demanded.

Another measure is now proposed to further the interests of the slaveholding power, by removing another barrier in the way of the extension of slavery.

The Nebraska bill repeals the Missouri compromise act, and obliterates the line which it established. This project is supported as only carrying out the spirit of the compromise measures (so called) of 1850. Those measures were the acts, by which California was admitted as a State—settling the boundary of Texas—giving territorial governments to Utah and New Mexico—abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia—and “the fugitive slave law.” When these measures were adopted, I had the honor of a seat in the Senate as one of your representatives in that body. I willingly gave my support to some of them. The fugitive slave law was among those which did not receive my vote. I voted against that act, because it contained no provision for a trial by jury, as I should vote against any act involving the question of personal liberty, and denying or impairing this great safeguard of freedom.

How these measures, which all, though by differing votes commanded a majority in Congress, can be considered as laying the foundation for this Nebraska bill, I am at a loss to conceive. I am aware of nothing that was said or done at the time these acts were passed that justifies this assumption; I find nothing in the acts themselves to warrant it; nor do I believe that with such a construction they could ever have been enacted.

The bill now before Congress seeks to annul a sacred compact, deemed obligatory and binding by those who entered into it, considered constitutional by the highest official authority at the time when it was made, and sanctioned and confirmed by an acquiescence of over thirty years, and a fulfillment by one of the parties. This measure is uncalled for by any existing necessity; it will revive anew the violent and embittered feelings which have always attended the agitation of the slavery question; it will impair the strength of our Union; it will destroy our mutual confidence; and it will open the way for the introduction and extension of slavery over a country containing nearly a half a million of square miles.

We are here to protest against this bill. We should do so in the spirit and with the firmness of freemen strongly attached to the Union, revering



the constitution made by our fathers, abiding in good faith by its compromises, but determined by all constitutional means *to resist the extension of slavery over our foot of our soil where it has now no legal right to enter.*

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REMARKS OF REV. ALEXIS CASWELL, D. D.

MR. PRESIDENT,—The committee appointed at the preliminary meeting of the friends of this movement, to prepare resolutions suitable for the consideration of this general meeting of citizens, have attended to the duty assigned them. They have simply to say, in explanation of the character of the resolutions, that, for obvious reasons, they deemed it proper to restrict themselves to the single object specified in the public call for the meeting—that is, to protest against the extension of slavery into territory now free, as contemplated in the Nebraska bill. Other issues of slavery, of the gravest moment, may well be contemplated elsewhere and on other occasions. Indeed, from the present gloomy aspect which the halls of Congress turn to the North, it may soon become an imperative duty, throughout the whole extent of the free States, to entertain them as questions for action, as well as contemplation. Without suggesting what ground may be taken with regard to others of them, it is hoped and believed that *this* will be met with an unbroken line of resistance.

It has been the intention of the committee to give to the resolutions a tone of remonstrance, at once dignified and firm and unequivocal,—such a tone as it becomes the freemen of Rhode Island to utter, whenever the cause of freedom is in danger, and one which we cannot doubt will find a deep and cordial response in the bosom of every citizen within these crowded walls to-night.

With your permission, sir, I will read the

RESOLUTIONS.

Whereas, by the ordinance of 1787 for the organization and government of the northwest territory, then the only territory over which the Congress of the United States had jurisdiction;—an ordinance which had its origin in no sectional feeling, but which, in the language of an eminent statesman, “had the hand and seal of every Southern member in Congress”—it was ordained that slavery should be forever excluded from said domain; thus clearly evincing the intention of the great founders of the Republic to restrict slavery to the States in which it then existed; and

Whereas, the Constitution of the United States, contemporary in its formation with said ordinance, expressly empowers Congress to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory belonging to the United States, there being then but one; and

Whereas, by the act preparatory to the admission of Missouri into the Union, approved March 6, 1820, known as the Missouri compromise, it was solemnly agreed and enacted that “in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes of north latitude”—(comprising nearly all the territory now to be organized,)—“slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in punishment for crimes, shall be and is hereby forever prohibited;—and

Whereas, in the joint resolution for the admission of Texas into the Union, passed March 1st, 1845, it was expressly affirmed that “in such State or States as shall be formed out of said territory north of said Missouri compro-

mise line, slavery or involuntary servitude (except for crime) shall be prohibited; and

Whereas, the bill known as the Nebraska bill, now pending before Congress, has for its object the removal of said prohibition of slavery in all the territory north of said parallel of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes, thus opening to the encroachment and blight of slavery an immense and fertile public domain, which, by sacred compacts and legislative enactments, dating from the very origin of the republic, has been again and again consecrated to freedom; therefore,

*Resolved*, That, as citizens of Rhode Island, without distinction of party, we solemnly protest against the passage of the said bill.

We protest against it as a measure uncalled for by the present condition of the territory, and as boding renewed injuries to the Indian tribes within its borders.

We protest against it as an invasion of the rights of the free States, and as fraught with imminent peril to the peace and harmony of this Union, which we have been accustomed to cherish, and which we earnestly desire, by every just and honorable means, still to perpetuate.

We protest against it in the name of liberty, which it scandalizes; in the name of humanity, which it wrongs; in the name of plighted public faith, which it violates and tramples under foot.

*Resolved*, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be respectfully requested to use their utmost endeavors to prevent the passage of said bill, and every other bill which contemplates or permits the extension of slavery into territory now free.

*Resolved*, That copies of these resolutions and preamble, signed by the Chairman and Secretaries of this meeting, be forwarded to our Senators and Representatives, and that they be requested to present the same to both Houses of Congress.

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#### REMARKS OF REV. EDWARD B. HALL, D. D.

MR. PRESIDENT.—It is the first, and I hope it may be the last time, when a sense of duty shall impel me to consent to speak on an occasion in any degree political. I see only its moral aspects; and approach it, not eagerly, nor in any temper of denunciation—but sorrowfully—in view of all that has led to it, and all that may follow. Let me go back for a moment, to its nominal beginning.

The year 1820 is destined to be remembered. It opened with the discussion and passage, in the American Congress, of the first, I believe, of those acts known by the significant, and as it may prove, ill-fated name of *Compromise*—the act which the same power now proposes to annul. The year closed, for it was the same year, with a great speech of a great statesman, not on the same ground, but on yet more “hallowed ground”—where, on the two hundredth birth-day of the nation, Daniel Webster planted his firm foot on the Rock of Plymouth, and expanded his large frame, to utter, among other eloquent declarations, the most scathing rebuke of the “slave-traffic,” that even that iniquity ever received. He appealed to merchants and all good citizens, to sweep it from the high way of nations. He called upon those who filled the seats of justice, to be faithful and firm in executing a law which made the slavetrader a pirate and felon. And he invoked, in words not to be forgotten now, the ministers of “religion”—declaring with

mighty emphasis—"if the pulpit be silent, it is false to its trust." Sir, if there has been an hour since that, when this appeal should be renewed and regarded, it is this hour. I pass by subsequent occasions, like that in the Senate four years ago this day, the 7th of March, 1850; when the same strong voice advocated a measure, of which, it was thought, the pulpit ought *not* to speak. The pulpit asks not leave of man to speak; but it may accept man's reproof be he high or low, if it be silent when not liberty only, but justice, truth, honor, the law of the land, and the law of God, are affronted.

Am I told, that the question now before the country has nothing to do with the slave-trade, of which Mr. Webster spoke? I think I understand the meaning of the present question, and I have no desire to make it worse than it is. Let us not misrepresent it. It is not a decree of slavery. The Nebraska bill wears a different face, and I would not charge deceit or evil purpose upon its author, or any man hastily. The new Territories, or States, are to be left free to admit slavery or exclude it, as they please. And this is said to be only putting them on a level with other States, and to be after all a very small matter! Sir, is there a man in this crowded assembly, who would think it a small matter to pass through the security of freedom to even the possibility of bondage—in himself, his family, his chosen State, or growing country? Is there so little difference between full, joyous liberty, and even the danger of slavery—and American slavery—as much worse than the Hebrew servitude of which we hear, as Christianity is larger and better than Judaism? Beside, Sir, the vice here, as all know, is the breaking of faith—recreancy on the one hand, and sycophancy on the other. And, again, it is the encroachment of slavery upon our own rights and our own freedom. It is the retrogression and degradation of the country, instead of advancement and prosperity. And though it were not capable of proof, as it is, that the traffic both domestic and foreign, alike atrocious, will be essentially affected by the measure now proposed—though it were not true, as our first civilians, North and South, have declared, that the needless extension of slavery is as repugnant to the spirit of our federal compact, as to the law of nature and God—it could still be shown, that the deed to be perpetrated now, transcends, in its inconsistency and moral outrage, all previous acts, and deserves the epithets with which the orator branded the foreign trade—as "inhuman and disgraceful." There are three grades of slavery, or three positions which it assumes, and asks us to sanction—first, its continuance where it already exists, protected by local law; next, its permission in new territories, by compact and compromise; and next and worse, its protrusion, in *violation* of compact and compromise, into a province dedicated and forever pledged to liberty! Sir, if this be not a climax in the foul wrong, it can be found only in the future. The past does not record it. Our own history contains nothing like it. Our nation, though it were as guilty as the most indignant think it—which God forbid! has not yet steeped itself in this infamy. I repeat, there is a wide distance, an enormous stride of the gigantic slave-power, from all previous steps to this; and the difference creates a personal and fearful responsibility. For the introduction of slavery into the country, we are not accountable; for its continuing where we have no right or power to reach it, unless by moral means and Christian appeals, we are not accountable; nor for the different constructions of that wonderful instrument, the Constitution, so carefully framed and balanced by great minds, who would not suffer it to be defaced by the odious word "slave;" virtually declaring it "wrong," as Madison said, "to admit

in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in men"—yet inserting an article which is interpreted as imposing upon us a duty, against which our whole souls revolt. Of these constructions, it is not my province to judge—and for the inferences, just or unjust, I hold not myself accountable. But totally different is my relation, the relation of every man in the republic, to the pretence and attempt here made, to seize a vast region, equal in extent to nearly all our free States together, a region in which the sovereign power itself has pronounced, that "slavery shall be, and hereby is, forever prohibited"—and to prohibit this prohibition, opening the whole to all the evils of that cruel system.

