

*Misses Ambley & Charles Fisher
with the regards of Wm. F. Channing*

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AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED AT LENOX,
ON THE
FIRST OF AUGUST, 1842,
THE
ANNIVERSARY OF EMANCIPATION,
IN THE
BRITISH WEST INDIES.
BY WILLIAM E. CHANNING.



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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I have been encouraged to publish the following address by the strong expressions of sympathy with which it was received, I do not indeed suppose, that those, who listened to it with interest and who have requested its publication, accorded with me in every opinion which it contains. Such entire agreement is not to be expected among intelligent men, who judge for themselves. But I am sure, that the spirit and substance of the address met a hearty response. Several paragraphs, which I wanted strength to deliver, are now published, and for these of course I am alone responsible.

I dedicate this address to the Men and Women of Berkshire. I have found so much to delight me in the magnificent scenery of this region, in its peaceful and prosperous villages and in the rare intelligence and virtues of the friends whose hospitality I have here enjoyed, that I desire to connect this little work with this spot. I cannot soon forget the beautiful nature and the generous spirits, with which I have been privileged to commune in the Valley of the Housatonick.

Lenox, Mass., Aug. 9, 1842.

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A D D R E S S .

THIS day is the anniversary of one of the great events of modern times, the Emancipation of the Slaves in the British West India islands. This Emancipation began Aug. 1st. 1834; but it was not completed until Aug. 21st. 1838. The event indeed has excited little attention in our country, partly because we are too much absorbed in private interests and local excitements to be alive to the triumphs of humanity at a distance, partly because a moral contagion has spread from the South through the North and deadened our sympathies with the oppressed. But West India emancipation, though received here so coldly, is yet an era in the annals of philanthropy. The greatest events do not always draw most attention at the moment. When the May flower, in the dead of winter, landed a few pilgrims, on the ice-bound, snow-buried rocks of Plymouth, the occurrence made no noise. Nobody took note of it, and yet how much has that landing done to change the face of the civilized world! Our fathers came to establish a pure church; they little thought of revolutionizing nations. The emancipation in the West Indies, whether viewed in itself, or in its immediate results, or in the spirit from which it grew, or in the light of hope which it sheds on the future, deserves to be commemorated. In some respects it stands alone in human history. I therefore invite to it your serious attention.

Perhaps I ought to begin with some apology for my appearance in this place; for I stand here unasked, uninvited. I can plead no earnest solicitation from few or many for the service I now render. I come to you simply from an impulse in my own breast; and in truth had I been solicited, I probably should not have consented to speak. Had I found

here a general desire to celebrate this day, I, should have felt, that another speaker might be enlisted in the cause, and I should have held my peace. But finding that no other voice would be raised, I was impelled to lift up my own, though too feeble for any great exertion. I trust you will accept with candor what I have been obliged to prepare in haste, and what may have little merit but that of pure intention.

I have said that I speak only from the impulse of my own mind. I am the organ of no association, the representative of no feelings but my own. But I wish it to be understood, that I speak from no sudden impulse; from no passionate zeal of a new convert; but from deliberate and long cherished conviction. In truth my attention was directed to Slavery fifty years ago, that is, before most of you were born; and the first impulse came from a venerable man, formerly of great reputation in this part of our country and in all our churches, the Rev. Dr. Hopkins, who removed more than a century ago from Great Barrington to my native town, and there bore open and strong testimony against the Slave Trade, a principal branch of the traffic of the place. I am reminded by the spot where I now stand, of another incident which may show how long I have taken an interest in this subject. More than twenty years ago, I had an earnest conversation with that noble-minded man and fervent philanthropist, Henry Sedgwick, so well and honorably known to most who hear me, on which occasion we deplored the insensibility of the North to the evils of Slavery and enquired by what means it might be removed. The circumstance which particularly gave my mind a direction to this subject, was a winter's residence in a West Indian Island more than eleven years ago. I lived there on a plantation. The piazza in which I sat and walked almost from morning to night, overlooked the negro village belonging to the estate. A few steps placed me in the midst of their huts. Here was a volume on Slavery opened always before my eyes, and how could I help learning some of its lessons. The gang on this estate, (for such is the name given to a company of slaves,) was the best on the island,

and among the best in the West Indies. The proprietor had laboured to collect the best materials for it. His gang had been his pride and boast. The fine proportions, the graceful and sometimes dignified bearing of these people, could hardly be overlooked. Unhappily misfortune had reduced the owner to bankruptcy. The estate had been mortgaged to a stranger who could not personally superintend it, and I found it under the care of a passionate and licentious manager, in whom the poor slaves found a sad contrast to the kindness of former days. They sometimes came to the house where I resided, with their mournful or indignant complaints; but were told that no redress could be found from the hands of their late master. In this case of a plantation passing into strange hands, I saw that the mildest form of slavery might at any time be changed into the worst. On returning to this country I delivered a discourse on Slavery, giving the main views which I have since communicated; and this was done, before the cry of Abolitionism was heard among us. I seem then to have a peculiar warrant for now addressing you. I am giving you not the ebullitions of new vehement feelings, but the results of long and patient reflection; not the thoughts of others, but my own independent judgments. I stand alone, I speak in the name of no party. I have no connection, but that of friendship and respect, with the opposers of Slavery in this country or abroad. Do not mix me up with other men good or bad; but listen to me as a separate witness, standing on my own ground, and desirous to express with all plainness what seems to be the truth.

On this day a few years ago, Eight Hundred Thousand human beings were set free from slavery; and to comprehend the greatness of the deliverance, a few words must first be said of the evil from which they were rescued. You must know Slavery to know Emancipation. But in a single discourse, how can I set before you the wrongs and abominations of this detestable institution? I must pass over many of its features, and will select one, which is at present vividly impressed on my mind. Different minds are impressed with different evils.

Were I asked, what strikes me as the greatest evil inflicted by this system, I should say, it is the outrage offered by slavery to human nature. Slavery does all that lies in human power to unmake men, to rob them of their humanity, to degrade men into brutes; and this it does by declaring them to be Property. Here is the master evil. Declare a man a chattel, something which you may own, and may turn to your use, as a horse or a tool; strip him of all right over himself, of all right to use his own powers, except what you concede to him as a favor and deem consistent with your own profit; and you cease to look on him as a Man. You may call him such; but he is not to you a brother, a fellow being, a partaker of your nature, and your equal in the sight of God. You view him, you treat him, you speak to him, as infinitely beneath you, as belonging to another race. You have a tone and a look towards him, which you never use towards a man. Your relation to him demands that you treat him as an inferior creature. You cannot if you would treat him as a man. That he may answer your end, that he may consent to be a slave, his spirit must be broken, his courage crushed; he must fear you. A feeling of his deep inferiority must be burnt into his soul. The idea of his rights must be quenched in him, by the blood of his lashed and lacerated body. Here is the damning evil of slavery. It destroys the spirit, the consciousness of a man. I care little in comparison for his hard outward lot, his poverty, his unfurnished house, his coarse fare; the terrible thing in slavery is the spirit of a slave, the extinction of the spirit of a man. He feels himself owned, a chattel, a thing bought and sold, and held to sweat for another's pleasure, at another's will, under another's lash, just as an ox or horse. Treated thus as a brute, can he take a place among men? A slave! Is there a name so degraded on earth, a name which so separates a man from his kind? and to this condition millions of our race are condemned in this land of liberty.

