

Johnson - An Address by Request of the  
Vermont Anti-Slavery Society - 1835

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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, IN MIDDLEBURY,

BY REQUEST OF THE

VERMONT ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

ON

WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 18, 1835.

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BY OLIVER JOHNSON.

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MONTPELIER:

KNAPP AND JEWETT, PRINTERS.

1835.

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Bright fund

At the Annual Meeting of the VERMONT ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, holden in Middlebury, February 18, 1835, it was unanimously  
'Voted, That the thanks of this Society be presented to Mr. OLIVER JOHNSON for his Address, delivered on the present occasion, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.'

Attest,

CHAUNCEY L. KNAPP,

*Recording Secretary.*

## ADDRESS.

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MANKIND in general love to be praised for their good deeds, rather than to be censured for their bad ones; to be lauded on account of their virtues, rather than to be plainly told of their vices.

Hence arises the prevailing opposition to associations for moral reform. It is the avowed object of such associations to expose and condemn public and prevailing sins; to bring to light the hidden corruptions of the times; and to shame them out of existence by a righteous public sentiment. Foreseeing the effect of such measures upon their reputation in society, the guilty will generally make a desperate effort to arrest their progress, by misrepresenting the objects and impugning the motives of those concerned in urging them forward. This is done to divert public attention from the main point—the question of their own guilt or innocence—and with the hope of dividing the friends of reform upon some consideration of minor importance; thus enfeebling their efforts, by inducing them to quarrel among themselves.

It is believed that no society for moral reform has ever encountered more violent opposition than the associations which have been formed in this country, within the last three years, for the abolition of slavery. The primitive Christians were not more universally reviled, or malignantly misrepresented than are the prominent members of these associations. They are stigmatized as mad-men and fanatics, and reviled as incendiaries; they are accused of holding principles the most corrupt and of advocating measures the most revolting and dangerous. These accusations and these epithets are uttered by men of every grade, and of every complexion of moral character, from the minister of the gospel down to the most degraded tenant of the grog-shop. They are uttered in places high and

low—in the pulpit, the legislative hall, and from the press\*—and industriously circulated in social and private circles.

Much of this opposition is doubtless the fruit of ignorance and misapprehension. Multitudes join in the general ‘hue and cry’ against abolitionists, who know nothing of their principles and purposes. They have heard it confidently affirmed, by men who *ought* to be good authority in such matters, that they contemplate a dissolution of the Union and an amalgamation of the whites and blacks; and without stopping to inquire into the truth of these grave charges, they have thrown themselves into the ranks of the opposition.

There are others, whose fear of excitement and want of moral courage keep them in an attitude of hostility to the measures of the abolitionists. They are alarmed at the threats of slaveholders, and tremble lest, somehow or other, if the question is agitated, the Union will be sundered. They do not so much doubt the correctness of our principles as call in question the *expediency* of our measures.

There are others whose love of popularity prevents them from joining our ranks. They are convinced, in their own minds, that our principles are correct; but their love of popular applause induces them to remain silent while they are accounted our opponents.

Again, there are many whose pride of opinion prevents them from joining us. They have thought themselves wise, and are unwilling to confess that they have been mistaken.

The two classes last mentioned are chiefly composed of men in public life, who prefer to lead rather than follow the multitude in any important enterprise; and who are envious of the distinction which must be awarded to others, if the cause succeeds. Exclusive of these, there are large numbers of almost every class in the community, who need only to be accurately informed in relation to the principles and designs of Anti-Slave-

\* Among the numerous slanders which have been put in circulation by a pro-slavery press, designed to bring odium upon abolitionists and their cause, no one appears to have been uttered with a more reckless disregard of truth, than the assertion of the Vermont Chronicle, that they hold the corrupt and disorganizing principles of the French Jacobins. It was uttered not only without evidence, but against evidence. It is owing, in a great measure, to this misrepresentation, so generally circulated among the religious portion of community, that so many of the pulpits in this State are closed against our Agents, and the minds of multitudes filled with the most bitter and unrelenting prejudices against our cause. The Chronicle must be regarded as wholly unworthy of confidence on any subject connected with Abolition, while its editors continue to hold this ‘LIE in their right hand.’

One of the gentlemen who conducted the Chronicle at the time this slander was first promulgated, is now the editor of the Boston Recorder, and appears to be the presiding genius in the newly-formed ‘American Union.’ He has said much of what, with affected contempt, he is pleased to call the *Garrisonism* of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Query—Is the above slander to be regarded as a specimen of the *Tracyism* of the ‘American Union?’



ry Societies, to become their firm and unwavering supporters. Indeed it is believed, that a vast majority of those in the free States, who are at present either opposed to our efforts or indifferent concerning them, might be induced to join us, if we could reach their minds and hearts by our arguments and appeals. The truth is, we have been condemned without a hearing. The pulpits have been extensively closed against us; editors of newspapers, both religious and political, have, for the most part, refused to open their columns, or opened them only to revile us: and being thus extensively shut out from all the ordinary avenues to the public mind, it is no wonder that our principles have been misunderstood, and our objects misrepresented.

In view of these circumstances, I have thought that I could not do the cause a better service on the present occasion, than by endeavoring to answer the most prominent objections to our principles and measures. I shall therefore speak,

I. OF OBJECTIONS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETIES; and

II. OF OBJECTIONS TO THEIR MEASURES.

It will be necessary, however, in the first place, to state, concisely, what are the fundamental principles of these societies. And

1. They maintain, that slavery, which consists in holding and treating human beings as property, is, in all circumstances, altogether sinful; that it is a heinous and aggravated crime, for which there is and can be no more excuse than for robbery or murder. Hence,

2. They maintain, that the masters are solemnly bound instantly to emancipate their slaves; to afford them the protection of law; and to treat them, not as *merchandize*, but as *men*.

3. They maintain, that the people of color have a right to a home in this country; that such of them as 'possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, as others; that the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion;' and that to make the color of their skin a pretext for excluding them from these privileges, is a violation of the law of love.\*

There are but few persons—at least in New England—who will withhold their assent from the general statement, that slavery is wrong and ought to be abolished; but multitudes contend, that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of

\* See the 'Declaration of Sentiments,' adopted by the Convention which formed the American Anti-Slavery Society.

immediate emancipation—difficulties which justify the retention of the slaves in bondage for a limited period. As

1. *Their ignorance disqualifies them for freedom.*—What then becomes of the principle asserted in our Declaration of Independence, ‘that all men are *created* equal;’ and that the right to ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ is *inalienable*? Is ignorance a crime on the part of the slave? Or is it the fault of the master? If it be a sin, let punishment fall upon the guilty and not upon the innocent. Let not the lacerated and bleeding slave suffer for that which is not his fault.

It is dangerous to adopt principles which we cannot define. Let those who say, that one man may innocently enslave another on account of his ignorance, tell us how much knowledge a man must possess to entitle him to his liberty. Shall he simply be required to understand the letters of the English alphabet? Or must he be able to read intelligibly? Or must he understand Latin and Greek, and have a perfect knowledge of the various branches of English literature? These are questions, which those who make the objection under consideration are bound to answer. The principle, too, when defined, they must apply to men of all complexions—the whites as well as blacks. Alas! how many men, whom the God of nature has clothed with a white skin, would never again taste the sweets of liberty, if their *ignorance* were to be admitted as a valid excuse for enslaving them!

If it is right to retain the slaves in bondage on account of their ignorance; would it not also be right, on the same principle, to enslave all, of every complexion, who are as ignorant as they? Where is the difference?

But this objection to immediate emancipation will appear still more absurd, when it is considered, that the ignorance of the slaves is the natural and inevitable consequence of slavery. How can you prevent the effect without annihilating the cause? Are the slaves to be educated by the same process which has made them ignorant?

Ever since the organization of our government, the doctrine has been maintained by slaveholders, and echoed by their apologists, that the slaves ought not to be emancipated until they are prepared by education. Now I ask, what has been done within this period by way of instructing them? Are they any better prepared for freedom now, than they were fifty years ago? And what reason have we to hope, that they will be any better prepared fifty years hence than they now are?