Why, Sir, the world cries out against this outrage, even portions of the world which we ourselves have looked down upon as almost barbarous. The Sultan, years ago, abolished the slave-market in Constantinople. The Bey of Algiers, living on the very line of 36 deg. 30 min., has removed the curse from his dominions. The Barbary States of Africa have become abolitionists, so far as they can be. And lo! *here*, in proud America, in the most favored republic the sun ever shone upon, in a Senate which we have been taught from childhood to honor, there stands up a man, calling himself a freeman, with all the privileges and responsibilities of a free State and an advanced christian age, and with no necessity, no provocation, or admitted lure, asks this nation, before its own tribunals and high heaven, to perjure itself for *slavery*! Have the nations of the earth seen the like before! Will they not, and may they not, hiss at this vaunted free America! Heretofore, with whatever qualifications and regrets, few Americans, if any, have gone abroad, especially from New England, without finding constant reason to thank God for such a home as ours. But if this act is to be consummated, if we ourselves, knowingly, voluntarily, shall commit this huge fraud upon our own free soil and through a government of which we are all constituents, no just man, no christian, can look a foreigner in the face, and hear his taunt, without burning shame.

Sir, what has been the plea of the North and the South, in behalf of slavery? I mean, the moderate, peaceable portion of the North, and the intelligent and humane of the South, making, we will still hope, the majority of both sections. They have said to us, and we have desired to believe them, and feel for them—"Think not that we consider slavery no evil; it pains and oppresses us, more than it can you. Our first and noblest men, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Mercer, Lowndes, Pinkney, Clay, and many more, have virtually condemned it. We lament it, we would not continue it if we saw any safe remedy; we rejoice that you are not cursed with it, and pray that no others may be. Only leave us in peace, to wrestle with it as we can, until Providence opens a way of relief." Often have we heard this language, and though sometimes sadly contradicted both by words and acts, I have never allowed myself, for one, to doubt its sincerity in the many. Indeed so confidently did most of us rest upon it, that when we first heard of the Nebraska bill, we at once said—"There is no danger; it cannot pass; not the North only—alas, sir, that that trust is so basely betrayed!—but the South, all its fair representatives, at the least, will rise against it; they are too high-minded, beside all else, thus to trifle with their own assertions and pledges; they will not belie themselves, by not only asking to be let alone, but by overstepping their own line, robbing an immense domain of the freedom secured to it, and planting there a system which one of their own writers just after the passage of the Missouri compromise, called the "supreme curse of the country." So we felt, and what have we heard? What do we see? Not one remonstrance, not one southern man against

this recreant act! And are we to regard this as another of the fruits of slavery? Does it poison the very fountains of justice there, and exert its baleful influence here also, leaving us nothing on which to rest? Verily, all may learn one truth, if no more—that a “compromise” is a very poor reliance, and a “finality” an utter nullity.

A word more, and I give place to others. Sixty years ago, William Pinkney, of Maryland, a true man, said of slavery, whose nature he well understood, and whose perpetuity or spread he heartily deprecated, that, “if it should survive fifty years, it would work a decay of liberty in the *free States.*” Was he a prophet? And is it too late to prevent the worst fulfilment of his prediction? Let us hope not. True to our State motto of “Hope in God,” if not in man, let us cherish the faith, that this very blow, if fall it must, though dealt by a parricidal hand, will strike, not death, but life, into Freedom’s fainting form, and cause her to stand erect, as in our early independence, in the panoply of righteousness, pleading and working, in the power of God and the spirit of Christ, for the Emancipation of Man.

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#### REMARKS OF ABRAHAM PAYNE, ESQ.

THE means by which slaveholders have obtained the control of this Government, may indicate the rule which ought to guide the future action of the people.

Less than seventy years since the people of the thirteen Colonies assembled in convention to form a Constitution. No where among men were the duties and powers of government so well understood, the rights of man so entirely respected as among that people.

In the midst of them existed an institution essentially despotic, and whose existence implied the denial of all rights to a class of men. The difficulty was to provide for this institution, under a declaration that all men were created equal, and in a constitution ordained among other things to “establish justice” and “secure the blessings of liberty.” Justice and liberty required that this institution should have neither recognition nor protection; but a necessity supposed to be controlling, and a policy presumed to be wise carried the day, and we are convened to-night for a purpose which illustrates the great truth, that “justice is the standing policy of nations, and that any eminent departure from it will turn out in the end to be no policy at all.”

That the sentiment of the people was at this time favorable to freedom, appears from the general consent with which the great ordinance of 1787 had just been enacted. That the character and probable influence of slavery as a political power had not then been thoroughly considered, is evident from the alacrity with which Congress assumed the doubtful power to legislate for the capture of fugitive slaves, and their criminal neglect to provide for the alleged fugitive a jury trial.

After thirty years we find Missouri claiming to come into the Union with a constitution permitting slavery. The increased culture of cotton had given the slaveholders a new interest in their slaves; the power of a banded oligarchy to control the action of the government was felt, and it made demands which, at the time when the constitution was formed, would have been trampled on with scorn and contempt. Justice and liberty demanded, and the constitution permitted, that slavery should be excluded from the national territory, and that none but free States should be admitted into the

Union. But another necessity had arisen, another stroke of policy was accomplished, and a solemn compact was made, by which we gave to the slaveholders a large portion of the vast domain, the rest of which they are now attempting to steal.

A few years after the anti-slavery feeling of the people was organized, and (with what errors I am not now to consider,) sought to enlighten the public conscience, and besieged the doors of Congress with petitions. Again the slaveholders renewed their demands, and again the people (this time reluctantly and only partially,) submitted.

Then came the annexation of Texas and the conquest of Mexico; measures conceived and executed by slaveholders for the always obvious and sometimes avowed purpose of strengthening, extending and perpetuating slavery.

Strenuous efforts were now made to arouse the people to a sense of their danger. Dr. Channing pleaded with them with all the fervor of his rare eloquence and all the power of his spotless character. Mr. Webster labored in public and private with the merchants whom he served and the farmers whom he loved, but they went, "one to his farm and another to his merchandise;" and his desponding confession that the people would not hear him, is still fresh in our memories, and should not be forgotten when we remember that there came a day, (also too soon!) when the cause of freedom called on Daniel Webster, and called in vain.

The war over, a large territory, obtained by conquest, awaited the disposal of Congress. Then came another struggle and another surrender of the people to the slaveholders. In the ashes of that conflict still live their wonted fires, and God grant that they may burn so long as their lives a slave to feel his chain. Justice and liberty were disregarded in the legislation of 1850—the public conscience has been debauched by a systematic attempt to make the people acquiesce in this legislation, and one of the ripe fruits of these proceedings is the bold, bad measure against which we are met to protest. This protest is well; and if it is followed by such action as will secure the appropriate and constitutional influence of this government in favor of freedom and against slavery, that will be better.

The general government of this country to-day is under the control of slaveholders, and is used by them for their own purposes. If it can be taken out of their hands and restored to the people to whom it belongs, justice may yet be established, the blessings of liberty may yet be secured. If the people cannot, or will not, take the government into their own hands and use it for the purposes for which it was instituted, then they will continue to live under a sway already sufficiently degrading, and growing more profligate year by year. I thank God that we have vitality enough left amongst us to protest, and I hope for the day when we shall have sufficient energy to act.

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#### REMARKS OF REV. FRANCIS WAYLAND, D. D.

**MR. PRESIDENT:** I am not surprised to see so large a number of the citizens of Rhode Island assembled on the present occasion. On this spot was formed the first government on earth which proclaimed both civil and religious liberty to be the birthright of man. It is meet that on this soil and in this city, a measure, which proposes to violate the most sacred rights of humanity, should receive its merited condemnation.