In what is the slave treated as a Man? The great right of a Man is to use, improve, expand his powers, for his own and

other's good. The slave's powers belong to another, and are hemmed in, kept down, not cherished, or suffered to unfold. If there be an infernal system, one especially hostile to humanity, it is that which deliberately wars against the expansion of men's faculties; and this enters into the essence of slavery. The slave cannot be kept a slave, if helped or allowed to improve his intellect and higher nature. He must not be taught to read. The benevolent christian, who tries, by giving him the use of letters, to open to him the word of God and other good books, is punished as a criminal. The slave is hedged round, so that philanthropy cannot approach him to awaken in him the intelligence and feelings of a man. Thus his humanity is trodden under foot.

Again, a Man has the right to form and enjoy the relations of domestic life. The tie between the brute and his young endures but a few months. Man was made to have a home, to have a wife and children, to cleave to them for life, to sustain the domestic relations in constancy and purity, and through these holy ties to refine and exalt his nature. Such is the distinction of a man. But slavery violates the sanctity of home. It makes the young woman property, and gives her no protection from licentiousness. It either disallows marriage or makes it a vain show. It sunders husband and wife, sells them into distant regions, and then compels them to break the sacred tie and contract new alliances, in order to stock the plantation with human slaves. Scripture and nature say, "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder;" but slavery scorns God's voice in his word and in the human heart. Even the Christian church dares not remonstrate against the wrong, but sanctions it, and encourages the poor ignorant slave to form a new, adulterous connexion, that he may minister to his master's gain. The slave-holder enters the hut of his bondsman, to do the work which belongs only to death, and to do it with nothing of the consolatory, healing influences, which christianity sheds round death. He goes to tear the wife from the husband, the child from the mother, to exile them from one another, and to

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convey them to unknown masters. Is this to see a man, in a slave? Is not this to place him beneath humanity?

Again, it is the right, privilege and distinction of a Man, not only to be connected with a family, but with his race. He is made for free communion with his fellow creatures. One of the sorest evils of life is to be cut off from the mass of men, from the social body; to be treated by the multitude of our fellow creatures as outcasts, as Pariahs, as a fallen race, unworthy to be approached, unworthy of the deference due to men; and this infinite wrong is done to the slave. A slave! that name severs all his ties except with beings as degraded as himself. He has no country, no pride or love of nation, no sympathy with the weal or woe of the land which gave him birth, no joy in its triumphs, no generous sorrow for its humiliation, no feeling of that strong unity with those around him which common laws, a common government, and a common history create. He is not allowed to go forth, as other men are, and to connect himself with strangers, to form new alliances by means of trade, business, conversation. Society is every where barred against him. An iron wall forbids his access to his race. The miscellaneous intercourse of man with man, which strengthens the feeling of our common humanity, and perhaps does more than all things to enlarge the intellect, is denied him. The world is nothing to him; he does not hear of it. The plantation is his world. To him the universe is narrowed down almost wholly to the hut where sleeps, and the fields where he sweats for another's gain. Beyond these he must not step without leave; and even if allowed to wander, who has a respectful look or word for the slave? In that name he carries with him an atmosphere of repulsion. It drives men from him as if he were a leper. However gifted by God, however thirsting for some higher use of his powers, he must hope for no friend beyond the ignorant, half-brutalized caste with which bondage has united him. To him there is no race, as there is no country. In truth, so fallen is he beneath sympathy, that multitudes will smile at hearing him compassionated for being bereft of these

ties. Still he suffers great wrong. Just in proportion as you sever a man from his country and race, he ceases to be a man. The rudest savage, who has a tribe with which he sympathises, and for which he is ready to die, is far exalted above the slave. How much more exalted is the poorest freeman, in a civilized land, who feels his relation to a wide community; who lives under equal laws to which the greatest bow; whose social ties change and enlarge with the vicissitudes of life; whose mind and heart are open to the quickening, stirring influences of this various world. Poor slave! humanity's out-cast and orphan! to whom no door is open, but that of the naked hut of thy degraded caste! art thou indeed a man? Dost thou belong to the human brotherhood? What is thy whole life but continued insult? Thou meetest no look, which does not express thy hopeless exclusion from human sympathies. Thou mayest indeed be pitied in sickness and pain, and so is the animal. The deference due to a man, and which keeps alive a man's spirit, is unknown to thee. The intercourse, which makes the humblest individual in other spheres partaker more or less in the improvements of his race, thou must never hope for. May I not say, then, that nothing extinguishes humanity like slavery.

In reply to these and other representations of the wrongs and evils of this institution, we are told that slaves are well fed, well clothed, at least better than the peasantry and operatives in many other countries; and this is gravely adduced as a vindication of slavery. A man capable of offering it, ought, if any one ought, to be reduced to bondage. A man, who thinks food and raiment a compensation for liberty, who would counsel men to sell themselves, to become property, to give up all rights and power over themselves, for a daily mess of pottage, however savory, is a slave in heart. He has lost the spirit of a man, and would be less wronged than other men, if a slave's collar were welded round his neck.

The domestic slave is well fed, we are told, and so are the domestic animals. A nobleman's horse in England is better lodged and more pampered than the operatives in Manchester.

The grain which the horse consumes, might support a starving family. How sleek and shining his coat! How gay and rich his caparison! But why is he thus curried, and pampered, and bedecked? To be bitted and curbed; and then to be mounted by his master, who arms himself with whip and spur to put the animal to his speed; and if any accident mar his strength or swiftness, he is sold from his luxuriant stall to be flayed, overworked, and hastened out of life by the merciless drayman. Suppose the nobleman should say to the half-starved, ragged operative of Manchester, 'I will give up my horse, and feed and clothe you with like sumptuousness, on condition that I may mount you daily with lash and spurs, and sell you when I can make a profitable bargain.' Would you have the operative, for the sake of good fare and clothes, take the lot of the brute? or, in other words, become a slave? What reply would the heart of an Old England or New England laborer make to such a proposal? and yet if there be any soundness in the argument drawn from the slave's comforts, he ought to accept it thankfully and greedily.

Such arguments for slavery are insults. The man capable of using them ought to be rebuked as mean in spirit, hard of heart, and wanting all true sympathy with his race. I might reply, if I thought fit, to this account of the slave's blessings, that there is nothing very enviable in his food and wardrobe, that his comforts make no approach to those of the nobleman's horse, and that a laborer of New England would prefer the fare of many an alms-house at home. But I cannot stoop to such reasoning. Be the comforts of the slave what they may, they are no compensation for the degradation, insolence, indignities, ignorance, servility, scars, and violations of domestic rights to which he is exposed.