The ignorance of the slaves, so far from excusing the masters for retaining them in servitude, is one of the strongest reasons which can be urged in favor of their emancipation. The

system of slavery, which shrouds its victims in the grossest darkness—putting out as it were the eyes of the soul—which denies them the privilege of reading the Word of Life, and makes it a crime to teach them the lowest rudiments of knowledge—must be annihilated, before it will be possible to enlighten their minds. How long, think you, the slaves would remain in bondage, if they were taught to read, and allowed free access to books? Slaveholders know, that their safety depends entirely upon the ignorance of their victims; that if they were instructed, they would not wait for the tardy process of voluntary emancipation, but would seek their liberty at the expense of blood: hence they never will allow them to be instructed while they continue to hold them as property. The history of the world does not furnish a single instance of a race of men who have been educated while in a state of slavery, and it never will. Speculate about it as we may—the thing is impossible. The light of knowledge will never illumine the mind of the slave until his fetters are broken.

The wisdom of the objection under consideration was admirably illustrated by the father who told his son that he should never go into the water until he had learned to swim! for it is not more necessary for a man to go into the water to learn the art of swimming, than it is that he should be free in order to be educated.

2. *It is said, that the slaves are in a better condition now than they would be if they were immediately emancipated.* Let us see. We will first look at their present condition; and then at what it probably would be, if they were allowed the peaceable enjoyment of their rights.

Now they are regarded as property—as mere goods and chattels;\*

Now the masters have unlimited control over their bodies, and may starve or torture them at pleasure;†—

Now they have no means of redress against any white man who may choose to invade their rights; for the law deprives them of the privilege of being witnesses in any case where a white man is the accused;‡—

\* 'Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators and assigns, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever.'—Civil Code of S. C.—See Stroud's 'Sketch of the Laws relating to Slavery,' p. 23.

† A law in North Carolina, which prescribes the punishment for killing a slave, contains the following proviso: 'Provided always, this act shall not extend to the person killing a slave outlawed by any act of Assembly of this State, or to any slave in the act of resistance to his lawful owner or master, or to any slave DYING UNDER MODERATE CORRECTION!'—See Mrs. Child's Appeal, p. 48.

How 'moderate' must be that 'correction' under which a slave should DIE!

‡ 'A white man may, with impunity, if no other white be present, torture, maim, and even murder his slave, in the midst of any number of negroes and mulattoes.'—Stroud, p. 66.

Now they can hold no property, real or personal ;\*—

Now they are compelled to toil solely for their masters, without compensation ;—

Now they may be sold separately, or in lots to suit purchasers ; the husband and wife, the parent and child, and lover and friend, may be separated at the pleasure of their owners ;†—

Now they are unprotected in their domestic relations ; the virtue of more than a million females is at the mercy of licentious masters and overseers ;‡—and

Now they are kept in brutal ignorance both of their relations to God and to their fellow men. ||

In lieu of this complicated system of oppression—this combination of all that is odious and corrupt in principle and cruel in practice, we propose—

That they shall be treated as men, and not as property ;—

That the masters shall be deprived of the power to punish them at discretion—to exact their labor without compensation—to sell them, the husband from the wife, the wife from the husband, and parents from their children ;—

That they shall be placed under the protection of wise and equitable laws, which shall secure to them the enjoyment of all their rights on the one hand, and restrain them from the commission of crime on the other ;—

That they shall be employed as free laborers, and paid justly for their labor ; or if they should refuse to be thus employed, and become disorderly or turbulent, that the law shall punish them in the same way that it now does white people of the same character ;—

That the law shall regard the virtue of colored females as sacred as that of their white sisters ;—and

That, all, both old and young, male and female, shall be taught the rudiments of knowledge—allowed to read the Bible, and be instructed in its heavenly truths.

Who can doubt that a transformation like this would add to

\* All that a slave possesses belongs to his master—he possesses nothing of his own.—Civil Code of Louisiana—Stroud, p. 48.

† In the winter of 1833, an auction flag was hoisted in Richmond, Virginia, with the following curious advertisement : 'On Monday the 11th inst., will be sold in front of the High Constable's office, one bright mulatto woman, about twenty-six years of age ; also, some empty barrels, and sundry old candle boxes !'—Mrs. Child's Appeal, p. 11.

‡ James A. Thome of Kentucky, in his speech at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, said—'I have facts ; but I forbear to state them—facts which have fallen under my own observation, startling enough to arouse the moral indignation of the community.' 'Let it be felt in the North and rolled back upon the South, that the slave States are Sodoms, and almost every village family a brothel !'

|| In Georgia, the teaching of a colored person to read or write is punished by fine not exceeding one hundred dollars, and imprisonment at the discretion of the court. The laws of the other slaveholding States are similar.

their happiness? I know we are often told, that the *free* colored people at the South are in a worse condition than the slaves; and from this it is inferred, that the slaves ought not to be emancipated. Admitting the premises to be correct, the inference is false. What right have I to lay my hand upon my brother-man and say, 'You will be happier in a state of slavery, than if you were allowed to be free; therefore I claim you as my property'?

Suppose the free blacks at the South to be as wretched as it is pretended they are; I ask, what is the cause? Is it because they are free? I answer, no. It is because they are cruelly and wickedly oppressed. The same despotic power, which keeps the slaves in bondage, is felt, in a thousand ways, by those who are nominally free. The masters know well, that if they were to permit a free and intelligent class of colored people to live quietly and happily in their midst; the slaves, seeing their condition, would desire liberty, and in all probability would fight to obtain it. As a southern gentleman has expressed it, 'The free blacks are walking mirrors, which reflect the light of liberty into the dark bosoms of the slaves.' Hence the masters enact the most oppressive laws in relation to them—laws which abridge their liberty, and, of course, render them unhappy. They are kept as ignorant as the slaves—it being regarded as a crime to teach them to read; and slaveholders will never employ them when slave labor can be obtained.

But notwithstanding their sufferings, the free blacks set a high value upon their personal freedom. The thought, that they are not liable to be sold like the slaves, is consoling to them under all their trials. If it were otherwise, they might, without the least difficulty, sell their birthright.

There is a principle in man—it was implanted in his bosom by the Creator—which leads him to set a high value upon personal liberty—to prize it even above life itself. This principle exists in the bosom of the slave—subdued, it may be, by oppression—but still it exists, and can never be obliterated. Does any one ask, if this be so, why slaves have sometimes refused to receive their liberty? I answer, because the offer has been accompanied by the assurance, expressed or implied, that if it is accepted, they must consequently become more miserable. They are taught to associate the idea of liberty, in regard to persons of their complexion, with poverty and disgrace.

We have the most indubitable evidence that slaveholders themselves, notwithstanding all they say to the contrary, do in fact regard liberty as the greatest blessing which can be



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bestowed upon the slaves. This evidence is found in the fact, that when they wish to reward a slave for some noble and disinterested act, *they break his fetters!* For example, the legislature of Georgia recently bought of his master, for \$1,800, a slave who had saved a valuable public building from destruction by fire, and gave him his liberty! Did they mean to inflict a curse, or to bestow a blessing? What is this act but a confession, on the part of the masters, that emancipation would be happy for the slave?

If there is a class of persons in the world whom I could endure to see made slaves, it is those who maintain that liberty would be a curse to the colored man. Mayhap a year's service under a southern task-master—a few sales at auction with 'other live stock'—and a few floggings with a slave-driver's whip, might restore them to their reason, and convince them that, after all, liberty is better than slavery. A trial of a single month might be sufficient, perhaps, to induce them to say with full sincerity—

'O! massa, he is fool or knave,  
And his heart is sealed to me,  
Who says de poor afflicted slave  
Is happier dan de free.

But if he be not fool or knave,  
If he speak de truth of me,  
Den let *him* come and be de slave,  
And *I* will be de free.'

3. *It is said that an immediate emancipation of all the slaves would be dangerous—an evil of greater magnitude than slavery itself—and that of two evils we must choose the least.* But we have not the right of choice between moral evils. The principle of choosing the least of two evils is applicable only to those evils which are merely *physical*. Take a familiar illustration: Suppose there is a rock in the highway, so that the traveler cannot pass without great difficulty. Now it is proper to say of this rock that it is an evil, and ought to be removed. But we can easily conceive of circumstances in which its immediate removal would produce a still greater evil. Now we have a right to exercise our judgment in choosing the best time to remove that rock from the highway; because it is a *physical* evil, which does not involve the violation of God's law. But slavery is a *moral* evil—a *SIN*—and cannot be continued a moment without guilt.

That immediate emancipation would be attended with perfect safety, may be argued from the nature of the human mind, and from historical facts.