Before I proceed to consider this bill, I think it proper to say, that while I shall speak with entire plainness on the merits of the question, I shall avoid all denunciations of individuals. It is my good fortune to know and esteem many of my fellow-citizens at the South, whom I believe incapable of performing an action which they see to be dishonorable or mean. I will go farther, and say that I have never conversed with an intelligent and right-minded slaveholder who did not confess slavery to be wrong, utterly indefensible in itself, and the great curse that rests upon the Southern States. They have looked upon the subject in sad despair, hoping that a kind Providence would open for them some way of escape from an evil which was every year becoming more and more threatening. Such men, and they form a large portion of the best men at the South, will, I know, honor us for opposing this bill; and will in their hearts rejoice if our opposition be successful.

We have met to protest against the bill now before Congress for establishing the territorial governments of Nebraska and Kansas. The feature in this bill against which we first protest is, that in all that vast territory, now uninhabited by white men, either free or slave States may be organized at the will of the settlers. On the face of it, then, it places slavery and freedom on equal terms; and proclaims that freedom and oppression are looked upon with equal favor by the people of the United States. It is, I know, said that it is intended to have no practical effect, for that slavery will never be introduced there. This, I presume, however, that no one expects us to believe. To suppose the universal agitation of this subject to be revived, an agitation so much to be deprecated by the South, and the reproach of violated faith to be endured without an assignable object, is to suppose men to act without motive, that is, to be either idiotic or insane. We will not accuse reasonable men of this absurdity. I therefore consider this as a bill to establish slavery throughout all this vast region.

Now, against this bill I protest, in the first place, because it proposes to violate the great elementary law on which not only government, but society itself is founded.

If there be any moral or social principle more obvious or more universal than any other, it is this, that *every man has a right to himself*. He possesses this right as a man, because he is a man, in virtue simply of his humanity. This right includes his right to his body and his mind, to his material and his spiritual nature. It is the foundation of all responsibility, for the moment I cease to have a right to myself that moment I also cease to be responsible for my actions, either to God or to man. It is this right which distinguishes me from a brute. Brutes are endowed with no such right, and we may lawfully enslave them, slaughter them, and feed on them. Governments are established and laws are enacted not to confer this right, it existed before them, but to prevent its violation. It is the sole foundation of the right of property; for if I have a right to myself, I have a right to the product of my own energies, provided those energies are innocently directed, that is, not in interference with this right in another.

But assume the opposite, and what is the result? Suppose a man not to have a right to himself, and what is the consequence? Government is impossible. Every man becomes the prey of every other man. Right personal and right in property are annihilated by a single blow. Turks may oppress Greeks, Russians may trample on Turks, Austrians may deluge Italy or Hungary in blood, and no right is violated. Nay more; you, Sir, may enslave me, or I may enslave you, the white man may enslave the black man, and the black man may in turn enslave and murder the white man, and all are innocent of crime. Nay, I go further, if slavery be the law of humanity,

or even of the United States, we may as rightfully enslave Germans or Irish men as enslave men who differ from ourselves only in the color of their skin. The rising of the slaves universally would thus be justified, and all cause for our aiding to subdue insurrection would be taken away. But it is needless to pursue a doctrine so monstrous. Slavery is a sin against God, and an outrage on humanity. It deprives man not of one or another right, but it violates that fundamental law of humanity on which all right rests. I would protest against this iniquity anywhere, in the name of humanity and justice and universal love, I protest against it here at home specially, when this outrage is to be perpetrated on soil of which I and every other American citizen are the sole and rightful possessors.

But secondly, as an American citizen I protest against this bill.

Our government owes its existence to the assertion of the principle to which I have just alluded; that every man has a right to himself. The declaration of independence, that bill of rights which made us a nation, affirms, first of all, "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." It was for this principle that our fathers contended in that prolonged struggle, the revolutionary war. It was for this that blood was poured out like water at Concord and Bunker Hill, at Bennington and Saratoga, at Red Bank and Trenton, and York Town. And when they asserted this principle they asserted it of humanity, without excluding from it any portion of the race. This is abundantly shown by the writers of that time, who were also actors in the war of independence. To omit the mention of all the men at the North, it is sufficient to call to your recollection the names of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and in fact all the fathers of the republic, whose opinions were of sufficient importance to reach to the present day.

The sentiments of these men were fully exemplified by the act of 1787. Slavery existed in several of the States. It was acknowledged to be at variance with the sentiments of the whole people, and in violation of the principles asserted in the declaration of independence. That it might be forever restricted within its then limits, and thus be the more easily extinguished, all the territory then possessed by the confederation was declared to be forever free.

When the constitution was adopted, the object for which it was formed was explicitly stated; it was, "to *establish justice*" "and *secure the blessings of liberty.*" It is the recognition of this principle as the great object of our Union that gave this nation consideration among men. This we have always, it has been said even obtrusively, claimed for ourselves. It is in this respect that we have held ourselves up in contrast with governments in which the rights of man as man were trampled under foot. It is this principle which has made the stars and stripes the dawning star of liberty to the civilized world. Abolish this and there is nothing more to distinguish us from those despotic oligarchies, in which a few declare themselves free, while they hold millions under them in bondage.

Now I affirm that this proposed measure is in the gravest sense revolutionary, far more so than if it enacted that the office of the President should be abolished and its place supplied by an hereditary monarchy. This latter might be done and yet the great object for which the government was established be maintained. But here the great object for which the government was formed is not changed but reversed. The particular manner in which the agents of a government are to be related to each other, and to the people, is of far less consequence than the principle by which all their action is to



be directed. An insurance company is formed to protect buildings from loss by fire. It establishes its laws and elects its officers. But if its objects be reversed, and it devotes itself to setting buildings on fire, it were vain to tell me that they elected their president in the same manner, or that the clerks and the president were not permitted to interfere with the duties of each other. Nor, were I an original member of such a company, could I, by any cry of union, be persuaded to be a partner to their transactions. I should say the object being changed, the association is dissolved, and I will be a partaker in none of your villany. Now I cannot but consider this measure as of precisely this character. We united to form a government on the principle of the declaration of independence and the preamble of the constitution, namely: to establish justice and secure the blessings of liberty, to illustrate to the world the truth that all men are endowed by their Creator with an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This bill reverses this principle, and makes this government declare that men are not endowed with these rights, and that our object is not to establish justice or secure the blessings of liberty, but to extend slavery over their whole domain and transmit it to our children as their heritage forever. The force of such a revolution is to dissolve the government itself, for when the essential element of a compact is reversed, every contracting party is released from his obligations in respect to it. I therefore protest against this bill as revolutionary and giving just cause for a dissolution of the Union.

Third, As a citizen of a free State I protest against the passage of this bill.

This seems to me only one of a series of measures of which the obvious intention is to render the whole legislation of this country subservient to the interests of the slaveholding States, by securing, at all hazards, a majority in the Senate.

These measures it is painful to specify. I pretend not to enumerate them all, but I will mention only a few of the most important.

The purchase of Louisiana, though not made for this object, gave the first bias in this direction. It was made without constitutional authority, and furnishes an illustration of the mischief resulting from the violation of a principle for the sake of an immediate advantage. Then came the Missouri compromise. Here, for the sake of peace and the preservation of the Union, as it was said, the essential principle in which the government was founded was held in abeyance, and this territory, acquired from France, was divided, a part being conceded to slavery, and the rest irrevocably devoted to liberty. It has always been said that even this concession was procured by corruption. "We wanted," said John Randolph, "sixteen dough-faces and we got them; we could have got sixteen more had we wanted them." Then came the admission of Texas. This was done not only without constitutional authority, but, as I think, in opposition to constitutional enactment." By this act an immense tract prepared for slavery was admitted to the Union. The lamented Dr. Channing, than whom a truer friend of the Union never lived, declared in his letters on "The duty of the Free States," that if ever this was done, the Northern States were bound at once to separate themselves from the confederacy. Next came the compromise of 1850. In this instance the free States were grossly insulted, and nothing could have carried the measure but the influence of a great statesman, who, by his conduct in this case, has left a stain on his reputation which his even former brilliant services can never erase. A short time before Florida had applied for admission to the Union, with a constitution riveting slavery upon her to the latest time. When a question was made about receiving a State with

slavery so irrevocably interwoven into its constitution, it was indignantly replied that with this matter Congress had nothing to do; and that the Union would be dissolved if the slave character of the constitution of a State was made an objection to its reception. The next State which presented itself was California, with a free constitution. The reception of this State gave rise to an angry debate of six months, and she was admitted at last by a compromise. The remarkable terms of the compromise were—1st, that California should be admitted into the Union, and on the other hand, that *four* new slave States should be formed out of Texas; that a more stringent and reckless law should oblige the free States to deliver up fugitive slaves, and, on the other hand, that the slave trade, which on the high seas is piracy, should not be carried on in the district of Columbia.

Then came the measures which we are now considering. The territory covered by this bill is, in part, the same as was by the Missouri compromise solemnly consecrated to freedom. It was so considered by Southern men. The measure was carried by Southern votes. It was considered that in yielding to slavery the territory South of 36° 30', the North made a great concession for the sake of union. It is now proposed to nullify this solemn compact, and devote to slavery a territory out of which some fifteen or twenty new States may eventually be formed. When these States are organized and added to those formed out of Texas, the character of the Senate is irrevocably fixed. The legislation of the nation is forever Southern, and Southern legislation is always subservient to the peculiar institution of the South.