I have spoken of what seems to me the grand evil of slavery, the outrage it offers to human nature. It would be easy to enlarge on other fatal tendencies and effects of this institution. But I forbear not only for want of time, but because I feel no need of a minute exposition of its wrongs and miseries to make

it odious. I cannot endure to go through a labored proof of its iniquitous and injurious nature. No man wants such proof. He carries the evidence in his own heart. I need nothing but the most general view of slavery, to move my indignation towards it. I am more and more accustomed to throw out of sight its particular evils, its details of wrong and suffering, and to see in it simply an institution which deprives men of Freedom; and when I thus view it, I am taught immediately, by an unerring instinct, that slavery is an intolerable wrong. Nature cries aloud for Freedom as our proper good, our birthright and our end, and resents nothing so much as its loss. It is true, that we are placed at first, in subjection to others' wills; and spend childhood and youth under restraint. But we are governed at first that we may learn to govern ourselves; we begin with leading strings that we may learn to go alone. The discipline of the parent is designed to train up his children to act for themselves, and from a principle of duty in their own breasts. The child is not subjected to his father to be a slave, but to grow up to the energy, responsibility, relations and authority of a man. Freedom, courage, moral force, efficiency, independence, the large, generous action of the soul, these are the blessings in store for us, the grand ends to which the restraints of education, of family, of school and college are directed. Nature knows no such thing as a perpetual yoke. Nature bends no head to the dust, to look forever downward. Nature makes no man a chattel. Nature has implanted in all souls the thirst, the passion for liberty. Nature stirs the heart of the child, and prompts it to throw out its little limbs in restlessness and joy and to struggle against restraint. Nature impels the youth to leap, to run, to put forth all his powers, to look with impatience on prescribed bounds, to climb the steep, to dive into the ocean, to court danger, to spread himself through the new world which he was born to inherit. Nature's life, nature's impulse, nature's joy is Freedom. A greater violence to nature cannot be conceived, than to rob man of liberty.

What is the end and essence of life? It is to expand all our faculties and affections. It is to grow, to gain by exercise new energy, new intellect, new love. It is to hope, to strive, to bring out what is within us, to press towards what is above us. In other words, it is to be Free. Slavery is thus at war with the true life of human nature. Undoubtedly there is a power in the soul, which the loss of freedom cannot always subdue. There have been men, doomed to perpetual bondage, who have still thought and felt nobly, looked up to God with trust, and learned by experience, that even bondage, like all other evils, may be made the occasion of high virtue. But these are exceptions. In the main, our nature is too weak to grow under the weight of chains.

To illustrate the supreme importance of Freedom, I would offer a remark, which may sound like a paradox, but will be found to be true. It is this, that even Despotism is endurable, only because it bestows a degree of freedom. Despotism, bad as it is, supplants a greater evil, and that is anarchy; and anarchy is worse, chiefly because it is more enslaving. In anarchy all restraint is plucked from the strong, who make a prey of the weak; subduing them by terror, seizing on their property, and treading every right under foot. When the laws are prostrated, arbitrary, passionate, lawless will, the will of the strongest, exasperated by opposition, must prevail; and under this the rights of person, as well as property are cast down, and a palsying fear imposes on men's spirits a heavier chain, than was ever forged by an organized despotism. In the whole history of tyranny in France, liberty was never so crushed as in the reign of terror in the revolution; when mobs and lawless combinations usurped the power of the State. A despot to be safe must establish a degree of order, and this implies laws, tribunals, and some administration of justice, however rude; and still more, he has an interest in protecting industry and property to some degree, in order that he may extort the more from his people's earnings under the name of revenue. Thus despotism is an advance towards liberty; and in this

its strength very much lies; for the people have a secret consciousness, that their rights suffer less, under one, than under many tyrants, under an organized absolutism, than under wild, lawless, passionate force; and on this conviction, as truly as on armies, rests the despot's throne. Thus freedom and rights are ever cherished goods of human nature. Man keeps them in sight even when most crushed; and just in proportion as civilization and intelligence advance, he secures them more and more. This is infallibly true notwithstanding opposite appearances. The old forms of despotism may indeed continue in a progressive civilization, but their force declines; and public opinion, the will of the community, silently establishes a sway over what seems and is denominated, absolute power. We have a striking example of this truth in Prussia, where the King seems unchecked, but where a code of wise and equal laws ensures to every man his rights to a degree experienced in few other countries, and where the administration of justice cannot safely be obstructed by the will of the sovereign. Thus freedom, man's dearest birthright, is the good towards which civil institutions tend. It is at once the sign and the means, the cause and the effect of human progress. It exists in a measure under tyrannical governments, and gives them their strength. No where is it wholly broken down, but under domestic slavery. Under this, man is made Property. Here lies the damning taint, the accursed blighting power, the infinite evil of bondage.

On this day, four years ago, Eight Hundred Thousand human beings were set free from the terrible evil of which I have given a faint sketch. Eight hundred thousand of our brethren, who had lived in darkness and the shadow of death, were visited with the light of liberty. Instead of the tones of absolute, debasing command, a new voice broke on their ears, calling them to come forth, to be free. They were, undoubtedly, too rude, too ignorant, to comprehend the greatness of the blessing conferred on them this day. Freedom to them undoubtedly seemed much what it is not. Children in intellect,

they seized on it as a child on a holiday. But slavery had not wholly stifled in them the instincts, feelings, judgments of men. They felt on this day, that the whip of the brutal overseer was broken; and was that no cause for exulting joy? They felt, that wife and child could no longer be insulted or scourged in their sight, and they be denied the privilege of lifting up a voice in their behalf. Was that no boon? They felt that henceforth they were to work from their own wills, for their own good, that they might earn perhaps a hut, which they might call their own, and which the foot of a master could not profane, nor a master's interest lay waste. Can you not conceive how they stretched out their limbs, and looked on them with a new joy, saying, These are our own. Can you not conceive how they leaped with a new animation, exulting to put forth powers, which were from that day to be "their own?" Can you not conceive how they looked round them on the fields and hills, and said to themselves, We can go now where we will; and how they continued to live in their huts with new content, because they could leave them if they would? Can you not conceive, how dim ideas of a better lot dawned on their long dormant minds; how the future, once a blank, began to brighten before them; how hope began to spread her unused pinions; how the faculties and feelings of men came to a new birth within them? The father and mother took their child to their arms and said, Nobody can sell you from us now. Was not that enough to give them a new life? The husband and wife began to feel, that there was an inviolable sanctity in marriage; and a glimpse, however faint, of a moral, spiritual bond, began to take place of the loose sensual tie, which had held them together. Still more, and what deserves special note, the colored man raised his eyes, on this day, to the white man, and saw the infinite chasm between himself and the white race growing narrower; saw and felt that he too was a Man, that he too had rights; that he belonged to the common father, not to a frail, selfish creature; that under God he was his own master. A rude feeling of dignity, in strange contrast with

the abjectness of the slave, gave new courage to that look, gave a firmer tone, a manlier tread. This, had I been there, would have interested me especially. The tumult of joyful feeling bursting forth in the broken language which slavery had taught, I should have sympathized with. But the sight of the slave rising into a man, looking on the white race with a steady eye, with the secret consciousness of a common nature, and beginning to comprehend his heaven-descended, inalienable rights, would have been the crowning joy.