Man is made to be governed by motive and not by force; and whoever overlooks this essential principle of human nature, in his dealings with mankind, will become involved in difficulty and danger. The system of slavery may be compared to a volcanic fire: every stroke of the whip, every tear which flows at the separation of friends, and every hour of unrequited toil, adds fuel to the flame! What motive has the slave to labor, but to avoid the lash? Alas! he knows, that however industriously he may toil, his hire will be 'kept back by fraud;' therefore, in the language of Adam Smith, he 'can have no other interest than to eat and waste as much, and work as little as he can.' But emancipate him—place him under the protection of wise and equitable laws—allow him to possess his wife and children, and labor for his own and their benefit; and with what alacrity and cheerfulness would he go forth to his daily task!

Look in yonder field! See that human being, on whose countenance is depicted sullenness and despair. He has dropped the implement of labor by his side, and stands in idle indifference. Now see the lash flourishing over his head and falling upon his naked body, while he bleeds afresh at every stroke! He begins to work, but every motion betrays an agitated and despairing mind. The whip at length ceases its strokes, and again the implement of labor falls to the ground! Need I tell you that man is a *slave*?

Look again! See how industriously that man applies himself to his task. His countenance is the picture of health and contentment. Although you see no whip wielded over him, he does not relax from his toil. Need I tell you, that man is a *freeman*—toiling hard, it may be, but cheerfully, for his wife and children?

The slaves, in their present condition, are surrounded with every motive to insurrection. Deprived of all their rights, liable to be torn asunder from their relatives and friends, and sold like beasts in the market! and goaded to desperation by the lash! would it be strange, if they should make an effort to shake off their fetters? Do not slaveholders live in constant fear of insurrection? Why does the slaveholding mother, when she hears an alarm of fire, press her infant closer to her bosom? Why is it, that, in many instances, the master dare not retire to rest without the implements of war by his bedside? Why, but because he is conscious that the slaves are surrounded with motives to fight—motives more powerful far than those which urged our fathers to the field of battle and of blood?

Emancipation would not only remove the causes which now

operate to induce the slaves to fight, but furnish them with the strongest motives for gratitude and contentment. After having been so long treated as merchandize, how would it console and comfort them to think, that they were at last to be regarded as men! no longer to be bought and sold—no longer to be compelled to toil without compensation, or kept in ignorance of their relations to God and their fellow-men. O, it would bind around their hearts a 'cord of love' stronger than death, by which they might be led in the paths of virtue and peace!

I have said, that the safety of emancipation might be argued from historical facts; and I now challenge the advocates of gradual emancipation to produce from the history of the world a single instance in which the liberation of slaves has caused the evils which their imagination has depicted. I challenge them to point to a single drop of human blood, which has been shed by slaves in consequence of their emancipation.

Do they point to St. Domingo? Let them know, that the horrible scenes enacted there were the bitter fruits of oppression. For eight years, more than half a million of emancipated slaves continued to labor peaceably and quietly for their former masters; and 'the colony,' to use the language of an accredited historian,\* 'marched, as by enchantment, towards its ancient splendor; cultivation prospered; every day produced perceptible proofs of its progress.' It was when Bonaparte attempted to restore slavery—to fasten again the iron yoke of bondage upon five hundred thousand freemen, that those scenes occurred, which struck the whole civilized world with horror.

In July, 1828, thirty thousand Hottentots were emancipated in Cape Colony, in South Africa, by the British Parliament; and admitted by law to all the rights and privileges of the white colonists. Although the masters protested that there would be no security to life or property, yet were their flocks not pillaged nor their throats cut.†

Passing by a score of facts of the same nature, which we might mention, if time would permit, we refer to the experiment now going on in the British West Indies for evidence of the most decisive character of the entire safety of immediate emancipation. While the people of Great Britain were discussing the subject of slavery in their Colonies, and while a vast majority of the philanthropists of that country were urging Parliament to abolish it at once and forever; the same predictions of ruin and massacre were uttered by the planters, which are now uttered by the friends of gradual reform in this country. It was said there, as it now is here, that the emancipated slaves would pillage and burn the houses of their former masters, and fill the land with mourning and wo!

\* General Lacroix. † See the 'Oasis,' by Mrs. Child, p. 163.

It was on account of these alarming predictions, so loudly uttered and so strenuously persisted in, that Parliament was induced to leave each colony to choose for itself, whether to make emancipation immediate and complete, or to hold their slaves in the relation of apprentices for a term of years. Two of the colonies, Antigua and Bermuda, in the face of their former predictions, *preferred the system of immediate emancipation!* They no sooner saw that Parliament was determined that the slaves should eventually be free, and that their auguries of danger could not avail to prevent this result, than they gave their fears to the winds! The other colonies adopted the system of apprenticeship.

Now mark the result. In Antigua and Bermuda, where the system of immediate and unconditional emancipation was adopted, there has been no disorder—no difficulty. No houses have been pillaged or burned, and no throats have been cut. Those who were formerly slaves now labor peaceably and quietly for wages; and the latest accounts encourage the hope, that no serious difficulties will ensue. In the other colonies, where the system of apprenticeship was preferred, although the slaves have not fulfilled the predictions of their masters by resorting to violence, they have still shown much dissatisfaction, and in some instances have refused to work. They cannot see the justice of being compelled to serve an apprenticeship with those whom they have heretofore served as slaves. Hence they are disappointed and dissatisfied. This is just the result which the friends of emancipation predicted. How much better would it have been, had the example of Antigua and Bermuda been followed by the other colonies. Then there would have been no discordant note to mar the song of joy and rejoicing at the freedom of eight hundred thousand human beings from the galling fetters of slavery.\*

How plainly do these facts demonstrate the perfect safety of doing justice at once. And why should they surprise us? Might we not expect that obedience to the law of God would be productive of the happiest consequences? There are some who talk as if they supposed God had made some mistake in framing his law—that he did not make due allowance for all the circumstances of human existence—and that therefore they have a right to remedy the defect. But let them recollect, that God saw the end from the beginning—that when he commanded mankind to love their neighbors as themselves, he did it for their good, and with a perfect knowledge of all the circumstances in which every individual of the human family would be placed.

\* See Appendix A.

4. *It is said by way of objection, that the laws deprive the masters of the power of emancipating.* This reminds me of a story, very simple indeed, but yet illustrating the fallacy of this excuse so well that I cannot forbear to relate it. A lady once left home, and commanded her daughter to perform a certain piece of labor in her absence. Finding on her return, that the work had not been done, she interrogated the daughter as to the cause. 'Mother,' said she, 'I was tied.' 'Who tied you?' 'O, I tied myself!' And this is just what the slaveholders do—they make laws prohibiting emancipation, and then gravely plead those laws as an excuse for their oppression!

I was conversing, not long since, with a student, in a Theological Seminary in New-England, from Virginia. He declared positively, that the masters in that State were generally very anxious to emancipate—mourning over their unfortunate condition, and the difficulties which prevented the accomplishment of their benevolent desires. I asked him to tell me what were the difficulties which rendered it necessary for slaveholders to oppress their sable victims, and disregard the plain demands of the law of love. And what do you suppose was the first difficulty which he brought forward by way of palliation for their heaven-daring crimes? Why, that the *laws* deprived them of the power to 'undo the heavy burdens!' But have you not told me that there exists among them a strong public sentiment in favor of emancipation? 'Yes.' And they would generally be glad to emancipate, if the laws were repealed? 'Yes.' Why then do they not repeal the laws? 'Because,' added he, with as much gravity as if he supposed this hypocritical subterfuge would effectually silence all further argument—'because they regard the laws as essential to their safety!' Truly has it been said, 'error is fated to run crooked'!

But it is asked, what shall those individuals do, who would be glad to emancipate, if the laws did not exist? I reply, let them obey God rather than men. God says, 'break every yoke—let the oppressed go free,' and they can no more be excused for refusing to comply, on account of the laws in question, than Daniel could have been excused for neglecting to pray on account of the law of his king. But it is said, that if they do this, those who are set at liberty will be again enslaved by the public authorities. And what of that? Must they continue in crime to prevent its perpetration by others? Let them fearlessly obey God, and do all in their power to protect the emancipated; and then if the State reduces them to bondage, on the State be the responsibility.

5. *It is objected that immediate emancipation is not the doctrine of the Bible.* In support of this objection it is said,

that slavery existed under the ancient dispensation, and in the time of Christ and the Apostles, who did not inculcate the duty of letting the slaves go free at once. I shall not go into an extended examination of these points. It is a subject for an elaborate treatise. In regard to the children of Israel I will only say, that allowing that their servants were slaves, in the proper sense of the word, they were held by express authority from God. It would be just as reasonable to say, that we have a right to make war upon surrounding nations with a view to exterminate them, because God authorized the Israelites to do it, as it would be to plead their example in justification of slavery.