When this has been done, this country at home will present a singular spectacle. The slaveholders in the United States are said not to exceed 300,000, call them half a million. We have then half a million of men governing, in fact, thirty or forty millions. An institution unknown to the constitution will be seen annulling and subverting the constitution itself; an institution by which labor is rendered degrading and despicable, legislating for men who respect themselves the more for earning their own bread. How long a union of such a character can continue may be easily foreseen. The question ceases to be whether black men are forever to be slaves, but whether the sons of the Puritans are to become slaves themselves.

Nor is this all. This change in the principle underlying the constitution changes our relation to the whole civilized world. The great question which is henceforth to agitate the nations is the question of human rights. It has been the glory of this country thus far to stand forth everywhere in defence of human liberty. It is the position which we have taken on this question that has given us our influence among nations and taught down-trodden humanity everywhere to look up to us for succor. But establish slavery not as the exception, but the rule; make slavery the law of the land, the pivot on which legislation turns, and we must by necessity ally ourselves with despotism. We expose ourselves to contempt even now, by swaggering about human liberty, while a pious and benevolent lady is at this moment immured in a dungeon in Virginia for no other crime than that of teaching children to read. What will it be when such an act of oppression is sanctioned by the whole country.

I value the Union as much as any man. I would cheerfully sacrifice to it everything but truth and justice and liberty. When I must surrender these as the price of the union, the union becomes at once a thing which I abhor. To form a union for the sake of perpetuating oppression is to make myself an oppressor. This I cannot be, for I love liberty as much for my neighbor as for myself. To sacrifice my liberty for the sake of union is impossible.

God made me free and I cannot be in bondage to any man. These I believe to be the sentiments of the free States, and therefore it is, as a friend of the union; that I protest against this bill.

But there is another feature in this bill which deserves to be considered. The consequence of its passage must be the destruction of the Indian tribes within the territory which it proposes to establish. These poor red men had already begun to cultivate land and were advancing in civilization and christianity, when, in defiance of a hundred treaties, they were savagely torn up by the roots and transplanted to their present location, and in the removal one-third of their whole number perished. Every guarantee that could bind a moral agent was given them, that they should remain unmolested in their present residence forever. They are now rapidly improving their condition. They have schools admirably conducted, churches of Christ under the care of almost every Protestant denomination, they are introducing manufactures, and, in fact, will lose nothing by comparison with the whites in their vicinity. Shall these Christian men and women be again driven away? Shall the most solemn treaties ever ratified by the Senate of the United States be again violated? Shall an act of cruelty unparalleled in the history of civilized man be perpetrated because the victims are weak, and their skins are red? Has no man any rights unless his skin is white, or has a just God given permission to white men to defraud and enslave and murder their fellow men with impunity.

Lastly, I protest against the passage of this bill as a Christian.

It is my firm belief, Mr. President, the belief on which I rest my hope of salvation, that the Son of God assumed our nature, and died for our sins, that we might escape the condemnation deserved by our transgressions. I believe that he died for the redemption of our whole race, for the ignorant and down trodden African, as much as for his haughty Anglo-Saxon oppressor. While on earth, he chose the lot of a poor man, and of an oppressed man, thus showing us that it was this class which shared his deepest sympathies. He came "to preach the gospel to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound." He himself died by the hand of oppression, and he has taught us that the poor and the oppressed are his representatives always remaining, and that we must manifest our love to him by charity to them. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the *least* of them, ye have done it unto me." "Take heed," said he, that ye offend not one of these little ones." Taking Christ, then, for my example, and striving to imbibe his spirit, can I do otherwise than take to my bosom every oppressed and down-trodden child of humanity? Jesus Christ, my master, is not ashamed to call them brethren, and can I have any partnership in an attempt to trample them under foot? The Union itself becomes to me an accursed thing, if I must first steep it in the tears and blood of those for whom Christ died.

But more than this: hundreds of thousands of these black and red men, whose dearest rights are sacrificed by this bill, are, in the strictest sense, our *Christian* brethren. Some are Episcopalians, some Presbyterians, but by far the largest part are Baptists and Methodists. They sit down with us at the same table of the Lord; they are, equally with us, members of His body, they share with us, the same gift of His Holy Spirit, and hope with us to be ever with the Lord. And can Christian men join hands with the oppressors of their brethren? Can we allow it to be declared in our name, as American Christians, that throughout this vast region our Christian brethren shall be delivered over to brute violence, and that it shall be made a crime to teach them to read the word of their Savior and ours? Can we do this and hope to be forgiven?

And here let me appeal to Christians at the South. I have conversed with many of them on this subject ; they have confessed slavery to be wrong, and they have mourned over its blighting influence on religion and morals. They have told me, and I believe them, that it is their daily prayer that this curse may be removed, that they would cheerfully make any sacrifice for its removal, but that, at present, they see no way of escape from it. But could my voice reach them, I would say, brethren, can you, as disciples of Christ, aid in extending and perpetuating what you know to be wrong? Can you pray God to remove slavery from our country, while you are seeking to fasten it upon the country forever?

Could I speak to Southern Statesmen, I would address to them a similar appeal. I have conversed with many of them, men of whom any country might be proud. They have told me that slavery was the curse of the Southern States, that utterly indefensible in principle, in practice it wrought unmingled evil in every relation of life, civil, social and domestic. I would say to them, can you as lovers of your country, extend over this vast territory an institution which you in private allow to be unmeasured evil, an evil already so gigantic that you are already unable to cope with it. Nay, more, are you willing, in order to extend and perpetuate this wrong, to overturn the foundations of the constitution and violate your solemnly plighted faith. Can you expect that after this we can look upon you as brethren. If you will trample on the essential principles of the constitution, and annul a contract which you declared should be binding forever, in order to attain uncontrolled power over the free States, how may we expect that power to be exerted after it has been attained. If such things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry.

Once more, could I hope that my words could reach the ear of the President of the United States, with the respect due to the Chief Magistrate of my country, I would address him somewhat in this wise. "It has pleased Divine Providence, Sir, to place you in the most responsible situation now held by any man on earth. It rests with you to decide whether this vast territory, comprising it may be twenty independent States, shall become the abode of happy freemen or of down-trodden slaves; whether man shall be recognized as a being formed in the image of God, or degraded to a chattel, shall be sold in the shambles like the beasts that perish, whether in the conflict between freedom and despotism for which the civilized world is preparing, the mighty influence of this great republic shall be thrown in favor of the oppressor or the oppressed. You have the right to arrest this measure as a grave departure from the principles of the constitution and a violation of solemnly pledged national faith. Let me then entreat you to look beyond the mists of passion that surround you, and gaze for a moment on that eternal justice which is the habitation of the throne of the Most High. Decide this question in such a manner as will be most pleasing to that Great Being, the elements of whose character are spotless holiness and infinite love. Can you as a patriot array your country in opposition to every attribute of the eternal God. Remember also that your life will have a page in this world's history. An impartial posterity will judge you by your actions, and will assign you a place with good men or with bad, with the benefactors or the enemies of your race. And more than all, you must soon appear before a tribunal where you can claim no precedence whatever over the meanest slave that the sun shines upon. The millions whose moral character has been affected for weal or for woe by your act, will meet you there face to face in presence of the Universe of God. It is my earnest prayer that you may, by divine grace be enabled to decide this question in view of these solemn realities, so that, at that day you may review this transaction with joy and not with

grief, and that the plaudit may await you, "well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Fellow citizens, I rejoice that this meeting has been held. Come what will, it will ever be to us an unspeakable satisfaction that, to the utmost of our power, we have washed our hands of this iniquity. Let us cease not to beseech the God of our fathers, to defeat the counsels of misguided men, and, if the worst shall come that he will grant to the free States the wisdom, temper, patriotism and union, which may be needed in this grave emergency.

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#### REMARKS OF HON. JOHN WHIPPLE.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW CITIZENS:—Slavery in its mildest forms I have ever considered an oppressive and wicked exercise of the power of man over his fellow man, and repugnant to all the humanities of his nature. I inherited this feeling from hardy ancestors, the immediate successors of Roger Williams. They came from the free mountain air of Wales, and here in Rhode-Island, as in their native mountains, not a man of them for eight generations, ever felt an impulse, or breathed a thought in the slightest degree countenancing this horrid war upon the best feelings of our natures. I feel to the full as they felt, the lofty and ennobling sentiment of one of the sweetest and most commanding of our English poets ;

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.  
No, dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
Just estimation, prized above all price,  
I'd sooner be the slave and wear the chains  
Than fasten them on him."

Before the Rhode-Island people, I feel as the greatest of men felt toward the Rhode-Island regiment in the very darkest hour of our revolutionary struggle for civil and political freedom. In the presence of an immense superiority of force, when it seemed impossible to avoid a battle, our great Captain and still greater Patriot, in the front of the gallant defenders of Red Bank and Mud Fort, uttered these words: "Your commander places great reliance upon this Rhode-Island regiment."