It was natural to expect that the slaves, on the first of August, receiving the vast, incomprehensible gift of freedom, would have rushed into excess. It would not have surprised me, had I heard of intemperance, tumult, violence. Liberty, that mighty boon, for which nations have shed rivers of their best blood, for which they have toiled and suffered for years, perhaps for ages, was given to these poor, ignorant creatures in a day, and given to them after lives of cruel bondage, immeasurably more cruel than any political oppression. Would it have been wonderful, if they had been intoxicated by the sudden, vast transition, if they had put to shame the authors of their freedom, by an immediate abuse of it? Happily, the poor negroes had enjoyed one privilege in their bondage. They had learned something of Christianity, very little indeed, yet enough to teach them that liberty was the gift of God. That mighty power, religion, had begun a work within them. The African nature, seems singularly susceptible of this principle. Benevolent missionaries, whom the anti-slavery spirit of England had sent into the colonies, had for some time been working on the degraded mind of the bondmen, and not wholly in vain. The slaves, whilst denied the rank of men by their race, had caught the idea of their relation to the Infinite Father. That great doctrine of the Universal, Impartial Love of God, embracing the most obscure, dishonored, oppressed, had dawned on them. Their new freedom thus became associated with religion, the mightiest principle on earth, and by this it was not merely saved from excess, but made the spring of immediate elevation.

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Little did I imagine, that the emancipation of the Slaves, was to be invested with holiness and moral sublimity. Little did I expect, that my heart was to be touched by it, as by few events in history. But the emotions, with which I first read the narrative of the great gift of liberty in Antigua, are still fresh in my mind. Let me read to you the story; none I think, can hear it unmoved. It is the testimony of trust-worthy men, who visited the West Indies to observe the effects of Emancipation.

“To convey to the reader some account of the way in which the great crisis passed, we here give the substance of several accounts which were related to us in different parts of the island, by those who witnessed them.

“The Wesleyans kept watch-night in all their chapels, on the night of the 31st of July. One of the Wesleyan missionaries gave us an account of the watch meeting at the chapel in St. Johns. The capacious house was filled with the candidates for liberty. All was animation and eagerness. A mighty chorus of voices swelled the song of expectation and joy, and as they united in prayer, the voice of the leader was drowned in the universal acclamation of thanksgiving, and praise, and blessing, and honor, and glory to God who had come down for their deliverance. In such exercises the evening was spent until the hour of twelve approached. The missionary then proposed, that when the clock on the cathedral should begin to strike, the whole congregation should fall upon their knees, and receive the boon of freedom in silence. Accordingly as the loud bell tolled its first notes, the crowded assembly prostrated themselves on their knees. All was silent, save the quivering, half stifled breath of the struggling spirit. The slow notes of the clock fell upon the multitude; peal on peal, peal on peal, rolled over the prostrate throng, in tones of angels' voices, thrilling among the desolate chords and weary heart strings. Scarce had the clock sounded its last note, when the lightning flashed vividly around, and a loud peal of thunder roared along the sky; God's pillar of fire, and trump of jubilee! A moment of profoundest silence passed; then came the burst; they broke forth in prayer; they shouted, they sung, “Glory Alleluia;” they clapped their hands, leaped up, fell down, clasped each other in their free arms, cried, laughed, and went to and fro, tossing upward their unfettered hands; but high above the whole there was a mighty sound which ever and anon swelled up; it

was the uttering in negro broken dialect, of gratitude to God.

"After this gush of excitement had spent itself, and the congregation became calm, the religious exercises were resumed, and the remainder of the night was occupied in singing and prayer, in reading the Bible, and in addresses from the missionaries, explaining the nature of the freedom just received, and exhorting the freed people to be industrious, steady, obedient to the laws, and to shew themselves in all things worthy of the high boon which God had conferred upon them.

"The first of August came on Friday, and a release was proclaimed from all work until the next Monday. The day was chiefly spent, by the great mass of negroes, in the churches and chapels. Thither they flocked as clouds, and as doves to their windows. The clergy and missionaries throughout the island were actively engaged, seizing the opportunity, in order to enlighten the people on all the duties and responsibilities of their new situation, and above all, urging them to the attainment of that higher liberty with which Christ maketh his children free. In every quarter we were assured that the day was like a Sabbath. Work had ceased; the hum of business was still, and noise and tumult were unheard in the streets. Tranquility pervaded the towns and country. A Sabbath indeed! when the wicked ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest, and the slave was freed from the master! The planters informed us, that they went to the chapels where their own people were assembled, greeted them, shook hands with them, and exchanged most hearty good wishes."²

Such is the power of true religion, on the rudest minds. Such, the deep fountain of feeling in the African soul. Such, the race of men, whom we are trampling in the dust. How few of our assemblies, with all our intelligence and refinement, offer to God this overflowing gratitude, this profound, tender, rapturous homage! True, the Slaves poured out their joy with a child-like violence; but we see a childhood full of promise. And why do we place this race beneath us? Because nature has burnt on them a darker hue. But does the essence of humanity live in color? Is the black man less a man than the white? Has he not human powers, human rights? Does his color reach to his soul? Is reason in him a whit blacker than

² See *Emancipation in the West Indies*, by Thorne and Kimball.

in us? Have his conscience and affections been dipped in an inky flood? To the eye of God, are his pure thoughts and kind feelings less fair than our own? We are apt to think this prejudice of color founded in nature. But in the most enlightened countries in Europe, the man of African descent is received into the society of the great and good, as an equal and friend. It is here only that this prejudice reigns; and to this prejudice, strengthened by our subjection to southern influence, must be ascribed our indifference to the progress of liberty in the West Indies. Ought not the emancipation of nearly a million of human beings, so capable of progress as the African race, to have sent a thrill of joy, through a nation of freemen? But this great event was received in our country with indifference. Humanity, justice, Christian sympathy, the love of liberty, found but few voices here. Nearly a million of men, at no great distance from our land, passed from the most degrading bondage into the ranks of freedom, with hardly a welcome, from these shores.

Perhaps you will say, that we are bound to wait for the fruits of emancipation, before we celebrate it as a great event in history. I think not so. We ought to rejoice immediately, without delay, whenever an act of justice is done, especially a grand public act, subverting the oppression of ages. We ought to triumph, when the right prospers, without waiting for consequences. We ought not to doubt about consequences, when men, in obedience to conscience, and in the exercise of their best wisdom, redress a mighty wrong. If God reigns, then the subversion of a vast crime, then the breaking of an unrighteous yoke, must in its final results be good. Undoubtedly an old abuse, which has sent its roots through society, cannot be removed without inconvenience or suffering. Indeed no great social change, however beneficial, can occur without partial, temporary pain. But must abuses be sheltered without end, and human progress, given up in despair, because some, who have fattened on wrongs, will cease to prosper at the expense of their brethren. Undoubtedly Slavery cannot be broken

up without deranging in a measure the old social order. Must, therefore, slavery be perpetual? Has the Creator laid on any portion of his children the necessity of everlasting bondage? Must wrong know no end? Has oppression a charter from God, which is never to grow old? What a libel on God, as well as on man, is the supposition, that society cannot subsist without perpetuating the degradation of a large portion of the race! Is this indeed the law of the creation, that multitudes must be oppressed? That states can subsist and prosper only through crime? Then there is no God. Then an evil spirit reigns over the universe. It is an impious error to believe, that injustice is a necessity under the government of the Most High. It is disloyalty to principle, treachery to virtue, to suppose that a righteous, generous work, conceived in a sense of duty and carried on with deliberate forethought, can issue in misery, in ruin. To this want of faith in rectitude, society owes its woes, owes the licensed frauds and crimes of statesmen, the licensed frauds of trade, the continuance of slavery. Once let men put faith in rectitude, let them feel that justice is strength, that disinterestedness is a sun and a shield, that selfishness and crime are weak and miserable, and the face of the earth would be changed. The groans of ages would cease. We ought to shout for joy, not shrink like cowards, when justice and humanity triumph over established wrongs.