Although the slavery which existed in the time of Christ and the Apostles was very different from that which exists at the present day, the New Testament is far from justifying it. Much stress has been laid upon the fact, that Paul commanded servants to be obedient to their masters; but this no more proves that the masters had a right to retain them in bondage, than the command, 'Love your enemies,' implies that men may innocently be enemies to one another. Our Savior has said, 'If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also;' but does this justify him who smites? Neither does the exhortation to servants to be obedient to their masters imply that the relation was an innocent one.

But what did Paul say to the masters? Did he tell them that their servants were their property—mere goods and chattels, which they might starve or sell at pleasure? Did he say that they might be kept in brutal ignorance as the slaves are kept at the south? Listen to his words: 'Masters,' said he, 'give unto your servants that which is *just and equal.*'\* When it can be shown that the holding of men in slavery, selling them at auction with horses and cattle, and compelling them to labor without hire, is '*just and equal,*' then it will be time enough to assert that Paul justified it.

The case of Onesimus, whom Paul sent back to Philemon, is so often referred to in justification of slavery, that I need make no apology for quoting what follows from a lecture delivered in England, by that noble champion of the slave, GEORGE THOMPSON, who is now in this country.

Yes! resumed Mr. Thompson, this is all very beautiful: but then, St. Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon! Well, then, about this Onesimus. In the first place, does the gentleman know that this Onesimus was a slave in the sense that the negroes in the West Indies [United States] are slaves? Second. Did Philemon possess a property in his life and limbs, as the West India [American] slave owners say they have in the life and limbs of the negroes? He should have prov-

\* Colossians, iv. 1.

ed this before he justified slavery, because St. Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon. We find in the 18th chapter of Matthew, that a certain king would take account of his servants. Now the word *doulos*, translated servant there, is the same which is translated servant in the epistle to Philemon; and we find there that one unfaithful *doulos* owed his master ten thousand talents. How could an abject slave owe ten thousand talents? But mark the conduct of his master. He orders the slave and his family to be sold, that he may be repaid. He sells his own property to pay himself! I may perhaps illustrate the folly of this conduct, supposing *doulos* to mean slave, by a homely simile. A horse in a stable slips his halter, and eats some beans out of a sack, and the master says, 'Oh thou wicked and ungrateful horse! did I not give thee hay enough? and yet thou hast broken loose and eaten up this sack of beans! Though thou art mine, and though thou hast cost me fifty pounds, I will punish thee for this. I will sell thee to-morrow, though I should lose by thee, that I may repay myself for the beans thou hast eaten.'

Suppose this *doulos*—this slave according to West Indian translation, runs away and becomes a convert to principles that he knew not before—that he is recognized and sheltered, as St. Paul kept Onesimus—and that he is sent back with a message, 'I send you back your runaway.' In such a case, no doubt the slave owner would say, 'Ay, to be sure, let me have him.' But what does St. Paul say? Does he bid Philemon take Onesimus, and treat him as the poor boy was treated for running away with his own naked body? No! Does he say, 'Take him and hang him?' No! Does he say, 'Flog him?' No! Does he say, 'Chain him?' No! Does he say, 'Put a collar on him?' No! He says, 'Receive him *not as a servant, BUT AS A BROTHER.*' He bids him esteem him as more than a servant—as a *brother beloved.*

One thing is certain; the Bible does not say a word about gradual emancipation, or the duty of preparing the slaves for freedom by educating them: consequently, if the argument attempted to be drawn from Scripture in support of slavery proves any thing, it proves that the system may be perpetual! The objector can take which horn of the dilemma he chooses: he may say the Bible justifies slavery, and therefore all attempts to promote emancipation are unscriptural: or else candidly admit, that he perverts the sacred volume and slanders the character of those who 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

Those who resort to the Bible to find apologies for slavery consider themselves slandered when *they* are spoken of as the friends of the system. They can talk very calmly of Abraham, as a *pious* slaveholder—and of Paul as vindicating the just claims of the masters, &c. But ask them whether *they* support the system, and they will reply, 'O no, we are as much opposed to slavery as the abolitionists:' as if they were more holy than Paul! more benevolent than God! and as if their morality were purer than that of the Bible! O, shame! that men—that *Christians* should thus 'wrest the Scriptures,' and give occasion for the enemy to blaspheme!

I have spoken thus far of objections to PRINCIPLES: I will now proceed to answer, as was proposed,

## II. OBJECTIONS TO THE MEASURES OF ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETIES. And

1. *It is said they are exciting the free States on a subject which does not concern them.* And is it true, that the people of the free States have no concern with slavery? Suppose the slaves should universally rebel against their masters, and seek revenge for the wrongs which they have suffered; would the South be willing then that we should have nothing to do with the matter? Do we flatter ourselves that such a crisis will never come? that the slaves will always remain peaceable, and submit to their fate? Let us not delude ourselves with such a hope. Unless they are voluntarily emancipated, the day of retribution will come! In all the anguish of hope deferred, they will make such an effort to secure their rights as will baffle the skill of their oppressors and fill the land with mourning and wo! And where would the South look for succor in such a crisis, but to the people of the free States? Would she not point to the constitution—‘the sacred national compact’—and demand our assistance under its solemn stipulations? And have we then no concern with slavery? no right to utter a note of warning and expostulation? To whom, moreover, does the South look for assistance in recovering her ‘fugitives,’ but to the officers of justice in the free States? Must we stain our hands with the guilt of oppression, and become partners with them in perpetrating the highest of all crimes? and have we no right to remonstrate? Are we slaves ourselves, having no right to utter a word, when we are required to assist in fastening the yoke of bondage on those who fly to us for protection?

I maintain, that so far from having nothing to do with slavery, the free States are under the most solemn obligations to seek its removal by united and persevering exertion. The groans of the oppressed, wafted to us on every breeze—the guilt of the oppressor rising up to Heaven and calling for vengeance—our solemn Declaration of Independence, disregarded in the persons of more than two millions of manacled and bleeding slaves—the bleeding reputation of our country, and the solemn injunction of Holy Writ, to ‘remember them that are in bonds as bound with them’—lay us under an obligation, as weighty as any which was ever pressed on the conscience of man, to seek the removal of this mighty evil.

I know it is said, that the free States are already opposed to slavery. There is a sense, doubtless, in which this is true;

but there is another sense, far more important, in which it is false. The free States opposed to slavery! Why then are the mouths of the people filled with apologies for the sin? Why do we hear one crying out, that it is a necessary evil? another, that its removal would be a curse both to the master and slave? and another, that the Bible sanctions it? Why do they tolerate the domestic slave-trade—a traffic, fraught with misery as great, and with guilt as enormous, as that which marks the steps of the kidnapper on the coast of Africa?\* But above all, why do they permit the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia?† Why do they allow human beings to be bought and sold in the very place where stands the Temple of Liberty? Why are our Representatives in Congress silent, when they hear the clanking of the prisoner's chains, and the hammer of the auctioneer, as he knocks off to the highest bidder the bodies and souls of men, women and children, within a stone's throw of that very building where talent and eloquence are exhausted in lofty speeches concerning 'inalienable rights'?‡ The free States opposed to slavery? Their practice gives the lie to their professions. Their hands are stained with innocent blood, and on them rests the deepest guilt!

Slavery at this very moment is supported at the South, in no small degree, by northern excuses and apologies, and more than all by the national example.¶ How can we reasonably expect that the South will wash out her deep-stained guilt, while we are crying, 'Peace, peace;' and while the nation itself lends the sanction of its high example to encourage them in their course? Let us annihilate slavery in the District of Columbia, elevate the people of color in our midst, and bear a faithful testimony against the sin of the South; and then the mighty fabric of oppression, which renders us the reproach and scorn of the whole civilized world, will speedily crumble and fall. We cannot neglect to do this and be innocent. If we fail to use the moral power which God has placed in our hands—a power amply sufficient to accomplish this glorious result—the same judgments which will, we have reason to fear, be visited upon the South, will be visited also upon us; and our glorious institutions, the envy of the world, will be swallowed up in the mighty ruin! The same God who brought Israel out of the

\* Appendix B.

† Appendix C.

‡ Appendix D.