This feeling of reliance upon the true and early asserters of religious liberty, and the most unflinching defenders of human freedom, I experience upon the eve of a great battle in defence of that holy cause. Stand or fall, sink or swim, this great battle must again be fought. All the free States of the Union must take the stand now from which they must never recede.

"Who would be a traitor knave,  
Who would fill a coward's grave,  
Let him turn and flee!"

The Benedict Arnold's are thick and numerous all over the free States, and they are increasing. The Missouri compromise in 1820, was the first great concession to the slave power. It was carried by the aid of sixteen votes from the North. At the very next election *thirteen of them were thrown overboard*. One of the dangers, indeed the only danger, that waylays and besets the great principle of human freedom, exists in the fact, that although there has ever been a majority of our national counsellors from the North, the South has always by means which you can imagine, corrupted or influ-

enced a sufficient number to give to slavery a triumph over freedom. At the recent meeting in Boston, the venerable Josiah Quincy, eighty-three years old, was urged to give his sentiments upon this great subject. Speaking of the South, he said: "They were always true and faithful to their own interests. I wish I could say the same thing of the people of the North. Sir, it is not their strength but our weakness; it is not their union but our disunion; and sir, they govern the people of the North by the distribution from the funds of the treasury. 'Why, Mr. Quincy,' said a distinguished Southerner, 'we of the South can calculate upon your leaders as we calculate upon our own negroes.'"

Our entire history from the adoption of the constitution to the present hour confirms the statement of Mr. Quincy. The constitution was adopted upon the understanding and belief of all the leading men of all political parties, that this great evil must be gradually abolished. General Washington was at the head of this extensive band of philanthropists, and some steps were taken toward the gradual termination of slavery. Much of this feeling continued until 1819—20, before the question whether Missouri should be admitted as a slave State arose. The Senate and House of Representatives were on opposite sides and the compromise of 1820 was the consequence.

This compromise was a Southern measure. It gave a large increase of slave territory to the South. It is acknowledged to have been a Southern measure to this day. Mr. Badger, a Southern Senator, stated in his place not many days since, "that the South were all united in 1848 and 1850. The Southern gentlemen on this floor desired nothing in the world but the Missouri compromise line." Similar statements were made by other Southern Senators. They desired nothing more at that time, because the House of Representatives was opposed to any further extension of slavery. They saw that a separation of the States would be fatal to Southern interests. Since that period they have been growing stronger and stronger, and consequently bolder and bolder. A few figures will show *why* they desire more now than in 1819—20.

There are now 17 free States and 14 slave States. In the Senate there are 34 Senators from the free and 28 from the slave States. In the House 135 Representatives from the free and 87 from the slave States, giving 6 majority in the Senate and 48 in the House to the free States.

Against this decided majority from the free States, slaves as well as slave territory have been increasing with a most threatening rapidity.

The whole number of slaves in 1790 was - - - 697,897

The number in 1850 was - - - 3,204,321

An increase of nearly five fold.

The increase of slave territory, including what is now claimed, is still greater.

The free States in 1790, upon the adoption of the constitution, occupied a territory of - - - 160,000 square miles.

Since that period there have been added seven free States, - - - 249,000 "

In all, - - - 409,000 "

The original slave States had - 218,000 "

They have added nine new States, 708,000 "

Making - - - 926,000 "

They now claim all the remaining territories.

New Mexico, - - - -	140,000	square miles.
Nebraska, - - - - -	485,000	"
Utah, - - - - -	150,000	"
Minnesota, Washington and Oregon,	500,000	"
	<hr/>	
	1,275,000	"

Making 2,201,000 square miles, or more than *five times* the territory of *all* the free States.

The population of the free States in 1850 was - - - 14,255,749

The population of the slave States - - - 8,936,169

The *slave owners* of the whole Union are estimated at 400,000. With but little more than half the population of the free States, they claim all the remaining territories, which would, if conceded, give to slavery five times the territory that is reserved to freedom. This has the appearance of desiring something more than was injudiciously conceded by the compromise of 1820. They talk of Nebraska because they already have slaves there; but they pass a law consigning the whole of the territories to the curse of slavery. They seek to set aside the compromise of 1820, upon two grounds so utterly untenable, so near to the ridiculous as to evince that their whole object is to spread slavery over the whole remaining territory belonging to the government.

1st. They now contend that the compromise of 1820 was void because Congress had no power to pass such a law.

2d. Because, if Congress *did* possess this power, and the law was constitutional, it was repealed by the compromise of 1850.

They say it was unconstitutional because the Congress of the United States has no power to prohibit slavery in any of the territories, but that every citizen of every State has a legal and constitutional right to settle in any of the territories and to *carry his property with him.*" They do not condescend to inform us what clause, line or letter of the constitution confers the *right* to enter upon the *territories* belonging to the government, either alone or with his slaves. If there is any act of Congress conferring upon any citizen of any State the right to settle upon the vacant territories either with or without his slaves, that act will confer a sufficient authority. I have not examined the legislation of Congress on the subject but I am not aware of any such act. The object of the existing proposition is to confer that power.

It must be kept in mind that the government of the United States not only possesses *unlimited* power to legislate for the territories, but that it is the *owner* and *proprietor* of the territories. As owner of the lands, it can prohibit any individual, white or black, free or slave, from entering upon a foot of its territory. It possesses, as owner, the same power over its territories as an individual possesses over his dwelling house. Without the permission of the government, express or implied, therefore, no individual has any right to enter upon this territory. It is different as between the States. By the constitution of the United States a citizen of one State has a right to enter and settle in any other State, and hold any property in that State which its laws acknowledge as property. In the free States slaves are not acknowledged as property, and therefore, though a slaveholder can himself settle in Rhode Island, and carry any property which the laws of Rhode Island permits, his slaves become free the moment he passes our line. If Rhode Island was an independent instead of a confederated State, no inhabitant of any other State would possess the legal right to enter its territory without its permission.

It is denied by the advocates of the Nebraska bill that Congress possesses

the constitutional power to prohibit slavery in its Territories, and that therefore the law of 1820 is void. The extravagant position is unsupported by even the appearance of plausibility. Congress possesses the sole power of territorial legislation. No limit is assigned this power but its own discretion. Its power is as extensive as the power of the people and the Legislature of a State over its own legislation.

The 4th section of the 4th article of the constitution is in these words :

“ The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the *territory* and *other property belonging* to the United States ; and nothing in this article shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States or of any particular State.”

Judge Story, in the 3d volume of his Commentaries upon the Constitution, says, pages 193-4 : “ As the general government possesses the right to acquire territory, either by conquest or by treaty, it would seem to follow, as an inevitable consequence, that it possesses the power to *govern* what it has so acquired. The territory, when so acquired, does not possess the power of self-government, and it is not subject to the jurisdiction of any State. It must consequently be under the jurisdiction of the United States, or it would be without any government at all.”

“ It has sole and complete power over the territory, and over its other property, *real or personal.*”—Page 196.

In page 191, it is said, speaking of the Missouri compromise of 1820 : “ On that occasion the question was largely discussed whether Congress possessed the *constitutional power* to impose such a restriction, upon the ground that the prescribing such a condition is inconsistent with the sovereignty of the *State* to be admitted, and its equality with other States. The final result of the vote seems to establish the rightful authority of Congress to impose such a restriction.

An objection of a similar character was taken to the compact between Virginia and Kentucky, upon the ground that it was a *restriction upon State sovereignty*. But the Supreme Court had *no hesitation in overruling it*, considering it as opposed to the theory of all free governments, and especially of those which constitute the American republics.”

The Supreme Court of the United States, by the constitution, is the tribunal to settle without appeal the constitutionality of the laws of Congress. Its decisions are conclusive upon Congress, upon the States and all individuals. Judge Marshall was then the Chief Justice, and two of the Associate Justices were from slave States. The Judges were unanimous, and from that day to this there has been no doubt expressed on the very question now agitated, except the pretence now set up by Senator Douglas and his associates, for political effect. You will observe the objection now urged in Congress is the *precise objection overruled by the Supreme Court*.

This question of the constitutionality of the Missouri compromise was also discussed by the Cabinet ministers. Mr. Wirt was then the Attorney General, a southern man, and among the ablest constitutional lawyers that this country ever produced. Neither Mr. Wirt, nor any other member of that cabinet, to my knowledge, ever expressed a doubt upon the subject.

Another objection, equally groundless, is, that the act of 1820 was repealed by the compromise act of 1850. It is not even pretended that the acts of 1850 contain any *words* of repeal. All that is pretended is, that the *principle* of the act of 1850 differs from the principle of the act of 1820. Be it so, for the sake of the argument. The act of 1820 contained certain provisions in relation to territory purchased of France in 1803. The acts of 1850 contained certain provisions in relation to territory purchased of Mexico in 1845. Apply



this to individuals. A and B become the joint owners of a certain farm, plantation or tract of land. In 1820 they divide it and enter into certain stipulations concerning its future use. Twenty-five years after, in 1845, they purchase jointly another tract, and in 1850 they divide it, upon terms essentially different and much less beneficial to B than the terms in the division of the previous tract. After this second contract in relation to this second purchase, A goes into court to nullify the second contract relating to a subsequent and different purchase, upon the ground that the *principle* of the first division of the first purchase was less favorable to him than the division of the second purchase. Would not A be laughed at by every lawyer, every judge, and every juror, to whom such a case was stated?

The territory purchased of France in 1803 was divided between the free States and the slave States. Neither party *could* divide territory which at that time belonged to Mexico. Neither party could enter into *any stipulations* concerning territory that belonged to Mexico. If neither possessed the *power* to contract in relation to foreign territory, can it be *implied* that they intended to divide *all future* acquisitions upon the same terms? Can it be implied that the parties intended to do what they possessed no power to do?

It is for the South to show, by proof of some kind, that in 1850 it was *understood* that the compromise of 1820 should apply to our territory in 1820 *and to all future acquisitions*. Again it is said that the *principle* of the acts of 1850, in relation to Mexico, differs from the principle of the act of 1820. Both parties intended that they should differ, but did either party intend that the last should destroy the first? Is there a man who was in favor of the act of 1850, who has said or will say that he understood that he was voting for an act which repealed, in its terms or in its principle, the acts of 1820?

But there is conclusive proof to my mind that the act of 1850 was not intended to apply in any way or manner to the act of 1820. Mr. Senator Chase stated this view of the subject, and appealed to Senator Cass, who voted for the compromise of 1850, to state whether the report of the committee of thirteen of the acts of 1850, did not state expressly that those acts applied only to "*newly acquired territory*." Neither Mr. Cass, nor other Senators who were present in 1850, denied this. They were silent. Mr. Chase then said, "I am right then." No Senator disputed this. There is still stronger proof. Not only did all the Senators who participated in the proceedings of 1850, when called upon in 1854 to state whether they understood that the acts of 1850 were intended to repeal the compromise of 1820, *remain silent*, thereby admitting that no such intention existed, but the very compromise acts of 1850 *expressly negative* any such intention.

The compromise of 1850 consisted of five distinct acts, relating to five separate and distinct subjects:

1st. An act relating to the boundaries of Texas, and establishing the Territory of New Mexico.

2d. An act establishing a new Territorial government in Utah.

3d. An act for the admission of California.

4th. An act relative to fugitive slaves.

5th. An act to suppress the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

In relation to the Texas boundary act, the Southern members were apprehensive that some of its provisions might seem to interfere with the compromise of 1820, which allowed slave States *south* of 36 deg. 30 min. New Mexico, with a territory four times as large as all New England, was all, except a very narrow belt on its north line, south of 36 deg. 30 min. The Southern members said then, as they say in the recent debate in the Senate, "that the Southern gentlemen desired nothing in the world but the Missouri

compromise line." This being, as they now avow their ardent desire, they determined, at all events, to *secure that line*, by the compromises of 1850.

Mr. Mason, from Virginia, therefore introduced the following proviso, which was adopted and forms a part of the compromise acts of 1850.

"Provided, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to impair or qualify *anything* contained in the third article of the second section of the joint resolution for the annexing of Texas to the United States approved March 1st, 1845, either as regards the number of States that may be formed hereafter out of the State of Texas, or otherwise."

The third article of the second section is in these words. "That in such State or States as shall be formed out of said territory *north* of said *Missouri compromise line*, slavery or involuntary servitude, except for crime, shall be prohibited."

The second act of 1850 established a Territorial Government in New Mexico. The South again instead of repealing, *clung* to the line of 36 deg. 30 min., and they say "that nothing in this New Mexico territorial act shall qualify *anything* in said third article of the second section."

In the third act establishing a Territorial Government in *Utah*, the same third article of the second section is preserved. Here then is the whole legislation of 1850 which has any bearing upon the line of 36 deg. 30 min., and in all of it, so far from repealing or wishing to repeal the prohibition north of 36 deg. 30 min., the Southern members carefully annex to the Texas, the New Mexico and Utah acts the prohibition north of 36 deg. 30 min., because they *well knew* that if they repealed that compromise, they would lose all south of 36 deg. 30 min. for slavery.

Therefore, I say, and say without the fear of contradiction of any lawyer, Judge, gentleman, or honest man, that the principle of the legislation of 1820 is the same, *precisely* the same, as the principle of the legislation of 1850. A man who examines these acts must turn rogue or politician, before he can deny that the principle of the two acts is precisely the same. They both allow of slavery south of 36 deg. 30 min., if the people choose to adopt it. They both *absolutely prohibit* it north of 36 deg. 30 min.

But why trouble ourselves to answer arguments thrown out to withdraw the attention of the people of the free States from the real objects and purposes of this act. One of the objects, probably the main one, with Southern politicians is, to increase slave States and slave territories so as to obtain a majority of slave Senators and Representatives in Congress. This would confer upon the South the entire control of the destinies of this country. A bare majority in both Houses would secure that control. The North could neither weaken nor frighten, nor in any way affect a Southern majority in Congress. It would be as vain and ridiculous as an attack upon Gibraltar by a fleet of gun boats.

Not so with a Northern majority. Our Northern politicians are most of them the greatest of living patriots. They all love the people with a heavenly love, a love too sublime to be exhibited on earth. They reserve the manifestation of it for another and better world. In this world they act upon the principle that sweet are the uses of adversity, and they anoint it, and embalm it with the religious sentiment "that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and therefore a large number of the most intense lovers of the people, have proceeded upon this Christian basis for the last thirty or forty years. They sell, trade away, barter and huckster the dearest rights of the North, sometimes for one equivalent and sometimes for another. More recently the trade inclines to the last forms, and prices vary from five to fifty thousand dollars. Besides all these appliances to the greedy office hunters of the

North, the government paper at Washington intimates very broadly that the patronage of the government will not be withheld from those who favor the occupation of the fairest regions of the North with the slave power of the South.

The territory of Nebraska is all of it north of 36 deg. 39 min. It is described as "not excelled by any equal quantity of land in the known world. Beautiful lakes, streams of water, wood land and prairie, a deep and rich soil, are spread out in all their fascinating virgin character." It occupies east and west the very centre of this Continent, having access to the future trade of two great oceans. It lies due west from Missouri in which State slave labor is increasing with an astonishing rapidity. No country on this continent is better adapted to slave labor than a large portion of Nebraska. I am informed that a considerable number of slaves are already there. The pretence of those who support this alarming measure is,—that the *people* are to decide whether slavery shall exist in that future State. *What people?* Why those who first possess it, the slaveholders. Is any one so ignorant of the intense desire of the South, to extend the area of slavery as to believe, that they vote to a man, and violate their honor, pledged to us by the Missouri compromise, in order to occupy this immense territory with *free* labor? Would they take such a step if they did not intend, and were not prepared to occupy it with slaves? It is to be the principal slave market in the world. It must be remembered that the people of the South are now, not as formerly owners merely, but traders in slaves. A slave child at the breast now sells to *slave traders* for \$600. A full grown man at \$1800. Opening this new market will not only increase the price, but increase the cruelty inflicted upon these poor victims of the slave trade. Formerly slavery in the South was a mere domestic relation, and the kindness of the owner softened and mitigated the suffering of the slave. Now this relation is entirely changed. A plantation in the South is like a stock farm in the North. At present prices they can make more by raising slaves than raising cotton. They mean to extend the market for the slave children, and to add that to the cotton produced by the labor of the slave parent.

In this connection allow me to ask what is to become of the free labor of the North? Where are the increasing half millions which annually immigrate here from all parts of Europe to find their future homes? Where are the industrious and pains taking German, and the generous, charitable and hard toiling sons of Erin to find their homes, if the richest and most beautiful part of this great central portion of our continent is to be occupied by slaves and slave holders? They cannot and will not, they ought not to labor side by side with the slave. Slave labor in these regions will be cheaper, much cheaper than the labor of white men. It is not the man of wealth in the North, nor the professional man, nor the trading man, it is *the laboring man*, the poorer class of men, whose interests are most deeply affected by this nefarious scheme, a scheme supported as we are told by the whole influence of an Administration *professing to be the warm and party friends of the poor*.

I am astonished, amazed, and as a friend of free government, almost disheartened at the magnitude, the boldness and the perfidy of this nefarious scheme. Its object is by extending the sphere of slavery to make slaves of the free people of the North, by giving to the slave States a majority in the National Legislature. Once give them that majority, and the free people of the North will be at once in the power of the slave holders of the South. We shall be entirely subject to the slave holders' legislation. In a political sense, our slavery will be as intolerable, as is the poor African's in a physical sense. He has no will over his own body; we shall possess no power over

ur political body. The slave holders will be able again to open the African slave trade and legalize it in every State in the Union. They will possess the power to prevent the admission of another free State into the Union. In fine, once submit to this act, and we are slaves ourselves. For one I protest against this outrage upon the most solemn contract, that this or any other nation ever pledged its sacred honor to abide by.

For one, and I speak for myself alone, I had rather submit to a peaceful separation of the free from the slave States, than to submit for an hour, to such an outrage upon our dearest rights. Great as such an evil would be, it would be no stain upon our honor. Great as it may be, what evil, what disgrace can equal the submission of 14,000,000 of free men, in free States to the dictation of 400,000 slave owners in the slave States!

Verily, this is the age of wonders. Neither the wildest dreams of poets, nor the most far fetched reasonings of philosophers, ever led to the sad reality, that now stares us in the face. Had it been foretold that in a country which had produced a Washington and a Franklin, which had spread over its entire surface, colleges, academies and free schools, which had first worked out the miraculous powers of steam, and the before hidden agencies of the electric fluid, which had whitened every ocean with its canvass, and awed the whole world with its naval prowess, and to crown all this combination of attainment and promise, had spread far and wide over this extended land, the pure, elevated and practical morality of the christian religion, had it been foretold, that as early as the second and third generations from the authors of that great charter of human freedom, the declaration of American independence, an American Senate could have done all that it could do, to reverse our onward course, and to turn us back to ignorance and barbarism, to slavery and despotism, the narrator of such prophetic truths would have been sent to an insane asylum, or indicted for a libel upon the American people. But, indeed, "the age of chivalry is gone, that of sophisters of calculators and economists has succeeded," and much do I fear that the glory of American freedom is extinguished forever.

In a country whose declaration of independence proclaims that all men are free, an American Senate proclaims it a lie. In a country in which the whole body of its literature, the whole preaching of its pulpits, and the whole boastings of its press, represent us as not merely in the front rank in the great march of nations toward a higher civilization, but as the great and peerless leader of those nations, an American Senate represents us as low and grovelling wretches, the tyrants of an interior, a helpless race, the drivers, with lash in hand, of its men, and the beastly ravishers of its women.

From this picture of American morals and American feeling, I beg leave for one to appeal to warmer hearts, and to more faithful artists, than the slave owner of the South, or the profligate office-hunter of the North. I appeal to the free people of the free States. I say to them, trust not your perjured office-hunters. Their faces are of dough, and their hearts are of marble. They betrayed their sacred trust in 1820. They betrayed it in 1850, and they will betray it now. Every compromise with slavery is an encroachment upon the hallowed ground of freedom. Leave the slave States to what has been thoughtlessly, if not treacherously, conceded to them. But sooner than grant them an inch more, I would retire peacefully but firmly from all connection with a power, "which no treaty and no signature can bind, and against which the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together, is no protection.

## REMARKS OF REV. SAMUEL WOLCOTT.

I am compelled to rise, fellow-citizens, at a very unseasonable hour. If I can have your indulgence for a few moments, I shall regard it as a tribute not to the speaker, but to the cause of freedom.

It is now twenty years since I passed a day in the city of St. Louis, on my way to a home which had been transferred to the great West. While standing in a public room in one of the hotels in that city, a young man came up and introduced himself to me, remarking that he had observed on the books of the hotel my name and destination; that he also was from the East, had come to seek his fortune in the West, and was wholly undecided where to locate himself. He added, that if agreeable to me, he would deem it a favor if he might accompany me to my friends in central Illinois, and he would seek a residence in that quarter. I assured him that I should be happy to have his company, and named the hour when I was to leave the city. He expressed a very lively satisfaction with the arrangement; and the first days and nights that he and I passed in the State of Illinois, we were fellow travellers and fellow lodgers. On reaching the village to which we were destined, he did not at once succeed in finding employment, and soon went into a small adjoining township, where he gathered some children into a school and commenced teaching them. I left that region soon after, and left him there pursuing the humble and laborious, but useful vocation of a village pedagogue—more honorable far than that of a national demagogue.

That young man, then an obscure adventurer in the West, is now filling the land with the bruit of his name. This Nebraska swindle is a scheme of his devising; and if the crime against freedom and humanity which it meditates shall be finally consummated, better unspeakably had it been for its author if he had adhered to his worthy calling—explaining the mysteries of the spelling book to the children of the prairie, and lived and died “unknown to fame.”

On the day that I met in St. Louis the future Senator Douglas of Illinois, I beheld, for the first time, the most revolting feature of American slavery. Some traffickers in human flesh—rather let me say in human beings, body and soul—had just completed their purchases for the Southern market; and I saw a cofile of slaves, some of them in chains, marched like a gang of convicts on board a spacious steamer lying at the wharf and ready to depart. They lined the upper deck, and stood in mute and sullen gloom, occasionally softened to an aspect of piteous and forlorn grief, at the sight of a company of their friends and relatives—so far as natural relations can exist under a system which ignores all the sanctities of domestic life—their wives and husbands, their children and parents, their sisters and brothers, assembled on the bank to snatch a parting and final glance. I watched that group on shore, and sure I am that the tears and looks of dumb agony found their way to Heaven, with which they saw the objects of their love borne forever from their sight, consigned to the living death of a Louisiana plantation. And as I saw the stately vessel move over the waters, desecrated to such a commerce, freighted with such woe, she embodied to my mind the poet's image of

—“that fatal and perfidious bark,  
Built in th' eclipse and rigg'd with curses dark.”

As I reflected that in the sorrow so eloquently depicted on those countenances, I witnessed the yearnings of a natural affection proverbially strong; as I thought of the delicate and endearing ties thus ruthlessly sundered; as I

saw the sacred attributes which I had been taught to revere and love trodden under the heel of insolent despotism, every instinct of my nature arrayed itself against the perpetrators of this outrage on humanity. I had come too recently from the free hills of New England to restrain the rising of intense and virtuous indignation towards the system which had conjured up the spectacle before me; and then, with humble and subdued emotions, I called to mind the image of my country; recollected that under the ægis of her protection, this anomaly of evil had flourished in sheltered security; that through a vast region overshadowed by her wing, scenes of as tragic interest, of as moving pathos, might be daily witnessed—might be, and were, because in many places the life-blood of a system which allowed them everywhere.

When now it is proposed to repeal the compact which excludes slavery from Nebraska, I know what it means. It means that this execrable traffic shall find its way along all of the navigable streams which water that immense region, and that its broad acres shall be tilled by the sweat of unrequited labor—blighted with a system which dishonors the law of industry and degrades its dignity, and which, in its moral effects, is more withering; fostering a debasing sensuality; the nurse of stormy and imperious passions, which spurn control; undermining the foundations of integrity and honor; depriving its victims of their all—of personal freedom, the wages of faithful labor, the sacred endearments of home, opportunities of mental culture, and access to the Word of Life; immortal beings—selling them at auction like dumb beasts; innocent of crime—driving them with the lash;—and all this, that it may the more effectually control the legislation of Congress and the action of the general government, linking the fortunes of the free States to its own dark destiny, and sacrificing the enduring peace and prosperity of the country at home, and her useful influence and lofty renown abroad, to the exactions of a sectional, selfish and inhuman policy. This, Sir, is just what the Nebraska bill means.

Annul, as this bill does, a law by which, in express terms, slavery is “forever prohibited” in this territory; enact, as this bill does, in express terms, that slavery shall “not be excluded” from the same—a territory contiguous to one which is slaveholding, and adapted to the same cultivation; remember, moreover, that slavery has grasped every rod of our national domain, from which it has not been excluded by statute; give it, withal, the cover of the fugitive slave law—and who can doubt the result? It has not been left to contingency. How many times was the bill altered by its author, even after its introduction, in order to make it perfectly acceptable to the slaveholders? He succeeded at length; and a leading journal of the South, the organ of slaveholding politicians, in whose hands the author of this Nebraska bill is as plastic as wax, thus speaks of it:

“If the compromise of 1850, and the present bill for the admission of Nebraska, really mean anything of fairness and justice to the South, if the latter be not intended as a trap to catch her support for a principle seemingly of value to her, *we are not in error in saying to slaveholders, here lies this territory, go into it with your property, if you will, and you shall be safe, until, as a sovereign State, the people decide for or against the institution.* Otherwise the Nebraska bill is a worthless and deceptive truce. But we mistake Mr. Douglas, if such an inference can be properly drawn from his argument and bill.”—*Charleston (S. C.) Mercury.*

Sir, they do not mistake the man nor the measure. Pass this bill, and the territory is theirs. Slaveholders will go there with their slaves, and freemen will keep away from it; for free emigrants, however poor, will never settle

down by the side of slaves; and when the time comes to organize a State government, the slave proprietors can have their own way.

It has been already stipulated that three or four more slaveholding States may be framed out of Texas—and that compact, I suppose, must stand, because it is in favor of slavery. Nebraska, it is said, will furnish eight States as large as the Empire State. A treaty now pending in the Senate will, if ratified, give us another portion of Mexico, on our southwestern border, sufficient to form two States of the largest class; and these, like their neighbors, will of course be slaveholding—that is already boldly avowed. Such are our present position and prospects with reference to this evil, which our fathers barely tolerated, in the full but mistaken confidence that it was destined to an early extinction, through the combined force of moral sentiments and natural laws; but which, through its aggressive nature and its potency as a political element, and through the servility and corruption of Northern politicians, and I must add, through the apathy of Northern freemen, has become thus rampant and defiant.

If roused by this last aggression, the North will but take a proper stand, she can yet recover herself, and save the ark of our freedom. But acquiesce in the present measure, tamely submit to this encroachment, and there is no redemption for us. Not that I believe that slavery is to be permanent in any part of our land: for I have faith in the progress of humanity, and faith in the promises of God. But let this conspiracy succeed, and instead of the early and peaceful extinction of the evil, which has hitherto been the hope of Christian patriots, I foresee no other issue, than at some distant day, through some tempest of convulsion and revolution, more terrific if possible, than that which now seems ready to burst upon Europe in a storm of fire and blood.

The consummation of this atrocity, if tolerated by the free States, will strike dumb among us the cheering voices of freedom, hushing the patriotic lays, the national lyrics, which, more than any other influences, fan in the popular breast the flame of Liberty.

"My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing."

Ah! how can we sing this strain, when borne down with the consciousness, that this land of boasted liberty is the great mart of slavery, and that the youthful energies of this Republic are devoted to the nefarious work of slavery extension? No, fellow citizens, our condition will be as mournful as that of the desponding exiles of Judah, when the cheerful songs of Zion were changed on their lips into plaintive cries, and by the sullen streams of Babylon they hung their harps on the willows of a sorrowful captivity, and refused to strike the chords, which, in happier days, had been swept to Jerusalem's glory.

What, now, can be done to avert this calamity? Let me say, in the fewest possible words, that in my opinion, (for which, of course, no one else is responsible,) there are two supports on which American slavery rests: and these are, its political alliance with liberty, and its ecclesiastical alliance with christianity. Let the Senators and Representatives of the free States in Congress clear themselves and their constituents from all participancy in it—purifying our national capital of its noxious atmosphere; sweeping it from our territories; interdicting between the States the very traffic which on the coast of Africa is branded and scourged as piracy; sternly refusing to receive into the embrace of the confederacy another State with this plague-spot on her bosom: driving it to such municipal shelter as it can find within

State lines, which it is never to cross—there to be assailed by moral weapons; doing, in a word, what Franklin prayed the first Congress to do, viz: “step to the very verge of the power vested in it for discouraging every species of traffic in the persons of our fellow men;”—let them do this, and at the same time let the churches of the free States cast it out of the pale of their communion and fellowship, as an unclean and accursed thing—and the evil days of the institution are numbered.

This, fellow citizens, is what is demanded of us as Christian freemen; and how have we met our responsibilities? The slave power has been making constant encroachments on the heritage of liberty, not by stealth but openly and insolently; and what have we, freemen of the North, been doing? Alas! it is not the least of the dreadful effects of slavery, which has been impressively referred to by both of the reverend gentlemen who preceded me, that familiar association with it has demoralized the free born—its contact, like the electric shock of the torpedo, benumbing their sensibilities. So that we ourselves, rocked in the cradle of liberty, breathing her pure air, and fanned by her mountain breezes, do yet need a stirring voice, as “of one crying in the wilderness,” to rehearse in our ears the neglected truths of freedom; to recall us to the vindication of immortal principles, which have been compromised and abandoned; to rally us to the defense and rescue of cardinal interests which have been jeopardized and sacrificed. While the enemies of freedom have been active and aggressive, we have solaced ourselves with chanting pæans to our glorious Union. Now the object for which our fathers united in a Federal Government, as defined in the preamble of our national Constitution, was, as you know, to “establish justice, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.” Union for such purposes we love as they did, and would sacredly cherish: but we abhor, and will repudiate an Union to establish injustice, and promote and perpetuate the evils of slavery. Since the world has stood, perhaps no government, enlightened or pagan, republican or despotic, ever proposed a more audacious crime, than the deliberate repeal of a law of freedom, and the admission, by enactment, of chattel slavery into a territory larger than our original confederacy. If the people are betrayed by their rulers in this transaction, the remedy is in their own hands; the wrong, if inflicted, can be righted, and the evil prevented. But if they consent to the act, either before or after its commission, I could pray that I and mine might be separated from their destiny. Over such a confederacy I seem to hear another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” I do but give utterance, in a conditional form, to a sentiment which has been almost voiceless as yet, but which has found emphatic recognition here, this evening, and if this work goes on, will soon swell on the gale as the sound of many waters—a sentiment which is struggling painfully in the breasts of calm, cautious, and conscientious men, who have borne much and long, perhaps too much and too long, but who are now ready to say, and cannot refrain from saying, “*If this Union is to be thus perverted and degraded; if instead of being the asylum and name of Liberty, it is to be the refuge and bulwark of oppression; if instead of being a terror to despots, it is to be the accomplice and tool of tyranny, the base instrument of slavery propagandism—then, in heaven’s name, let the Union be dissolved!*”

Mr. President, I fear that I owe an apology to this crowded and patient assembly, not for any sentiment that I have uttered here—Heaven forbid! but for the time which I have occupied, at so late an hour. But I could not say less, if I said anything: for, with my venerable friends who have pre-



ceded me, I do love freedom, in my heart of hearts I love it—not as a theory, not as a mockery, but as a substantive reality; not freedom for the whites and slavery for the blacks, but freedom for MAN. And cheerfully, most cheerfully, would I bear the opprobrium of any name, sooner than be conscious in my breast of having surrendered or disowned an ingenuous attachment to the principles in which my childhood was nurtured, and which, in my years of reflection, commend themselves to my calmest thoughts and my purest feelings.

There is one consolation, Sir, which in any event we may appropriate, and that is, that the citizens of Providence have endeavored to do their duty in this crisis. We have remonstrated by memorial, and we may congratulate ourselves on this imposing and impressive moral demonstration; that citizens who have retired from the honors and burdens of more active life, are drawn forth from their quiet retreats to bear their testimony for national truth, honor, justice and humanity; that the whole influence of the professional classes among us is committed to this movement; and not the least, that our merchants, manufacturers and mechanics connected by the ties of commerce and trade with all parts of the land, furnish this evidence that considerations of patriotism and philanthropy have more weight with them than mere material interests. The moral influence of this exhibition of sentiment cannot fail to be elevating in our own community. Had we hesitated in this emergency, recreant indeed should we have been to the principles of perfect civil and religious liberty, which the Founder of this Commonwealth bore in his solitary bark across the Narragansett waters and planted on this virgin soil.

In the loss of a public hall ample enough for such a gathering as this, it is a cause for gratitude that this venerable sanctuary has been cheerfully thrown open to us. There can be no more suitable place for protesting against the wickedness of this Nebraska bill, than by the altars of our holy religion. And when the electric wires shall convey to an expectant nation a simultaneous announcement of the result, if a righteous Heaven shall permit our infatuated rulers to perpetrate the deed which we deprecate, nothing could be more suitable than that the bells of all the sanctuaries in the free States should send forth a simultaneous summons, assembling a Christian people to offer their united prayers to the Supreme Ruler. At this climax of peril to our free principles and free institutions, we must look not to the noisy and stormy arena of Congress, but to the Hearer of prayer, to the Governor among the nations.

It was at a conjuncture morally less critical, that ROBERT HALL—that ornament of the British pulpit—reminded his countrymen of this, their last resort; and after declaring that, under God, it was for them “to decide whether freedom shall yet survive, or be covered with a funeral pall,” and appealing to their highest patriotism, he invoked the Most High “to pour into their hearts the spirit of departed heroes, and inspire them with his own;” and then sent them forth to the world’s last great battle with this assurance, “While you are engaged in the field, many will repair to the closet, many to the sanctuary; the faithful of every name will employ that prayer which has power with God; the feeble hands, which are unequal to any other weapon, will grasp the sword of the Spirit; and from myriads of humble, contrite hearts, the voice of intercession, supplication, and weeping, will mingle in its ascent to heaven with the shouts of battle and the shock of arms.”

It was on a day, in some aspects less portentous and gloomy, that JOHN MILTON—that immortal name in British history—after exhausting the rich

ness of an eloquence, of which he alone was master, exclaimed, "Which way to end I know not, unless I turn mine eyes, and with your help lift up my hands to that eternal and propitious throne, where nothing is readier than grace and refuge to the distresses of mortal suppliants;" and in language descriptive of our own specific evil, he implored deliverance from "that viper, which for four score years hath been breeding to eat through the vitals of our peace," and prayed for confusion to the schemes of the enemies of his country's liberties. "Let them all take counsel together, and let it come to nought; let them decree, and do Thou cancel it;" let them embattle, and be broken, for Thou art with us." And, as if in full assurance of a favorable answer to his petition, he concluded it in an ecstasy of sublime and exultant praise, which, against all sinister omens, I would gladly accept as auspicious of a similar happy conclusion to our present distresses. "Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate Thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages, whereby this great nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when Thou the eternal King, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies; proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly, that by their labors, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, in supereminence of beatific vision, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in over measure forever."