The emancipation of the British Islands, ought then to have called forth acclamation at its birth. Much more should we rejoice in it now, when time has taught us the folly of the fears and the suspicions which it awakened, and taught us the safety of doing right. Emancipation has worked well. By this I do not mean, that it has worked miracles. I have no glowing pictures to exhibit to you of the West Indian Islands. An act of the British parliament, declaring them free, has not changed them into a paradise. A few strokes of the pen, cannot reverse the laws of nature, or conquer the almost omnipotent power of early and long continued habit. Even in this country, where we breathe the air of freedom from our birth, and where we have

grown up amidst churches and school-houses and under wise and equal laws, even here we find no paradise. Here are crime and poverty and woe; and can you expect a poor ignorant race, born to bondage, scarred with the lash, uneducated, and unused to all the motives which stimulate industry, can you expect these to unlearn in a day the lessons of years, and to furnish all at once themes for eloquent description. Were you to visit those islands, you would find a slovenly agriculture, much ignorance, and more sloth than you see at home; and yet Emancipation works well, far better than could have been anticipated. To me it could hardly have worked otherwise than well. It banished slavery, that wrong and curse not to be borne. It gave freedom, the dear birthright of humanity; and had it done nothing more, I should have found in it cause for joy. Freedom, simple Freedom is "in my estimation just, far prized above all price". I do not stop to ask, if the emancipated are better fed and clothed than formerly. They are Free, and that one word contains a world of good unknown to the most pampered slave.

But emancipation has brought more than naked liberty. The emancipated are making progress in intelligence, comforts, purity; and progress is the great good of life. No matter where men are at any given moment; the great question about them, is, are they going forward? Do they improve? Slavery was immoveable, hopeless degradation. It is the glory of liberty to favor progress, and this great blessing, emancipation has bestowed. We were told indeed, that Emancipation was to turn the green islands of the West Indies into deserts; but they still rise from the tropical sea as blooming and verdant as before. We were told, that the slaves, if set free, would break out in universal massacre; but since that event, not a report has reached us of murder perpetrated by a colored man on the white population. We were told, that crimes would multiply; but they are diminished in every emancipated island, and very greatly in most. We were told that the freed slave, would abandon himself to idleness, and this I did anticipate, to a

considerable degree, as the first result. Men, on whom industry had been forced by the lash, and who had been taught to regard sloth as their master's chief good, were strongly tempted to surrender the first days of freedom to indolent indulgence. But in this respect the evil has been so small, as to fill a reflecting man with admiration. In truth, no race but the African could have made the great transition with so little harm to themselves and others. In general, they resumed their work after a short burst of joy. The desire of property, of bettering their lot, at once sprang up within them in sufficient strength to counterbalance the love of ease. Some of them have become proprietors of the soil. New villages have grown up under their hands; their huts are more comfortable; their dress more decent, sometimes too expensive. When I tell you that the price of real estate in these islands has risen, and that the imports from the mother country, especially those for the laborer's use, have increased, you will judge whether the liberated slaves, are living as drones. Undoubtedly the planter has sometimes wanted workmen, and the staple product of the island, sugar, has decreased. But this can be explained without much reproach to the emancipated. The laborer, who in slavery was over-tasked in the cane-field and sugar mill, is anxious to buy or hire land sufficient for his support, and to work for himself, instead of hiring himself to another. A planter from British Guiana, informed me a few weeks ago, that a company of colored men had paid down seventy thousand dollars for a tract of land in the most valuable part of that colony. It is not sloth, so much as a spirit of manly independence, which has withdrawn the laborer from the plantation; and this evil, if so it must be called, has been increased by his unwillingness to subject his wife and daughter to the toils of the field, which they used to bear in the days of Slavery. Undoubtedly the colored population might do more, but they do enough to earn a better lot than they ever enjoyed, and the work of improvement goes on among them.

I pass to a still brighter view. The spirit of education has

sprung up among the people to an extent worthy of admiration. We despise them; and yet there is reason to believe, that a more general desire to educate their children is to be found among them, than exists among large portions of the white population in the slave States of the South. They have learned, that their ignorance is the great barrier between them and the white men, and this they are in earnest to prostrate. It has been stated, that in one island, not a child above ten years of age was unable to read. Human history probably furnishes no parallel of an equal progress, in a half civilized community.

To this must be added their interest in religious institutions. Their expenditures for the support of these are such, as should put to shame the backwardness of multitudes in countries calling themselves civilized. They do more than we, in proportion to their means. Some of them have even subscribed funds for the diffusion of the gospel in Africa, an instance of their zeal, rather than their wisdom; for they undoubtedly need all they can spare for their own instruction. Their conceptions of religion, are of course narrow and rude, but their hearts have been touched by its simpler truths; and love is the key to higher knowledge.—To this let me add, that marriage is acquiring sanctity in their eyes, that domestic life is putting on a new refinement, and you will see that this people have all the elements of social progress. Property, marriage and religion, have been called the pillars of society, and of these the liberated slave has learned the value.

The result of all these various improvements, is what every wise friend of humanity must rejoice in. Their social position is changed. They have taken rank among men. They are no longer degraded by being looked on as degraded. They no longer live under that withering curse, the contempt of their fellow beings. The tone in which they are spoken to, no longer expresses their infinite and hopeless depression. They are treated as men; some of them engage in lucrative pursuits; all the paths of honor as well as of gain are open to them; they

are found in the legislatures; they fill civil offices, they have military appointments, and in all these conditions acquit themselves honorably. Their humanity is recognized, and without this recognition men pine and had better be left to perish.

I have no thought of painting these islands as Edens. That great ignorance prevails among the emancipated people, that they want our energy, that the degradation of slavery has not vanished all at once with the name, this I need not tell you. No miracle has been wrought on them. But their present lot compared with slavery, is an immense good; and when we consider, that as yet we have seen comparatively nothing of the blessed influences of freedom, we ought to thank God with something of their own fervor for the vast deliverance which he hath vouchsafed them.

We commemorate with transport the redemption of a nation from political bondage; but this is a light burden compared with personal slavery. The oppression which these United States threw off by our revolutionary struggle, was the perfection of freedom, when placed by the side of the galling, crushing, intolerable yoke which bowed the African to the dust. Thank God, it is broken. Thank God, our most injured brethren have risen to the rank of men. Thank God, Eight Hundred Thousand human beings have been made free.

These are the natural topics suggested by this day, but there are still higher views to which I invite your attention. There are other grounds on which this first of August should be hailed with gratitude by the Christian. If I saw in the Emancipation which we celebrate, only the redemption of Eight Hundred Thousand fellow creatures from the greatest wrong on earth, I should indeed rejoice; but I know not that I should commemorate it by public solemnities. This particular result moves me less than other views, which, though less obvious, are far more significant and full of promise.