‡ Since this Address was written, the long and guilty silence has been broken! Let the friends of humanity thank God and take courage! Let petitions be sent to Congress from every city, town and village in the free States! Let a voice of remonstrance be heard from every pulpit, from every hall of legislation, and from every human dwelling! Let not the press keep silence—but let it speak out in tones of thunder, until this iniquity be put away, and our country no longer suffer the reproach of tolerating a traffic in human flesh within sight of her temples of justice!



house of bondage, and overthrew their guilty oppressors, will visit us in anger, and destroy us in his hot displeasure.

I know it is said, that we should withhold our advice and leave the South to seek a remedy for this mighty evil in her own time and in her own way. But we might as well talk of leaving the sleeping inmates of a house on fire to extinguish the flames and effect their escape without our assistance! As well might the friends of temperance dissolve their associations and leave distillers, rum merchants and drunkards to reform in their own time and in their own way! As well might the church of Christ throw down her banners, and leave a guilty world to grope its way in darkness to the pit!

2. *It is said that Anti-Slavery Societies are interfering with the rights of slaveholders—rights guaranteed by the constitution.* But we deny that the framers of the constitution could confer the right of holding slaves. What authority had the framers of that instrument to nullify the laws of Jehovah? Hath God said, 'Whoso stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death;' and have men the right to enter into a compact which binds them to protect each other in stealing men, women and children? We say with PITT, 'A legislative contract for the continuance of slavery must have been void, even from the beginning; for it is an outrage upon justice, and only another name for fraud, robbery and murder. As well might an individual think himself bound by a promise to commit an assassination.' Others may talk of the *right* of slaveholders to their victims; but with the eloquent BROUGHAM, '*I deny the right—I acknowledge not the property.*' The principles, the feelings of our common nature, rise in rebellion against it. Be the appeal made to the understanding or to the heart, the sentence is the same that rejects it. In vain you tell me of the laws that sanction such a claim! There is a law above all the enactments of human codes—the same throughout the world, the same in all times—such as it was before the daring genius of Columbus pierced the night of ages, and opened to one world the sources of power, wealth and knowledge; to another, all unutterable woes;—such it is at this day: it is the law written by the finger of God on the heart of man; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, while men despise fraud, and loathe rapine, and abhor blood, they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy, that man can hold property in man! We say with RICE, 'The owners of slaves are licensed robbers, and not the just proprietors of what they claim: freeing them is not depriving them of property, but restoring it to the right owner; it is suffering the unlawful captive to escape. It is not wrong-

ing the master, but doing justice to the slave, restoring him to himself. Emancipation would only take away property that is its own property, and not ours; property that has the same right to possess us, as we have to possess it; property that has the same right to convert our children into dogs and calves and colts, as we have to convert theirs into these beasts; property that may transfer our children to strangers, by the same right that we transfer theirs.'

But what are Anti-Slavery Societies doing, which the constitution prohibits? They have done nothing, and propose to do nothing, but discuss the true doctrine of human rights—to operate upon public sentiment by arguments and facts—and touch the public conscience by appeals to the understanding. We do not alarm our opponents by the exhibition of physical power. The influence which we wield is a moral influence. And does not the constitution guarantee to us the liberty of speech and the press? May we write and print what we please on every subject but that of slavery? May we talk of the tyranny of European despots, and give utterance to our sympathies for the Greeks and Poles; and must we seal our lips in silence concerning the oppression which is done in our own country? No; we will not. We will lift up the warning voice; we will 'cry aloud and spare not;' we will show the people their sins; we will unfold to public view the enormities of slavery—that system of lust and blood, which remains like a plague-spot upon our country's fair escutcheon. We will not be deterred by threats, or suspend our exertions at the bidding of a lawless mob. We will suffer martyrdom, if need be, in defence of our principles. Never, till death lays his icy hand upon us, and we are summoned to our last account, will we cease to bear testimony against the crying sin of our country; and our last prayer shall be uttered in behalf of the manacled slave!

3. *It is said that Anti-Slavery Societies are endangering the Union.* It should rather be said that they are taking the only course which can save the Union from crumbling to pieces. What but slavery is the cause of all the heart-burnings and dissensions between the North and South? Remove this single evil, and the Union might be indissolubly cemented in the bonds of fraternal affection; but while this evil continues, it will be disturbed by animosities and jealousies innumerable.

How often have we been told, that the liberty of speech and the freedom of the press are the very pillars of our political fabric—our only safeguard from tyranny and despotism! But now, forsooth, our sagacious patriots have discovered, that the

safety of the Union depends upon the suppression of free inquiry ; and so the abolitionists must be silenced—peaceably if possible, *forcibly* if necessary. At all events, their mouths must be stopped, or the Union will fly to pieces! What, I ask, is our Union worth, if it be such a rope of sand as this declaration implies? If, indeed, it cannot stand, except on the necks of two millions of slaves ; if the law of God must be trampled under foot to sustain it ; if its foundation is so frail, that free discussion must be inhibited to preserve it ; then I say, let it fall. Yes, let it fall ; for much as I value it, I esteem it as nothing worth compared with God's holy law.

4. *It is made a serious objection to Anti-Slavery Societies that they oppose the Colonization Society.* Time will not permit me to enter at length upon a discussion of this topic. Candor seems to require, however, that I should not pass it in silence. I say then that we oppose the Colonization Society,

Because, in its official publications, and through its agents, it has ever manifested the most confirmed and deadly hostility to our fundamental principles ;—

Because it has declared itself the enemy of immediate emancipation ;\*—

Because it has maintained that no slave ought to be emancipated, except on condition of leaving the country ; thus admitting that the masters may innocently retain their victims in servitude ;†—

Because it denies the power of the gospel to annihilate prejudice, and blasphemously attributes those feelings of hostility to the people of color, which are the sin and disgrace of this country, to 'AN ORDINATION OF PROVIDENCE' ;‡—

Because it tends to increase the prejudice against the colored people, by gratifying it ;—

Because it has slandered the people of color, and declared that they are a vile and worthless class, who can never be ele-

\* ' Were the very spirit of angelic charity to pervade and fill the hearts of all the slaveholders in our land, it would by no means require that all the slaves should be instantaneously liberated.'—*African Repository*, vol. v. p. 329.

† ' All emancipation, to however small an extent, which permits the persons emancipated to remain in this country, is an evil which must increase with the increase of the operation.'—*First Annual Report of the Am. Col. Society*.

‡ ' Emancipation, with the liberty to remain on this side of the Atlantic, is but an act of dreamy madness !'—*Thirteenth Annual Report*.

One of the speakers at the last annual meeting of the society, (B. B. Thatcher of Boston) has declared in the *North American Review* for July, 1833, (and the declaration has been endorsed by the *African Repository*), that ' The society maintains that no slave ought to receive his liberty, except on condition of being excluded, not merely from the State which sets him loose, but from the whole country ; that is, of being colonized.'

‡ ' Christianity cannot do for them here what it will do for them in Africa. This is not the fault of the colored man, nor of the white man, nor of Christianity, but AN ORDINATION OF PROVIDENCE.'—*Fifteenth Annual Report*.

vated in this country, and 'of whom it were a blessing to society to be rid';\*—

Because the people of color themselves, wherever they have the liberty of speech, declare its influence to be prejudicial to their interests;†—

Because many of those whom the Society colonizes are *made willing* to be exported, by oppressive laws, which are enacted through the agency of the members and friends of the Society;‡—

Because it denounces abolitionists as enemies of their country—as mad-men and fanatics;||—

Because its friends, in their efforts to secure for it the patronage of different portions of the country, have practised the grossest deception;¶—

Because it justifies those laws which keep the slaves in ignorance;§—

\* 'They constitute a large mass of human beings, who hang as a vile excrescence upon society.'—*African Repository*, vol. vii. p. 230.

† The people of color, in the principal cities and villages in the free States, have published resolutions declaring their confirmed hostility to the society.

‡ 'And yet they sent out two ship-loads of VAGABONDS not fit to go to such a place, and that were COERCED away as truly as if it had been done with a CART-WHIP!'—Speech of R. J. Breckenridge before the Am. Col. Soc. in 1834.

|| 'The scope of the society is large enough, but it is in no wise mingled or confounded with the broad sweeping views of a few fanatics in America, who would urge us on to the sudden and total abolition of slavery.'—*African Repository*, vol. iii. p. 197.