When I look at West Indian emancipation, what strikes me most forcibly and most joyfully, is the Spirit in which it had

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its origin. What broke the slaves' chain? Did a foreign invader summon them to his standard, and reward them with freedom for their help in conquering their masters? Or did they owe liberty to their own exasperated valor; to courage maddened by despair; to massacre and unsparing revenge? Or did calculations of the superior profit of free labor, persuade the owner to emancipation as a means of superior gain? No. West Indian emancipation was the fruit of Christian principle acting on the mind and heart of a great people. The liberator of those slaves was Jesus Christ. That voice, which rebuked disease and death and set their victims free, broke the heavier chain of slavery. The conflict against slavery began in England, about fifty years ago. It began with Christians. It was at its birth a christian, enterprise. Its power was in the consciences and generous sympathy of men, who had been trained in the school of Christ. It was resisted by prejudice, custom, interest, opulence, pride and the civil power. Almost the whole weight of the commercial class, was at first thrown into the opposite scale. The politician dreaded the effects of abolition on the wealth and revenue of the nation. The King did not disguise his hostility; and I need not tell you that it found little favor with the aristocracy. The titled and proud are not the first to sympathize with the abject. The cause had nothing to rely on, but the spirit of the English people; and that people did respond to the reasonings, pleadings, rebukes of christian philanthropy, as nation never did before. The history of this warfare cannot be read without seeing, that, once at least, a great nation was swayed by high and disinterested principles. Men of the world deride the notion of influencing human affairs by any but selfish motives; and it is a melancholy truth, that the movements of nations have done much to confirm the darkest views of human nature. What a track of crime, desolation, war, we are called by history to travel over! Still history is lighted up by great names, by noble deeds, by patriots and martyrs; and especially in Emancipation we see a great nation, putting forth its power and making great sacrifices, for

a distant, degraded race of men, who had no claims but those of wronged and suffering humanity. Some, and not a few, have blamed, as superfluous, the compensation given by England to the planter for the slaves. On one account I rejoice at it. It is a testimony to the disinterested motives of the nation. A people, groaning under a debt which would crush any other people, borrowed Twenty Million pounds sterling, a hundred million of dollars, and paid it as the price of the slaves' freedom. This act stands alone in the page of history, and Emancipation having such an origin, deserves to be singled out for public commemoration.

What gave peculiar interest to this act, was the fallen, abject state of the people, on whom freedom was conferred at such a cost. They were not Englishmen. They had no claim founded on common descent, on common history, or any national bond. There was nothing in their lot to excite the imagination. They had done nothing to draw regard. They weighed nothing in human affairs. They belonged to no nation. They were hardly recognised as men. Humanity could hardly wear a more abject form. But under all this abjectness, under that black skin, under those scars of the lash, under those half naked bodies put up to auction, and sold as cattle, the people of England saw the lineaments of humanity, saw fellow creatures, saw the capacities and rights and immortal destinies of men, and in the spirit of brotherhood, and from reverence for humanity broke their chains.

When I look at this act, I do not stop at its immediate results, at the emancipation of Eight Hundred Thousand human beings, nor do I look at the act as standing alone. I look at the spirit from which it sprung, and see here a grand and most cheering foundation of human hope. I see, that Christianity has not come into the world in vain. I see that the blood of the cross was not shed in vain. I see, that the prophecies in the scriptures of a mighty change in human affairs, were not idle words. It is true, that Christianity has done little compared with these predictions. The corruptions of our age, who is so

blind as not to see? But that a new principle, derived from Christianity and destined to renovate the earth, is at work among these various elements; that silently a new spirit of humanity, a new respect for human nature, a new comprehension of human rights, a new feeling of brotherhood, and new ideas of a higher social state, have been and are unfolding themselves, under the influences of christian truth and christian civilization, who can deny? Society is not what it once was. Amidst all the stir of selfish passion, the still voice of Christianity is heard; a diviner spirit mixes however imperfectly, with the workings of worldliness; and we are beginning to learn the mighty revolution which a heavenly faith is to accomplish here on earth.

Christianity is the hope of the world, and we ought to regard every conspicuous manifestation of its spirit and power, as an era in human history. We are dazzled by revolutions of empires; we hope much from the rise or fall of Governments. But nothing but christianity can regenerate the earth; and accordingly we should hail with joy every sign of a clearer comprehension, and a deeper feeling of its truths. Christianity truly understood, has a direct tendency to that renovation of the world which it foretells. It is not an abstract system, secluding the disciple from his kind; but it makes him one with his race, breaks down all barriers between him and his brethren, arms him with a martyr's spirit in the cause of humanity, sends him forth to be a saviour of the lost; and just as far as Christianity is thus viewed and felt by its followers, the redemption of the world draws nigh. These views of religion are making their way. They dawn upon us not only in emancipation, but in many other movements of our age; not that they have ever been wholly obscured; but the rank which they hold in the Christian system, and the vast social changes which they involve, have not, until the present day, been dreamed of.

All the doctrines of Christianity are more and more seen to be bonds of close, spiritual, reverential union between man and man, and this is the most cheering view of our time. Christianity is a revelation of the infinite, universal, parental love of

God towards his human family, comprehending the most sinful; descending to the most fallen, and its aim is to breathe the same love into its disciples. It shows us Christ tasting death, for every man, and it summons us to take his cross, or to participate of his sufferings in the same cause. Its doctrine of Immortality gives infinite worth to every human being; for every one is destined to this endless life. The doctrine of the "Word made flesh," shows us God uniting himself most intimately with our nature, manifesting himself in a human form, for the very end of making us partakers of his own perfection. The doctrine of Grace, as it is termed, reveals the Infinite Father imparting his Holy Spirit, the best gift he can impart, to the humblest human being who employs it. Thus love and reverence for human nature, a love for man stronger than death, is the very spirit of Christianity. Undoubtedly this spirit is faintly comprehended by the best of us. Some of its most striking expressions, are still derided in society. Society still rests on selfish principles. Men sympathise still with the prosperous and great, not the abject and down-trodden. But amidst this degradation, brighter glimpses of Christianity are caught then before. There are deeper, wider sympathies with mankind. The idea of raising up the mass of human beings to intellectual, moral, and spiritual dignity, is penetrating many minds. Among the signs of a brighter day, perhaps the West Indian emancipation is the most conspicuous; for in this the rights of the most despised men have been revered.

There are some among us at the present moment, who are waiting for the speedy coming of Christ. They expect, before another year closes, to see him in the clouds, to hear his voice, to stand before his judgement seat. These illusions spring from misinterpretation of Scripture language. Christ in the New Testament, is said to *come*, whenever his religion breaks out in new glory, or gains new triumphs. He came in the the Holy Spirit in the day of Pentecost. He came in the destruction of Jerusalem, which, by subverting the old ritual law, and breaking the power of the worst enemies of his religion,

ensured to it new victories. He came in the Reformation of the church. He came on this day four years ago, when, through his religion, Eight Hundred Thousand men were raised from the lowest degradation, to the rights, and dignity, and fellowship of men. Christ's outward appearance is of little moment, compared with the brighter manifestation of his spirit. The Christian, whose inward eyes and ears are touched by God, discerns the coming of Christ, hears the sound of his chariot wheels and the voice of his trumpet, when no other perceives them. He discerns the Saviour's advent in the dawning of higher truth on the world, in new aspirations of the church after perfection, in the prostration of prejudice and error, in brighter expressions of Christian love, in more enlightened and intense consecration of the Christian to the cause of humanity, freedom, and religion. Christ comes in the conversion, the regeneration, the emancipation of the world.

You here see, why it is that I rejoice in the great event which this day commemorates. To me this event does not stand alone. It is a sign of the triumph of Christianity, and a prelude and herald of grander victories of truth and humanity. Christianity did not do its last work when it broke the slave's chain. No; this was but a type of what it is to achieve. Since the African was emancipated, the drunkard has been set free. We may count the disenthralled from intemperance by hundreds of thousands, almost by millions, and this work has been achieved by Christian truth and Christian love. In this, we have a new proof of the coming of Christ in his kingdom; and the grand result of these and other kindred movements of our times, should be, to give us a new faith in what Christianity is to accomplish. We need this faith. We are miserably wanting in it. We scarcely believe what we see of the triumphs of the cross. This is the most disastrous unbelief of our times. I am pointed now and then to an infidel, as he is called, a man who denies Christianity. But there is a sadder sight. It is that of thousands and millions who profess Christianity, but have no faith in its power to accomplish the work to which it is ordained.

ed, no faith in the power of Christ over the passions, prejudices, and corrupt institutions of men, no faith in the end of his mission, in the regenerating energy of his spirit and truth. Let this day, my friends, breathe into all our souls a new trust in the destinies of our race. Let us look on the future with new hope. I see indeed numberless obstructions to the regeneration of the world. But is not a deep feeling of the corruptions of the world fermenting in many breasts? Is there not a new thirst for an individual and social life more in harmony with Jesus Christ, than has yet existed? Can great truths, after having been once developed, die? Is not the human soul opening itself more and more to the divine perfection and beauty of Christ's character? And who can foretell what this mighty agency is to accomplish in the world? The present day is indeed a day of distrust, complaint, and anxious forebodings. On every side, voices of fear and despondency reach us. Let us respond to them, with a voice of faith and hope. Let us not shut our eyes ungratefully on the good already wrought in our times; and seeing in this the pledge of higher blessings, let us arm ourselves with manly resolution to do or suffer, each in his own sphere, whatever may serve to prepare the way for a holier and happier age. It may be, as some believe, that this age is to be preceded by fearful judgments, by "days of vengeance," by purifying fire; but the triumphs of Christianity, however deferred, are not the less surely announced by what it has already achieved.

I have now given the more general views which belong to this occasion; but I cannot close this address without coming nearer home, and touching, however slightly, some topics of a more personal character, and in which we have a more particular interest.

I am a stranger among you; but when I look round, I feel as if the subject of this address peculiarly befitted this spot. Where am I now pleading the cause and speaking the praises

of liberty? Not in crowded cities, where, amidst men's works and luxuries, and wild speculations, and eager competitions for gain, the spirit of liberty often languishes; but amidst towering mountains, embosoming peaceful vales. Amidst these vast works of God, the soul naturally goes forth and cannot endure the thought of a chain. Your free air, which we come to inhale for health, breathes into us something better than health, even a freer spirit. Mountains have always been famed for nourishing brave souls and the love of liberty. At Thermopylæ, in many a fastness of Switzerland, in the gorges of mountains, the grand battles of liberty have been fought. Even in this country, slavery hardly sets foot on the mountains. She curses the plain; but as soon as you begin to ascend the highlands of the South, slavery begins to disappear. West Virginia and East Tennessee are cultivated chiefly by the muscles of freemen; and could these districts be erected into States, they would soon clear themselves of the guilt and shame of enslaving their brethren. Men of Berkshire! whose nerves and souls the mountain air has braced, You surely will respond to him, who speaks of the blessings of freedom and the misery of bondage. I feel, as if the feeble voice, which now addresses you, must find an echo amidst these forest-crowned heights. Do they not impart something of their own power and loftiness to men's souls? Should our Commonwealth ever be invaded by victorious armies, freedom's last asylum would be here. Here may a free spirit, may reverence for all human rights, may sympathy for all the oppressed, may a stern, solemn purpose to give no sanction to oppression, take stronger and stronger possession of men's minds, and from these mountains may generous impulses spread far and wide.

The joy of this occasion is damped by one thought. Our own country is in part the land of slavery; and slavery becomes more hideous here than any where else, by its contrast with our free institutions. It is deformity married to beauty. It is, as if a flame from Hell were to burst forth in the regions of the blessed. No other evil in our country, but this, should

alarm us. Our other difficulties are the mists dimming our prospects for a moment. This is a dark cloud, scowling over our whole land; and within it the prophetic ear hear the low muttering of the angry thunder. We in the free States, try to escape the reproach which falls on America, by saying, that this institution is not ours, that the foot of the slave never pressed our soil; but we cannot fly from the shame or guilt of the institution, as long as we give it any support. Most unhappily, there are provisions of the Constitution binding us to give it support. Let us resolve to free ourselves from these. Let us say to the South, "we shall use no force to subvert your slavery; neither will we use it to uphold the evil." Let no temptations, no love of gain, seduce us to abet or sanction this wrong. There is something worse than to be a slave. It is to make other men slaves. Better be trampled in the dust, than trample on a fellow creature. Much as I shrink from the evils inflicted by bondage on the millions who bear it, I would sooner endure them than inflict them on a brother. Freemen of the mountains! as far as you have power, remove from yourselves, from our dear and venerable mother, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and from all the Free States, the baseness and guilt of ministering to slavery, of acting as the Slaveholder's police, of lending him arms and strength to secure his victim. I deprecate all political action on slavery, except for one end, and this end is, to release the free states from all connection with this oppressive institution, to sever slavery wholly from the National Government, to make it exclusively the concern of the States in which it exists. For this end, memorials should be poured in upon Congress, to obtain from that body such modifications of the laws, and such propositions to amend the constitution, as well set us free from obligation to sanction slavery. This done, political action, on the subject ought to cease. We shall then have no warrant to name slavery in Congress, or to it, except by that moral influence which every man is bound to exert against every form of evil.