¶ In proof of this, we refer to the gross falsehood concerning Clarkson's letter, which was published in the *African Repository* by the Rev. R. R. Gurley. Clarkson, the modern apostle of emancipation, wrote a letter to Elliott Cresson, the agent of the Colonization Society in England, expressing his views of the society and the reasons why he supported it. In that letter, he says that he understands the 'FIRST' object of the society to be, 'to assist in the emancipation of all the slaves in the United States;' and with this understanding he approved of it. The letter found its way to this country—to Washington. Mr. Gurley wished to add the name of Clarkson to the long catalogue of distinguished men who supported the society; but he dared not let it be known, that that worthy man supported it from a belief that its object was, to 'emancipate all the slaves;' first, because he knew he had been grossly deceived by Cresson—and secondly, because he knew that the people of the South would be indignant at such an announcement. He therefore omits Clarkson's introduction, and inserts an editorial paragraph in place of it, misrepresenting entirely the reasons which induced that good man to support the scheme. That the people of Vermont may see this deception, and no longer be gulled into a support of this ungodly conspiracy against an oppressed and down-trodden people, we insert in parallel columns the paragraphs to which we refer.

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE.

*Extract from Clarkson's Letter.*

'This society seems to me to have two objects in view—first, to ASSIST IN THE EMANCIPATION OF ALL THE SLAVES NOW IN THE UNITED STATES; and secondly, by sending these to Africa, to do away the slave trade, and promote civilization among the natives there.'

The author of this base forgery is still Secretary of the American Colonization Society! Will the people of Vermont support that society?

§ 'It is a well established point, that the public safety forbids either the emancipation or the general instruction of the slaves.'—*Seventh Annual Report.*

AND ON THIS!

*Mr. Gurley's False Substitute.*

'He [Clarkson] considers the object of the society two-fold; first, TO PROMOTE THE VOLUNTARY EMIGRATION TO AFRICA OF THE COLORED POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES; and secondly, the suppression of the slave-trade, and the civilization of the African tribes.'

Because it is managed chiefly by slaveholders, who do not repent of their sin, but continue to trade in human flesh; \*—

Because its colony is no benefit to Africa, and multitudes of the emigrants wish to return to this country; †—and finally,

Because its principles are such that it receives the support and countenance of many of the vilest men in the land, even of those who contrive and execute plans for mobbing the abolitionists. ||

These are the reasons why we oppose the Colonization Society. For the truth of our charges against it we appeal to its official documents. We ask no man to take our assertions instead of proof. We invite discussion; we challenge investigation; and we will not shrink from the issue.

This Society, like Popery, has endeavored to silence our objections by pointing us to its long calender of saints. But the question is not, whether good men have supported it? but whether its principles are in accordance with religion and humanity? And this question we shall continue to press upon the public mind, uninfluenced by flattery and unawed by threats.

5. *Finally, it is objected to Anti-Slavery Societies, that their measures tend to exasperate slaveholders, and confirm them in sin.* This objection has been made to reformers in every age of the world, from the time that Noah preached repentance to the antedelvians down to the present period. It was made against the Apostles—against Luther—and it has been made against the friends of temperance in our day. Why have such multitudes of Christian ministers fallen martyrs to the cause of their blessed Lord? Simply because they were faithful in declaring the truth; because they told men that they

\* About twelve years ago, some of the wisest men of the nation, *mostly slaveholders*, formed in the city of Washington, the present American Colonization Society.—*Af. Rep.* vol. iv. p. 274.

Bushrod Washington, first President of the Society, while he held his office, sold 60 of his slaves to be driven off to the southern market! And Charles Carroll, who was President of the Society at the time of his death, left, if we mistake not, nearly 1000 slaves, which he 'entailed' on his relatives!

† Of all misery and poverty, and all repining that my imagination had ever conceived, it had never reached what my eyes now saw, and my ears heard. Hundreds of poor creatures, squallid, ragged, hungry, without employment—some actually starving to death, and all praying most fervently that they might get home to America once more. Even the emancipated slave craved the boon of returning again to bondage that he might once more have the pains of hunger satisfied. There are hundreds there who say they would rather come back and be slaves, than stay in Liberia. They would sit down and tell us their tale of suffering and of sorrow, with such a dejected and wo-begone aspect, that it would almost break our hearts. They would weep as they would talk of their sorrows here, and their joys in America; and we mingled our tears freely with theirs. This part of the population included, as near as we could judge, *two thirds* of the inhabitants of Monrovia.—*Samuel Jones' Journal of a visit to Liberia—Birney's Letter.*

|| The mobocracy of New York passed resolutions the last year in favor of the society, after having broken up a meeting of abolitionists in Chatham Street Chapel.

were sinners, and must repent or perish. Why were Baxter and his associates forbidden to preach the gospel, and persecuted from city to city? Simply because they attempted to reform the vices of their times—because they told men plainly and fearlessly that they were sinners—rebels against God and exposed to utter destruction. There was one condition on which they might all have escaped persecution—*by ceasing to preach against sin so as to exasperate sinners.*

How was Pharaoh exasperated, when Moses, in the name of the Lord, commanded him to let Israel go? If Moses had only urged him on the ground of *expediency*—if he had only told him it was very *unfortunate* that the people of Israel were his slaves—if he had failed to urge upon him the duty of *immediate repentance*, and told him that he ought to let them go free as soon as existing *difficulties* were removed; Pharaoh would doubtless have been ready to assent to it all. It was an exhibition of his awful guilt in rebelling against God that so exasperated him and made him tremble with rage!

TRUTH is the grand instrument by which to prosecute every kind of moral reformation. If truth is yielded up, out of regard to the feelings of those whom it offends, the reformation will stop, and we shall 'labor in vain and spend our strength for nought.' The question then is, whether Anti-Slavery Societies in the prosecution of their object, do any thing more than wield this mighty weapon. If they do not, then the fact that they offend slaveholders is no objection to their measures.

On this question we are ready to join issue. We assert that we say nothing of slaveholders which is not strictly true. We call them men-stealers; and this we are told is abusive and slanderous. But why? If a man steals a horse, is he not at once branded as a *horse-thief*? If he steals a sheep, what do men call him but a *sheep-stealer*? And why should not those who steal *men* be called *men-stealers*? We maintain, that every person who retains in his possession as *property*, a human being, is guilty of the highest kind of theft. We care not what may be his station in society; whether he be rich or poor; a minister or layman; a magistrate or a private citizen; we charge him with the guilt of man-stealing. And we do it not for the purpose of offending him, but to make him sensible of the enormity of his guilt.

But, asks the objector, do you really mean to say, that ministers and church members who hold slaves at the South are men-stealers? Yes; and we say that their guilt is enhanced by their high professions. The churches at the South are stained with blood! They are corrupt, both ministers and people! With the word of God in their hands, which says,

'Thou shalt not steal,' they commit the highest kind of theft! With high professions of attachment to Christ and his cause, and of love to their fellow men, they oppress the poor and needy, and rob the fatherless and the widow!\*

I know it is said, these men are ignorant. But how is it possible, that, with the Bible in their hands, they should not know it is a heinous crime to deprive a human being of liberty and 'use his service without wages'? And then there is the Declaration of Independence staring them in the face, with its solemn attestation of human rights! Ignorant! Touch them and see! Enter their dwellings at midnight, seize their helpless children and carry them into exile. Will they not inquire for the *thief*? Will they not appeal to the Bible to show your inhumanity and wickedness? Where is now their ignorance? But I forget: you have stolen *their* children; and their children have *white skins*!

Our answer then to those who accuse us of harsh language is, that we utter NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH. Our design is, to represent slavery and the guilt of those who uphold it in such terms as will not fail to carry conviction to the conscience, and convey an adequate impression of their enormity. We do this because we believe it to be the only way to effect our object, and not because we take pleasure in offending the people of the South.

We could pay more respect to the objections of those who find fault with us for our harsh language, if they would deign to set us an example of the proper mode of discussing the subject. But this they neglect to do. They stand aloof and complain. They talk and write twice as much about our 'imprudent zeal' and 'harsh language' as they do about the enormities of slavery; and to crown the whole, they call us 'visionary enthusiasts,' 'mad-men' and 'fanatics'!

What, I ask, has given the cause of temperance such a mighty impulse in this land? I answer, the constant and fearless reiteration of the TRUTH—the unceasing declaration, from the pulpit and the press, that the manufacturers, venders and consumers of intoxicating liquor are awfully GUILTY in the sight of God, and bound INSTANTLY TO REPENT. It is the pressure of this truth upon the conscience, which has led such multitudes in our country to abandon the manufacture and sale of the drunkard's drink. The friends of temperance were slow in coming up to this point. They were at first disposed to say nothing that should offend—nothing that should exasperate those *pious* men who were so *unfortunate* as to have invested all their property in distilleries, and who were under the *neces-*

\* Appendix E.

sity of continuing their guilty business in order to support their families!

When the doctrine of total abstinence was first broached, it was generally regarded as a wild chimera; but experience has proved it to be the grand lever of the temperance reform. It is asked of us why we insist upon the doctrine of entire and immediate emancipation. We answer, for the same reason that Temperance Societies insist upon the doctrine of total abstinence—because it is the only principle that can reach the conscience and effect the object;—for the same reason that ministers of the gospel preach the duty of immediate repentance—because to preach any other doctrine would be to admit that men might innocently continue to sin.

We have several examples of the power of our principles to awaken the dormant conscience of the slaveholder. There is the noble BIRNEY, a living witness to their efficacy. But two years ago he was an agent of the Colonization Society, and a slaveholder. There was nothing in the principles of that institution which touched his conscience. But when the principles of abolition were presented to his mind, they reached his heart—he was convinced—he has repented—he is no longer an oppressor, but is exerting all the powers of his noble mind in extending to others a knowledge of the principles which led him to repentance.

The testimony of Mr. THOME of Kentucky to the power of anti-slavery principles is encouraging and valuable. In his eloquent and impressive address at the first annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society he said:

That abolition principles do commend themselves to the consciences and interest of slaveholders, I have the honor to stand before you a living witness. I breathed my first breath in the atmosphere of slavery. The sympathies of nature were dried up, even in their spring-tide; compassion was deadened, and the heart steeled by repeated scenes of cruelty, and oft-taught lessons of the colored man's inferiority. But though I am at this moment heir to a slave inheritance—one of those *unfortunate* beings upon whom slavery is by force *entailed*,—I am bold to denounce the whole system as an outrage, a complication of crimes, and wrongs, and cruelties, that make angels weep.

This is the spirit which anti-slavery principles inspire. Indeed I know of no subject that takes such strong hold of the man as does abolition. All the sympathies are its advocates, and every susceptibility to compassionate outraged humanity stands pledged to do its work.

For several years I contributed to the funds of the Colonization Society, and eulogized its measures; and though I would not now leave my path to attack this institution, yet duty bids me state, solemnly and deliberately, that its direct influence upon my mind was to lesson my conviction of the evil of slavery, and to deepen and sanctify my prejudice against the colored race.

My apology for speaking thus, is, that I *know* its evils. I *know* the individual slaves, who are now in bondage by its influence *alone*. I



know the masters, whose *only* plea for continuing in the sin is drawn from the doctrines of the Colonization Society. But Kentucky is rising above this influence. Conscientious citizens are forming themselves into other associations. The spirit of inquiry is abroad. The Legislature have taken up the subject. The great object of my presence in the free States is to urge abolitionists to renewed efforts in behalf of the slave. The question has been asked here, and repeated at the South, 'What has the North to do with slavery?' At present she has every thing to do with it—every thing. We have no abolition periodicals in the West and South; and your principles are grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. Yet, under all these disadvantages, you have done much already. The very little leaven you have been able to introduce is working with tremendous power. One of my acquaintance, heir to slave-property, a young man of growing influence, became a whole-hearted abolitionist, in consequence of reading a single number of the Anti-Slavery Reporter, sent to him by some unknown hand. A family of slaves in Arkansas Territory, another in Tennessee, and a third, consisting of eighty-eight, in Virginia, have been emancipated through the influence of one abolition periodical.

Then do not hesitate as to duty. We have been lulled to sleep by the guilty apologist. We appeal to you for light. Send us facts—send us kind remonstrance and manly reasoning. We are perishing for lack of truth.

Friends of the oppressed! let us be encouraged by these cheering examples, to go forward in our work of philanthropy and love. With GOD and TRUTH on our side, what have we to fear? Ignorance and misrepresentation may for a while triumph over knowledge and truth; but the cause is of God and must prevail.

It is but little more than three years, since, with eleven others, I assisted in forming the New England Anti-Slavery Society, in Boston. We met in what was called an African school house. We were poor and feeble of ourselves, but God gave us strength and courage. The agent of the Colonization Society, in its official organ, called us 'ardent young men, with more *blood* than *brains*!' The wise and great—the rich and noble, laughed at our folly and ridiculed us for our presumption. The nation was asleep. We knew of scarcely twenty individuals in the whole land who were ready to co-operate with us. In the name of God we set up the banner of IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION, and around it have gathered thousands of the noblest men in the land, with vigorous minds and warm hearts.

Brethren: All that has been done thus far in this noble cause, has been done through the influence of light and truth; and it can be urged forward to final and complete success only by the same means. The enormities of the system of slavery must be spread out to the public view. Our principles must be explained and enforced by warm appeals to the understandings and consciences of our fellow citizens. There are two

ways in which this can be done ; by the employment of agents and the distribution of tracts, pamphlets and periodicals. In these two ways, the public sentiment of Vermont might soon be changed, and brought to bear in all its force against the mountain of oppression which we seek to remove.

Let us then show our faith by our works. Let the sympathy which exists in our *hearts* extend also to our *pockets*. Let us give liberally of that which God has placed in our hands, that the cause may be carried forward vigorously, successfully, triumphantly.

Thanks be to God for past success. 'If the Lord had not been our side, then had our enemies swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.' The same Almighty Power which has delivered us from the rage and fury of mobs, will still go with us and protect us from all the assaults of our enemies. He will cause the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of the wrath he will restrain. Whatever may befall us as individuals—whether we live long, or die by the murderous hand of the assassin, our cause will be victorious. Yes! 'Glory to God in the highest,' slavery must speedily fall; the day is coming when every fetter shall be broken and the oppressed shall go free!

'Speed, speed the hour, O Lord!

Speak, and at thy dread word

Fetters shall fall

From every limb—the strong

No more the weak shall wrong,

But liberty's sweet song,

Be sung by all.'

## APPENDIX.

## NOTE A.—Page 13.

We commend the following facts, derived from authentic sources, to all who are in doubt respecting the probable consequences of emancipation.

STRIKING INSTANCE OF THE CAPACITY OF EMANCIPATED SLAVES TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

'It happened that several slaves took refuge from Martinique, where the slave-trade is avowedly carried on, to St. Lucia, in 1829. This caused a discussion, the effect of which was to make it generally known, that, on a foreign slave's reaching a British colony, he, by Dr. Lushington's Bill, becomes free; and in consequence of this discussion, several, exceeding 100 in number, came over in the year 1830.

Here were persons leaving a country of unmitigated slavery; persons precisely in the condition in which our whole slave population may be supposed to have been some thirty years ago, by those who maintain that the condition of the slave has improved; here were persons described by their government as *incendiaries, idlers, and poisoners*.

When I left the colony in April last, some were employed for wages in the business they were best acquainted with:—some as masons and carpenters; some as domestics; others in clearing land, or as laborers on estates; while about twenty-six had clubbed together and placed themselves under the direction of a free colored man, an African, one of the persons deported from Martinique in 1824. These last had erected a pottery at a short distance from Castries. They took a piece of land: three or four cleared it; others fished up coral and burned lime; five or six quarried and got the stones, and performed the mason's work; the remainder felled the timber and worked it in; and the little money that was requisite, was supplied in advance by the contractor for the church, on the tiles to be furnished for the building. This pottery was completed—a plain structure, but of great solidity and surprising neatness. Thus had they actually introduced a new manufacture into the country, for which it was previously indebted to our foreign neighbors or to the home market.'—*JEREMIE'S Essays*.

EMANCIPATION AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

'We speak advisedly: *Three thousand* prize negroes have received their freedom, *four hundred in one day*; but not the least difficulty or disorder occurred: servants found masters—masters hired servants; all gained homes, and at night scarcely an idler was to be seen. In the last month, one hundred and fifty were liberated under precisely similar circumstances, and with the same result. These facts are within our own observation; and to state that sudden and abrupt emancipation would create disorder and distress to those you mean to serve, is not reason; but the plea of any and all men who are adverse to emancipation.'—*South African Commercial Advertiser of Feb. 9, 1831*.

## NOTE B.—Page 18.

## THE DOMESTIC SLAVE TRADE.

A very extensive internal slave-trade is carried on in this country. The breeding of negro cattle for the foreign markets (of Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, and Missouri,) is a very lucrative branch of business. Whole coffles of them, chained and manacled, are driven through our capital on their way to auction. Foreigners, particularly those who come here with enthusiastic ideas of American freedom, are amazed and disgusted at the sight. A troop of slaves once passed through Washington on the fourth of July, while drums were beating and standards flying. One of the captive negroes raised his hand, loaded with irons, and waving it toward the starry flag, sung with a smile of bitter irony, 'Hail Columbia! happy land!'—*Mrs. Child's Appeal*, p. 30.

Curiosity, says a gentleman in Charleston, S. C. in a letter to his friend in New York, sometimes leads me to the auction sales of the negroes. A few days since, I attended one which exhibited the beauties of slavery in all their sickening deformity. The bodies of these wretched beings were placed upright on a table—their physical proportions examined, their defects and beauties noted. 'A prime lot, here they go!' exclaimed the auctioneer. There I saw the father looking with sullen contempt upon the crowd, and expressing an indignation in his countenance that he dare not speak; and the mother, pressing her infant closer to her bosom, with an involuntary grasp, and exclaiming, in wild and simple earnestness, while the tears chased down her cheeks in quick succession, 'I can't leff my children! I won't leff my children!' But on the hammer went, reckless alike whether it united or sundered forever.—*Stuart's Three Years in North America*, vol. ii. p. 74.

## NOTE C.—Page 18.

## SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

*Extract from Mr. Dickson's Speech in the House of Representatives.*

Sir, the foreign slave-trade with Africa is condemned by the laws of this country, of England, of France, and by those of almost every nation of the civilized world, as piracy; and those who carry it on are denounced as outlaws and the common enemies of the human race. And yet we tolerate in this District, and at our seat of government, a traffic productive of as much pain, anguish, and despair, of as deep atrocity, and as many accumulated horrors, as the slave-trade with Africa.

Private cells and prisons have been erected by the slave-traders in the District, in which the negro is incarcerated until a cargo of slaves, of 'human chattels' can be completed. The public prisons of the District, built with the money of the whole people of the United States, have been used for the benefit of the slave-traders, and the victims of this odious traffic have been confined within their walls. The keepers of those prisons, paid out of the monies of the whole people, have been the gaolers of the slave-traders, until their drove, their cargo of human beings, could be completed.

The petitioners complain that a traffic so abhorrent to the feelings of the philanthropist, so replete with suffering and wo, is approved and licensed by the corporation of the city of Washington, which receives \$400 a year for each licence, thus increasing her treasures by the express sanction of so odious a trade. Finally, the petitioners complain of the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia, as the source of all the before mentioned evils, and others too numerous now to detail. They consider it as unchristian, unholy, and unjust, not war-

ranted by the laws of God, and contrary to the assertion in our Declaration of Independence, that 'all men are created equal.'

NOTE D.—Page 18.

The following extract of a letter from JAMES G. BIRNEY, to a friend in Ohio, shows how the South is affected by the state of public sentiment in the free States. We find it in the Anti-Slavery Record.

I do trust, my dear sir, the Lord will make you eminently successful in raising up in *Ohio* a spirit among the people favorable to *immediate emancipation*. That, indeed, *must* be done before any large operations can be carried on in this State, (Ky.) One of the most formidable obstacles I meet with here is the pro-slavery spirit that as yet exists in Ohio, and the other free States. You can easily picture to yourselves with what exultation the slaveholder will quote against me the opinions of Dr. A., and Dr. B., and Dr. C., who he will say are eminent for learning and piety, and whose minds are free from the bias of interest, who live in a free State, &c. It is my firm conviction, that, if Ohio would rise as one man in the dignity of her great moral and intellectual power, and declare to the slaveholders of Kentucky—'You are wrong—your oppression is condemned by God, and shall meet with no favor from us,' that the death blow would be given to slavery, not only in Kentucky, but through the whole South. No chains could withstand the concentrated radiance of such virtuous action.

In another letter, addressed to Mr. Lewis Tappan, of New-York, Mr. BIRNEY thus rebukes those temporising reformers at the North, who dare not call slavery a *sin*:

They tell us that the 'system of slavery in this country is *wrong*.' O, notable discovery! O, wonderful stretch of Jack the Giant-killer, equipped in his seven-league boots! They are going to convince us that the system is wrong. We would be rapt in equal amazement if they would come to convince us that the sun shines. This has been acknowledged time out of mind. You may go through the gates of slavery into Kentucky, and pass through its thickening horrors till you reach its *ultima Thule*, the sugar-plantations of Louisiana; and with one acclaim from all, except the most *besotted minds*, the acknowledgement will be heard, the 'system' is wrong. But the system is made up of the reported cruelties of *others*—our *own* enter not into it as a component part. It enters not into our hearts to conceive that *our* course is not some how or another, an exception to the great rule by which all injustice and oppression is condemned.

And will our Christian friends thus mock us? If they had begun one hundred years ago, with the very rudiment with which they now propose to begin, it might have been well. But, sir, *now*, slavery has attained its giant-growth—it is impoverishing our country, breaking up our schools—effeminating our men, converting female amiableness into ungovernable fury, and bringing the judgments of God upon our churches, whose members and whose ministers live, and are supported in their ministry, by the fruits of unrighteous exaction. Truly, sir, has it been said—if the churches destroy not slavery, slavery will destroy them. Do these, our friends, think that slavery is a stationary disease—one in which a bread-pill may be harmlessly given, or in which experiments can be innocently tried? If they do, how greatly have they mistaken. \* \* \* Sir, sir, my soul is moved within me when I see such quacks as 'Desire-to-conciliate' and 'Fear-of-prejudice' ministering to a patient when life is fast ebbing, and death stands ready at the

door. Believe me, the *truth* is a weapon too heavy for them to wield—a remedy, whose operation they have not the courage to behold. At the same time it is nothing but the truth, the naked, unvarnished *truth* that will do.

Let the following passage from the same letter be pondered by northern churches. Their duty is here plainly set before them.

I am more and more convinced, from many of the proceedings at the North, that they are, in the main, ignorant of the slaveholder's *tenacity*, and of the moral obliquities that slavery has produced in him. Of this I feel confident, that nothing but the most tremendous mental shock—nothing short of the fears of hell will make him resign his hold. Let me explain by a supposed case: All the Protestant churches in the free States, say, are anti-slavery—viewing slavery as inconsistent with Christianity. A slaveholding minister from the South is among you on a visit. You do not invite him to preach in your pulpits, and you prohibit him from partaking with you the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The reason to be assigned to him calmly and kindly. The same course to be pursued with a lay-member. Here, sir, is the kind of *shock* I mean. Where could he go? What could he do? You have '*power (moral power) on your side*'—and he like his poor slave at home '*has no comforter.*' I do verily believe that *union* like this among the northern churches would be the strongest lever that could be used, for the peaceable and happy termination of slavery. It would compel men to '*consider their ways,*' confess their faults to their brethren, and if they are Christ's, to repent and humble themselves before God.

#### NOTE E.—Page 25.

##### SLAVEHOLDING PREACHERS.

THE REV. GEORGE BOURNE of New York thus pours the living coals of truth upon the kidnapping *preachers* of the South:

If the most guilty and daring transgressor be sought, he is a Gospel Minister, who solemnly avows his belief of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, or the Methodist Discipline, and notwithstanding himself is a Negro Pedler, who steals, buys, sells, and keeps his brethren in slavery, or supports by his taciturnity, or his smooth prophesying, or his direct defence, the Christian professor who unites in the kidnapping trade. Truth forces the declaration, that every church officer, or member, who is a slaveholder, records himself, by his own creed, a hypocrite! \* \* \* To pray and kidnap! to commune and rob men's all! to preach justice, and steal the laborer with his recompense! to recommend mercy to others, and exhibit cruelty in our own conduct! to explain religious duties, and ever impede the performance of them! to propound the example of Christ and his Apostles, and declare that a slaveholder imitates them! to enjoin an observance of the Lord's day, and drive the slaves from the temple of God! to inculcate every social affection, and instantly exterminate them! to expatiate upon bliss eternal, and preclude sinners from obtaining it! to unfold the woes of Tophet, and not drag men from its fire! are the most preposterous delusion, and the most consummate mockery! \* \* \* The Church of God groans. It is the utmost Satanic delusion to talk of religion and slavery. Be not deceived: to affirm that a slaveholder is a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ, is most intelligible contradiction. A brother of Him who went about doing good, and steal, enslave, torment, starve and scourge a man because his skin is of a different tinge! Such Christianity is the Devil's manufacture to delude souls to the regions of wo.









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BY REQUEST OF THE

VERMONT ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

ON

WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 18, 1835.

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BY OLIVER JOHNSON.

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