There are some people here, more kind than wise, who are

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unwilling that any action or sensibility on the subject of slavery should spring up at the North, from their apprehensions of the danger of Emancipation. The danger of Emancipation! this parrot-phrase, caught from the South, is thought by many a sufficient answer to all the pleas that can be urged in favor of the slave. But the lesson of this day, is the safety of Emancipation. The West Indian Islands teach us this lesson with a thousand tongues. Emancipation can hardly take place under more unfavorable circumstances than it encountered in those islands. The master abhorred it, repelled it as long as possible, submitted to it only from force, and consequently did little to mitigate its evils, or to conciliate the freed bondman. In those islands, the slaves were eight or ten times more numerous than the whites. Yet perfect order has followed emancipation. Since this event, the military force has been reduced, and the colored men instead of breaking into riot, are among the soldiers by whom it is to be suppressed. In this country, the white population of the South exceeds in number the colored; and who that knows the two classes, can apprehend danger from the former, in case of emancipation? Holding all the property, all the intellectual, the civil, the military power, and distinguished by courage, it seems incredible, that the white race should tremble before the colored, should be withheld by fear from setting them free. If the alarm be real, it can be explained only by the old observation, that the injurious are prone to fear, that men naturally suspect and dread those whom they wrong. All tyrants are jealous, and persuade themselves, that were they to loosen the reins, lawlessness, pillage, murder, would disorganise society. But emancipation, conferred deliberately, and conscientiously, is safe. So say facts, and reason says the same. Chains are not the necessary bonds of society. Oppression is not the rock on which States rest. To keep the peace, you need not make the earth a province of Satan; in other words, you need not establish wrong and outrage by law. The way to keep men from cutting your throats, is not to put them under the lash, to extort their labor by force, to

spoil them of their earnings, to pamper yourselves out of their compelled toil, and to keep them in brutal ignorance. Do not, do not believe this. Believe, if you will, that seeds of thistles will yield luxuriant crops of wheat; believe that drought will fertilize your fields. But do not believe that you must rob and crush your fellow creatures, to make them harmless, to keep the State in order and peace. Oh! do not imagine that God has laid on any one the necessity of doing wrong; that He, who secures the blessed harmony of the universe, by wise and beneficent laws, has created a world, in which all pure and righteous laws must be broken to preserve the show of peace. I honor free enquiry, and willingly hear my cherished opinions questioned; but there are certain truths which I can no more doubt than my own existence. That God is just and good, and that justice and goodness are his laws, and are at once the safety and glory of his creatures, I can as little question, as that the whole is greater than the part: When I am told, that society can only subsist by robbing men of their dearest rights, my reason is as much insulted, as if I were gravely taught that effects require no cause, or that it is the nature of yonder beautiful stream to ascend these mountains, or to return to its source. The doctrine, that violence, oppression, inhumanity, is an essential element of society, is so revolting, that did I believe it, I would say, let society perish, let man and his works be swept away and the earth be abandoned to the brutes. Better that the globe should be tenanted by brutes, than brutalised men. No: it is safe to be just, to respect men's rights, to treat our neighbors as ourselves; and any doctrine hostile to this, is born of the Evil One. Men do not need to be crushed. A wise kindness avails with them more than force. Even the insane are disarmed by kindness. Once, the mad-house, with its dens, fetters, straight-waistcoats, whips, horrible punishments, at which humanity now shudders and the blood boils with indignation, was thought just as necessary as slavery is now deemed at the South. But we have learned at last, that human nature, ever when robbed of reason, can be ruled, calmed, re-

stored by wise kindness; that it was only maddened and made more desperate by the chains imposed to keep it from outrage and murder. Treat men as men, and they will not prove wild beasts. We first rob them of their humanity and then chain them because they are not human. What a picture of slavery is given by the common argument for its continuance! The slaves, we are told must be kept under the lash, or they will turn murderers. Two millions and a half of our fellow creatures at the South, we are assured, have the seeds of murder in their hearts, and must be stripped of all human rights, for the safety of their neighbors. If such be a slave country, the sooner it is depopulated the better. But it is not true. A more innocent race than the African does not exist on the earth. They are less given to violence and murder, than we Anglo-Saxons. But when did wrong ever want excuse? When did oppression ever fail to make out a good cause in its own eyes? The truth is, that slavery is perpetuated at the South not from the fear of massacre, but from a stronger principle. A respected slaveholder said to me not long ago, "The question of slavery is a question of Property, and Property is dearer to a man than life." The master holds fast his slave, because he sees in him, not a wild beast, but a profitable chattel. Mr. Clay has told us, that the slaves are worth in the market, I think, twelve hundred millions of dollars, and smiles at the thought of calling men to surrender such a mass of property. It is not because they are so fierce, but so profitable, that they are kept in chains. Were they meek angels from God's throne, imprisoned for a while in human frames, and were they at the same time worth Twelve Hundred Millions of dollars in the market, comparatively few, I fear, would be suffered to return to their native skies, as long as the chain could fetter them to the plantation. I know, that there are generous exceptions to the spirit of slavery as now portrayed; but this spirit in the main is mercenary. I know, that other considerations than this of property, that considerations of prudence and benevolence, help to confirm the slaveholder in his aversion to emancipation.

There are mixed motives for perpetuating slavery, as for almost all human actions. But the grand motive is Gain, the love of Money, the unwillingness to part with Property, and were this to yield to justice and humanity, the dread of massacre would not long retard emancipation.

My friends, your compassion is often called forth by predictions of massacre, of butchered children, of violated women, in case of emancipation. But do not waste your sympathies on possible evils, which wisdom and kindness may avert. Keep some of your tears and tenderness for what exists; for the poor girl whose innocence has no protection; for the wife and mother who may be widowed and made childless before night by a stroke of the auctioneer's hammer; for the man subjected to the whip of a brutal overseer, and hunted, if he flies, by blood-hounds, and shot down if he outstrips his pursuers. For the universe, I would not let loose massacre on the Southern states, or on any population. Sooner would I have all the slaves perish, than achieve their freedom by promiscuous carnage. But I see no necessity of carnage. I am sure, that to treat men with justice and humanity is not the way to turn them into robbers or assassins. Undoubtedly wisdom is to be used in conferring this great good. We ask no precipitate action at the South; we dictate no mode of conferring freedom. We ask only a settled purpose to bring slavery to an end, and we are sure that this will devise a safe and happy way of exercising justice and love.

Am I asked what is the duty of the North in regard to slavery? On this subject I have lately written; I will only say, I recommend no crusade against slavery, no use of physical or legislative power for its destruction, no irruption into the South to tamper with the slave, or to repeal or resist the laws. Our duties on this subject are plain. First, we must free ourselves, as I have said, from all constitutional or legal obligations to uphold slavery. In the next place, we must give free and strong expression to our reprobation of slavery. The North has but one weapon, moral force, the utterance of moral judgment, moral feeling and religious conviction. I do not say

that this alone is to subvert slavery. Providence never accomplishes its ends by a single instrument. All social changes come from mixed motives, from various impulses, and slavery is to fall through various causes. But among these, a high place will belong to the general conviction of its evils and wrongs. Opinion is stronger than kings, mobs, lynch laws, or any other laws for repressing thought and speech. Whoever spreads through his circle, be it wide or narrow, just opinions and feelings in regard to slavery, hastens its fall. There is one point on which your moral influence may be exerted with immediate effect. Should a slave-hunter ever profane these mountainous retreats by seeking here a flying bondman, regard him as a legalized robber. Oppose no force to him; you need not do it. Your contempt and indignation will be enough to disarm the "man-stealer" of the unholy power conferred on him by unrighteous laws.

I began this subject in hope, and in hope I end. I have turned aside to speak of the great stain on our country, which makes us the bye-word and scorn of the nations; but I do not despair. Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth and "it cannot return to him void." A new comprehension of the Christian spirit, a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood and of all men's relation to the common Father—this is among the signs of our times. We see it; do we not feel it? Before this, all oppressions are to fall. Society silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this diviner energy. The song of angels, "On Earth Peace," will not always sound as fiction. O come thou kingdom of Heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the cross to reconcile man to man, and Earth to Heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned. Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble strivings of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth.