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Slavery

Frederick Douglass

In view of the recent¹ existence of slavery in the United States and its recent voluminous discussion by the ablest scholars and statesmen of our country, it may hardly seem necessary at first sight that much should be said in this volume upon that subject. But this impression will in some measure disappear when the object of this book is considered and when it is remembered that while slavery is a thing of only a few years ago and that even the descendants of those who suffered its evils and now know little or nothing about it either in theory or in practice,² and further, that the American people from their prepossessions are more likely to forget too soon than to remember either slavery or its discussions too long, no apology will be needed for giving the subject a somewhat thorough discussion here and now. On general principles too, it seems proper to make this subject a permanent (prominent) starting point in this volume. Events crowd upon each other so rapidly and the flight of time wings its way so swiftly, and memory is generally so defective that the deepest impression made upon it by passing events are soon (def)aced and forgotten; besides this book is to illustrate the progress of the negro in the United States, and there can be no proper sense of such progress which does not take into account the nature of the conditions from which the negro started in the race of civilized life. Plainly enough he is not to be measured from the heights attained by others, but from the depths from which he has risen and is still rising. The reader will, therefore, see at a glance, the fitness of the prominence here given of (to) the subject of slavery. They will also see, perhaps, the wisdom of the publishers in committing to my hands this feature of their contemplated volume, I having experienced slavery in my own person.

To deal intelligently and philosophically³ with the origin existence and history of slavery, and with its decline and fall in the United States,

it is necessary that a word should be said of its origin and decline in the world generally. For it is

important to notice that the enslavement of the negro on this continent and in the adjacent islands is not an isolated fact but one connected with the whole volume of human history. Like other ideas and systems, evil as well as good, (Which have come down to us) slavery was evolved from pre-existing conditions. It is the testimony of scholars and historians that a system of servitude in one form or another, each form involving principles (more or less) analogous to those of American slavery, has existed in the world from the earliest ages of mankind. So that is age, custom and universality of endorsement and (practical) adoption could confer a valid title to respect and veneration, these exalted sentiments might be properly claimed for the institution of slavery not only in the United States, but (for slavery) everywhere else. It has certainly come down to us with all the prestige and authority of antiquity and (of) ancient greatness. It ~~certainly~~ (is known to have) existed and flourished amid the regal and architectural splendors of Egypt; it was a part of Hebrew, Grecian and Roman Civilization, and was recognized as a legitimate institution in all the countries of Western Europe. It could and did exist as safely in a Republic as in a Monarchy. It is older by a thousand years than the Christian Era. We have the authority of the eminent Doctor Paley⁴ for saying that slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries when Christianity appeared.⁵ The same learned authority informs us that no passage is found in the

Christian Scriptures in which slavery is condemned or prohibited.

In the argument for slavery the antiquity of the system has often been employed and has played an important part(.) ~~as a means of~~ (It was used to) dulling the (sharp) edge of ~~the reproofs of~~ (a reproving) conscience and (to) reconciling men to the continuance of what in their better judgment they condemned as a manifest evil and wrong. It has been thought to be an arrogant assumption for one generation to assume to be wiser and better than those of the past. Yet in an important sense the children are older than their fathers. It is hardly worth while to stop here to expose the fallacy by which it is ~~attenuated~~ (attempted) over and over again to bind the conscience of one generation by the conscience of another⁶ and (often that) ~~one~~ of a darker age.

After the fact of the antiquity of slavery the one thing worthy to be noticed in connection with the subject is that the condition of slavery

has not been confined, until in modern times, to any particular variety of the human family. This thought is necessary to meet the argument often made in support of the inferiority of the negro race. It has been said that the submission of any people to slavery, is (in) itself a proof of their natural inferiority. Thus the negro has been so described, branded and accepted by the American people (as a legitimate subject of slavery.) Superficial men are wont to say that no other people could be enslaved like the negro.

Inferiority thus alleged and thus proved, it was supposed that the right to enslave the negro followed. It was contended

that it was in the order of Divine Providence that the superior animal should control and master the inferior (and that was for the best for both.) As the white man was superior to the black he therefore had a right to enslave the negro. This was essentially Mr. Calhoun's⁷ argument, and to the people of his section of the Union it was deemed logical and perfectly sound and satisfactory. It was consistent with the idea that parents should govern their children, that masters should direct their apprentices, that teachers should enforce obedience on the part of their pupils (and that monarchs should rule their subjects.)

But happily this allegation is not borne out either by the facts or by the philosophy of history. Here as elsewhere beggars have been seen on horseback and princes walking. It is an instructive and a somewhat gratifying fact that the grandest peoples in the world have at times (patiently) submitted to the yoke of bondage.⁸ The people who gave us the Ten Commandments and to whom we are to-day indebted for our highest religious ideas, and who are now esteemed to be among the most gifted of mankind, the chosen people of God, were many times and for long periods subjected to the degradation of slavery. Then again, contemplating the proud Anglo Saxon Race, than whom there is no greater race, as they now appear, no one would imagine that they could have at any time bowed their proud necks to the yoke of slavery, yet, humiliating as the fact may seem to-day, history shows that this great race, whose knowledge, wisdom and power now rock and rule the world as

is done by no other nation on the globe, was but a few centuries ago the ignorant and abject slaves of foreign masters. Their persons were hated, their language despised, and their Government set at naught (by their conquerors.) Scholars and authors in their writings did not deign even to employ their language in their works: (-) The a language which has since

become almost the language of mankind, was despised (utterly) and rejected. The Historian of the Norman conquest, M. Thirney (Thierry),⁹ tells us that the Saxon was looked down upon as composed of courser clay than his Norman master,¹⁰ and was deemed unfit for marital relations with the superior race. The fact (too) that twenty millions of white slaves(, were) forty years ago, ~~were~~ emancipated in Russia, shows that other than the negro has been enslaved. The proudest and most liberty loving people on the globe have fallen beneath superior power and have accepted for a time the condition of slavery. The Jews in Egypt; the Helots in Greece; the Saxon on their native soil, blue eyed, light haired, liberty loving Saxons, now the models of refinement and (of personal) beauty once wore brass collars on their necks with their masters names written or stamped upon them, as dogs wear such collars now. These facts prove that the simple subjection of a people to slavery carries with it no conclusion of natural inferiority or of permanent bondage. It only proves that men are but men, and that the bravest and proudest of mankind will yield to superior force and submit when they cannot resist with success.

Long before American slavery was inaugurated, one of the most powerful races of mankind, a race before which (all) Europe now trembles, were not only slaves, but their name as a nation is now (synonymous with slavery and in) almost the universal appellation of human bondage. As such appellation it has superceded all other names whether Greek, Roman or Hebrew, and this race is the Slavonic Race of Russia. In a work of great research and learning entitled "Fletcher's thoughts on Slavery,"¹¹ and perhaps the most exhaustive argument ever written in defense of that institution, it is shown from various authorities that the Slavonic Race, coming from Asia, overran continental Europe from the Adriatic to the Northern ocean. That they were reduced to bondage and that their name, which once signified among themselves "fame" and "distinction" became significant only of bondage. Thus the Dutch and Belgians say "slaff"; Germans, "sclave"; Danes, "slave" and "sclave"; Swedes, "slaf"; French, "esclave"; the Celtic French, etc., "sclaff"; Italians, "schia-vo" Spanish, "esclavo"; Portuguese, "escravo"; Gaelic, "slabhadh"; and the English, "slave."¹²

From these and such facts as these, so far from implying inferiority, it may be safely asserted that submission to slavery is rather an evidence of superiority of race than otherwise.¹³ It implies the possession of those strong elements of character upon which the best institutions

of mankind are predicted and permanent-ly founded. Servitude, however galling, may be wisely considered

as preferable to extinction by any people. So long as they must select between slavery or death, slavery will be (wisely) preferred. The passionate, impulsive and fiery nobleness that gave to the American revolution Patrick Henry's "liberty or death",¹⁴ was well enough as an individual utterance and served a good purpose when(,) there was(,) adequate power behind it, (to make it effective) but standing alone and without such power, it indicates a character too ardent and too extreme for wise counsel or for settled order and permanent well being.¹⁵ It is the exception, not the rule of wise human conduct. Liberty is great, but life is greater. Here, as elsewhere, the greater includes the lesser. While heroes have their place in the economy of human progress it is fortunate for mankind that heroes are exceptional and that the masses have acted upon principles more conservative than that indicated by the fire-flashing senti-ment of the eloquent Patrick Henry, or the glorious example of John Brown.

While there is life there is hope and the possibility of realization. In this belief men have always acted and probably in this belief they always will so act. It is something to be able to say when in the most forlorn conditions to which mankind can be reduced, as Milton makes his Satan say, "What though the field be lost, all is not lost!"¹⁶ Grasping, comprehensive and unsatiable as is the power of slavery by man over man, there are attributes and qualities of manhood too subtle and vital to be

reached and extinguished even by the power of slavery. Though the body may be loaded with chains and the back scarred with the lash, manhood itself with thoughts, feelings, hopes and aspirations may still remain free. These qualities may be cramped, cushioned and confined but death alone can annihilate them. The buildings of the White City at Chicago could be burned and their ashes scat-tered to the four winds, but the mind that conceived them and the power that built them still lives. So the slave with life was still able to invent, contrive and wait. As once with him, so with the freedmen of to-day. The can wisely await the logic of events and the certain unfoldings of the future.¹⁷

Acting upon the wisdom thus suggested, men have always rather surrendered a part in preference to surrendering the whole. They have given the robber the purse rather than the life. Resistance to arrest is not only useless but folly in the presence of super-ior force. One, in such

case, may be pardoned for refusing resistance when it (to resist) is only to add mortification to humiliation. The wisdom of the hour is to labor and wait.

All along the history of American slavery, the negro has been taunted with his failure to strike for his freedom and is so taunted to-day, but his conduct has shown that there is not only more courage and fortitude in submission than in resistance, but more wisdom and larger results. Suicide is ever more reckless than brave. A fiery temper, a hasty impatience of restraint may

lead to deeds of daring, but they are not the elements upon which to found and compose a great nation and accomplish a (high and enduring) civilization. Without excluding the heroic (from) in human life, I find real greatness of character to consist in the qualities that enable a people to bear and forbear, and to submit to wrong for the moment and bide their time for the opportunity and ultimate right, rather than to accept annihilation, wherein all is lost. That the American Negro has these qualities in large measure has been amply demonstrated both before and since his emancipation, and this is not only the foundation of my hope for his permanent well being but the proof of his kinship with the greatest of mankind and of his greatness in comparison with the greatest of men. In contrast with the Saxon, where is the Norman master to-day? The one leads the world in thought and action and stands at the top of human achievement, and the other has declined in all elements of its ancient greatness.

The next point worthy of note in this discussion is what may be termed the inherent and essential nature of the thing we call slavery. To many in this day the word slavery conveys no well defined idea of what the word itself contains. It is a thing of the past, an anachronism, and its meaning has become almost obsolete, even (as I have said) to the descendants of our former slaves. But as the subject of this discourse it is important to know the exact truth of its significance. In this respect, like all things else

of great human concern, it should be clearly understood. When any institution or system has played an important part, when, as in the present instance, (when) it has given character to a people among whom it was established, when it moulded their institutions, colored their sentiments, shaped their laws, and led them into resistance to the government under which they (had) lived, it wisely invites and should receive

the fullest and calmest investigation. Exactly such a thing as this was negro slavery in America. It was for this institution that the southern people took up arms against the government and led the American people in a “dance of death” during four long years. Nor has the influence of this institution subsided with the end of the way. It is still building monuments, writing poems, delivering orations (assembling multitudes,) and flaunting banners or (and) decorating graves in honor of its departed heroes, and (zealously) commending their example to the youthful patriotism of the South.¹⁸

During more than two hundred years it was a marked feature of American thought and life. It was a dominant interest and stood out before the (civilized) world as a national shame and disgrace. It came to be the “nation’s (the) scorn (of nations), the “heathen’s mirth.”¹⁹ In going abroad it was the one feature of American civilization (which) challenged attention and which was the most difficult for an American to defend and about which he met (manifested) the most hatred to inquiries. Everything else connected with our country could be spoken of abroad with more or less complacency, but here was a subject that

brought the blush to the American cheek the moment it was called in question or called up the most brazen of effrontery. Many a Northern man fought against his own conscience and defended the institution, not because he thought it was right, but because he thought it was his duty (patriotic) as a citizen to defend his country, “right or wrong.” Yet, in the face of this sacrifice on the part of men of the North, a people in no way benefitted by slavery, it took arms against the government by which it had been fostered for centuries and slayed (by the hundred) thousands of those by whom it had been tolerated and defended.

What then is the fundamental and essential principle of this institution? It is simply this: An arrangement of human relations in such fashion that one man is made the property of another man. It is the relation in which the will of one man is completely subjected to the will of another. It is the reduction of a rational human being to the condition of a thing. The conversion of a person into property; a man into a beast of burden. The law of slavery defines the slave to be one in the power of another to whom he belongs. His time, his talents, his industry, his inventions, discoveries, and, in fact, all the fruits of his exertion, whether these be of mind or of muscle, are all the property of the man recognized by the law as his master. He neither has parents, wife nor children in any

valid sense. He is simply a piece of property. A chattel to all intents and purposes whatever. He can be mortgaged, inherited, bartered,

and in any and every way disposed of as can any other piece or kind of property. He was numbered, valued and branded as are horses, sheep and swine. This is the essence of slavery. It sums up all that constitutes the relation of master and slave, and upon its face it would seem to be the quintessence of injustice. This is not only slavery as it existed in the United States in our time, but it is slavery as it existed in all ages and in all countries. It has ever been the same thing and has ever contained this one comprehensive principle of absolute power and authority of the master and of the unlimited submission of the slave. Wherever this principle is established, there we have slavery. It is distinguished and distinguishable from all other forms of service and subordination, and the line between it and all other forms is so broad, distinct and palpable that it cannot be mistaken or confounded with anything else. To call anything else slavery where this principle is absent is a misnomer and is misleading.²⁰

That there are and have been differences in the manner of enforcing this principle of slavery is not due to the absence of the principle itself but to the spirit, temper and enlightenment of the men by whom the principle has been administered. A master may be kind or cruel, wise or foolish, but this does not effect in any wise the definition here given of slavery as a system, or the principle by which it is characterized and upon which it is founded. It always sets aside man's natural right to

liberty, and invests one man with rights and powers which belong to another. There is in it no reciprocity or exchange of functions. The master is always the master, and the slave is always the slave. The whip never passes from the hand of the one to the hand of the other. It is impossible to conceive of an example in which arbitrary power is more complete or more likely to be exercised than in the relation of slavery. No potentate, however absolute, has the direct power over his subjects that a master has over his slaves.

In the great controversy over the question of slavery in our country, the defenders of slavery often sought to find in other relations, cases analogous to the relation of master and slave, hoping thereby to relieve the principle of slavery of its apparent harshness and (its) scandalous injustice. But no such example could be found. Husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward, apprentice and master, and the rela-

tion of capital and labor were cited as involving the principle of slavery. But (all) analogies fail when likeness disappears. In all these cases and relations there is the principle of reciprocity, the interchange of good offices, and the equity of sharing and sharing alike is recognized. The ward becomes a guardian, the child a parent, the apprentice a master, and the laborer a capitalist, while in the case of the slave only death can end his subjection and his misery.

Now, without pointing out any of the multitudes of evils

arising out of slavery, and what some are pleased to term, the abuses of the system, the reader will perceive in its essential principles (a) flagrant offense to the best sentiment of the human soul. But this result is not entirely due to the principle itself. Something is due to the stage of enlightenment reached by its present generation and to the increased moral sensibility which has come (along) with intellectual progress. Standing where we do we are naturally amazed that mankind could ever have regarded the principle of slavery with favor. And the fact is another proof of the truth of the constant evolution of moral ideas, and (brings to mind the persevering thought) that men are growing better in the march of time and events. Many things (were) ~~are~~ thought right in the infancy of mankind that are now thought to be entirely wrong. The verdict of conscience in one generation is contradicted by the verdict of conscience in another. In the matter of slavery, as in many other things, it is easy to trace and a happiness to observe the beneficent progress the race is making in ethical (and social) knowledge. The idea that man cannot hold property in men, that all men are born free, that human rights are inalienable, that the rights of one man are equal to those of another, that the liberty of one man is limited by that of another, that governments are ordained to secure human rights, did not come all at once to the moral conscience of men, but have all come very slowly into the thoughts of the world. What, therefore, to us in this day seems monstrous, cruel and shocking, made no such

impression on men's minds in the earlier years of the race. The doctrine of the inerrancy of conscience for which some contend, cannot well be maintained in view of the facts of history, for there can be no doubt that the men who hanged witches and burned heretics and made slaves of men, were as conscientious in other directions as we are to-day. The difference, as Buckle²¹ argues it, is due, not to the conscience, a separate

and distinct faculty, but (to the) different degrees of enlightenment existing between then and now.

The history of slavery shows that, like many other evils, it came into the world as a good thing in itself. At the worst it was the substitution of a lesser evil for a greater one. At the time it originated the right to buy and sell men, women and children, and the right of men to sell themselves into slavery, either for a term of years or for life, was unquestioned. It was supposed to stand in morals upon the same footing as that of the right of men (now a days) to hire themselves to other men for a short or for a long period. Hence paupers, debtors, and other unfortunates people readily sold themselves into slavery to relieve themselves of what they thought to be greater evils and hardships. But the main source from which the supply of slavery sprung was, as already stated, the conceded right of the conquerors to kill their captives when taken in way. Slavery came in this case as a substitute for the exercise of this admitted but cruel right. Men

found that it was more humane as well as more profitable to enslave than to slay their captives; that it was better to take their labor than to take their lives, and this, though a selfish suggestion, was a gain to humanity and to civilization. It ~~br~~ brought advantage both to the conqueror and to the conquered. The captive thought it was better to be enslaved than to be slaughter-ed; and the captors thought it was better to have the services of his captive as a slave than to kill him and thus destroy life as well as his service. Mr. Motley says in his celebrated work, "The Dutch Republic", that the ferocious inroads of the Normans scared many weak and timid persons into servitude.²²

But the history of those darker times tells us that slavery was further recruited from various sources. Men worsted in judicial trials, strangers and shipwrecked sailors (men in our day [easily find]²³ [illegible] and [illegible]²⁴) were reduced to slavery. These facts show what was the state of moral ideas in the world generally when the slavery of the negro originated in the United States (and the adjacent islands.)

The introduction of this peculiar slavery, a system which has transcended in horrors and in duration all other systems of slavery previously existing, shows it to have been the natural outgrowth of antecedent moral ideas and conditions. The minds of men had been prepared to receive it without scruple. Only a few great minds could perceive its enormity and had the courage to reject it. That there were such is a fact to be brought to view here-after.

According to Thomas Clarkson,²⁵ the most eminent and reliable historian of the African slave trade, as early as 1508 slaves had been sent from Portuguese settlements in Africa into the Spanish colonies of America, and that Ferdinand, the King of Spain, permitted them to be so carried and landed in great numbers. Under the pious Charles the Fifth, a regular system of commerce, in the persons of native Africans, was thus established. Still further showing that religion has not always led men right.

This slave trade was proposed by no less a person than a pious Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church; a man remarkable for his piety and for his human sentiments. Touched by his pity for the poor Indians in Santo Domingo who were rapidly perishing under the hardships and cruelties imposed by their Spanish Christian masters, this eminent divine suggested and urged upon his government the enslavement of negroes as a merciful measure of relief to the perishing Indians. It was the mistaken benevolence of this good man that gave us the atrocious African slave trade with all its horrors. His pity for the weak reconciled him to enslaving the strong.

While it must be admitted that slavery existed in Africa as everywhere else prior to the discovery of America, and to the introduction of slavery into the Western world, the natural effect of the opening of this trade was to increase the horrors of African slavery. It kindled anew in untutored Africa, the fire of human

avarice. It opened a fresh and greedy market for the sale of captives; it furnished a new inducement to the pursuit of fierce and relentless war among these barbarous people, each tribe stimulated by avarice and hoping to conquer the other, and thus to supply new material for this human flesh market. It gave to each captive an increased value. It gave to the slave trader a new market for the sale of (such) gew-gaws and trinkets as were available in exchange for the purchase of these captives and thus this new traffic with the Christian people of this newly discovered continent acted upon the passions of the African savage like a blast from hell. It excited his passions. It dried up all the natural fountain of mercy and set these ignorant and barbarous people to the dreadful work of (fighting each other of) surprising and (of) firing (the) otherwise peaceful villages of each other at midnight, and this for the sole purpose of kidnapping (their fellows) and thereby procuring victims for our American Christian slave market. It acted as a scourge

upon the African coast. It proved itself worse than small-pox, cholera and the pestilence that walketh in darkness.²⁶ Its terrible effects are still visible on that coast, as well as upon the descendants of the slaves in America. For the internal traffic is now only kept down by external force. What the poor captives suffered on their passage from their homes in Africa to this continent can never be fully told. Even the faint description of it that has come down to us in its history can only be read with a shudder.²⁷

It was death, hell and the grave (conferred in one.) The passage from Africa was (a) ~~erowned~~ (passage of) agony. The slave ship, followed by hungry sharks, left a track of negro blood in the sea.²⁸ No man can tell how many thousands of the victims of this trade were dragged out sick, dead and dying from the fetid holes of slave ships (crammed with naked human beings) and mercilessly flung into the open sea to be instantly torn to pieces and devoured by the sharp teeth of these hungry monsters of the deep. Of course, the motive for this to the slave(r)s seemed good. The sick, dead and dying were thus thrown overboard, the better to preserve the healthy and valuable part of the human cargo for our American slave market.

I have already described the relation of master and slave, and have stated the principle upon which that relation was founded. I now come to the practice of slavery. Nobody should need illustrations of the workings of its principle. For the practical operation of arbitrary power is well illustrated in human history whenever and wherever such power has existed. Two inferences, however, the one in direct contradiction to the other, have been drawn from this principle of slavery. On the one hand it has been contended that slavery was necessarily a humane institution and that it naturally induced kindness and tenderness on the part of the master towards the slave, and that ~~his~~ (the) condition (of the slave) was substantially a happy one; that ~~it~~ (the situation) created affectionate ~~relations~~ (consideration) between the slave and his master; that the slave master had a direct interest in securing the well being and happiness of his

slave. It was further argued that the master was/would not (be) more likely to abuse or injure his slave than to abuse or injure his horses or his other cattle. On the first blush this inference and reasoning seemed to many as entirely sound and as perfectly unanswerable. The fallacy of the argument was easily detected in the manifest difference that there

is between dumb animals and men. A man in the place of a horse or a horse in the place of a man are conditions out of joint with both horse and man. What would be the natural and (the) probable result in the one case would be (actively) the reverse in the other. To appropriate and hold an animal as property can never be the same thing as appropriating and holding man as property. The difference is as broad and eternal(,) as is the difference between a man and a beast. The argument overlooks the fact that the slave is a man, the image of man, wonderfully and fearfully made. What(t) may be easy in the one case would prove very difficult in the other. To succeed in making a man a slave, this difference between the man and the brute must be removed, or so subdued and ~~that~~ so completely that it shall not dare to assert itself. As a man(,) a slave(,) had(s) some sense of the dignity of his manhood. He has the ability to perceive that in slavery he occupies a false position. He (can) realizes that a wrong has been inflicted upon his nature; that he has been unjustly deprived of rights which belong to his manhood, and he reasons that his master has no more right to enslave him than he has to enslave his master. These ideas and sentiments are written on his face and

translate themselves into acts. Despite of himself they cause him to resent in a thousand ways the authority of the master. By the master this resentment is readily perceived in the downcast countenance, in the sullen(,) and injured, (complaining) if not defiant, look of the slave, and wherever these sentiments manifest themselves, the master (naturally) feels they must be promptly suppressed. To accomplish this something must be done, hence, hard work, scant supply of food, uncomfortable quarters, little time for sleep, and, in addition, what Carlyle has heartlessly called "the beneficent whip",²⁹ ~~must be~~ (were) employed (as a logical result.) These, combined with enforced ignorance, have been and are ever the accompaniments of slavery and are necessary to suppress this aspiring and rising feeling of manhood in the slave.

The foregoing reasoning is entirely consistent with my own experience and observation of the workings of slavery. When a slave I learned that the certain way to make a slave discontented, paradoxical as it may seem, was to treat him as one human being should treat another. Whatever tends to strengthen within him the sense of his manhood, is against slavery. To give him good food, good raiment, and ample leisure for thought, was to life(t) him above his condition. When a slave had a bad master (I have found that) he only wanted a better one. When he

had a better he only wanted the best, and when he had the best master, he aspired to be his own master. "It is the hand of little employment that hath the daintier touch."³⁰

Hence, instead of kindness and consideration for the slave being a just inference from the principle of slavery, hardships and injuries to his manhood became a necessity in order to destroy that sensibility which revolts at injustice and wrong. To those who have consulted the Statute Books of the late slave states, it is well known how well the slave masters have understood this philosophy and how strictly they applied it to the slaves under their dominion. Though thirty years have nearly passed away since slavery was abolished, we can see the rigor of the slave system in the dwarfed intellect, the thoughtless, loud and vacant laugh, the stunted figure, the flat feet, the shuffling gait, whip-scarred backs and awkward speech of those slaves who remain among us to tell the tale of their past condition more eloquently than any language of mine can describe. Not even barbarism on the coast of Guinea has delt so hard with the physical make up of the negro as slavery has in our Christian country. In his native land the negro is tall and strong and symmetrical and robust, but here he is stunted and mis-shapen. It is all wrong to think that nature has made the negro what we see him to be in this country. What the negro is in individual cases under favorable conditions shows what he would be in the absence of slavery. All the grand features of his manly form may sometimes be seen even here.

It is nothing against this statement or argument that some slaveholders sometimes succeeded in managing their slaves with less harshness and less cruelty than is here alleged of slave holders

generally. This was due, not so much to the system as to the personal differences of the masters. Some were kind, not because of the system, but in spite of the system. The whip was, however, always an indispensable part of the system. If not in the terror of his own lash the so-called kind master was able to manage his slave, he could do it in the terror of his neighbor's lash. He could also say to his slave, "If your behavior does not suit me, I will sell you to a master who will compel you to suit him." This power of selling a slave was often a greater terror to the slave and was more effective in securing fidelity, industry and obedience than the direct application of the whip. The threat "I will sell you" was aggravated by the thought that however bad the conditions were here under a present master they would be much worse elsewhere and under a different master.

The course of the treatment dictated by the philosophy of slavery was to reduce in the slave the sense of want to the narrowest limit, to a purely animal range to keep from him as far as possible a sense of all moral, social, intellectual and athletic wants. Even his physical wants must be kept down to the fewest and simplest. He must be kept hungry so that he may relish the coarsest food; he must be kept steadily at work so that he may only want rest. He must have only such wants as are common with the beasts of the field, so that the higher range of manhood wants should be removed from his consciousness.

Strange and amazing as it is that mankind should have ever originated such a system as slavery, it will seem still more strange to after coming generations that the system could hold its place in the world so long. Especially in view of the fact that good men were found to condemn it in the hour of its origin. For dark as the world was when the African slave trade was entered upon by Christian men, sanctioned by the government of Spain and England, men of eminence and influence were found who revolted at the inhuman traffic. According to the history of the slave trade by Thomas Clarkson and others, a number of influential persons associated themselves in England for its abolition as early as 1516. Such was the clear, moral sense of Cardinal Ximenes³¹ that he condemned the slave traffic upon the instant that it was brought to his attention. He could not agree with Bishop Barthelomew Delascassas.³² He was opposed to delivering the inhabitants of one country from a state of misery by cosigning another people to the same misery. Even the pious Charles the Fifth, the man who granted a patent containing the exclusive right to import African slaves, lived long enough to repent of that act. Pope Leo the Tenth about the same time expressed his strong abhorrence of that traffic and said that not only the Christian Religion, but nature herself cried out against a state of slavery.³³

The first importation of slaves from Africa by Englishmen was in the reign of Elizabeth in the year 1562. It is alleged that

this great Queen was deceived as to the nature of the slave traffic, and gave her sanction to it under a total misapprehension of its character. According to Hill's Naval History, she expressed concern lest any of the Africans should be carried off without their free consent; declaring that such carrying off would be detestible and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the under-takers. Captain Hawkins, afterwards Sir

John Hawkins,³⁴ the slave trader, promised the Queen that the Africans should not be carried off without their consent, but failed to keep his word. Even Louis XIII was very uneasy when he was about to issue his edict by which all Africans coming into his colonies were to be made slaves until he was assured that the introduction of them in this capacity was the readiest means of converting them to the principles of the Christian Religion.

The great and pious John Wesley,³⁵ in a pamphlet published by him in 1774 says, "To set (the) manner wherein negroes are procured it will suffice to give an extract of two voyages to Guinea."³⁶ The first is taken verbatim from the original manuscript of the Surgeon's Journal. "Sastro, December 29, 1874. No trade to-day though many traders came on board. They informed us that the people have gone to war is(in)land and will bring prisoners enough in two or three days, in hopes of which we will stay."

"30th. No trade yet, but our traders came on board to-day and informed us that the people had burned four towns so that to-morrow we expect slaves off.

"31st. Fair weather, but no trading yet. We see each night towns burning but we hear many of the Sestro people are killed by the inland negroes, so that we fear that his was will be unsuccessful.

January 2nd. We saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o'clock and this morning saw the Town of Sestro burned down to the ground, so that we find their enemies are too hard for them at present and consequently ~~are~~ (our) trade is spoiled here!"³⁷

Mr. Anderson, in his *History of trade and commerce*,³⁸ observes that England supplies her American Colonies with negro slaves amounting in number to about one hundred thousand every year.³⁹ That is, so many are taken on board our ships but at least two thousand of them die in the voyage; about a fourth part more die at the different islands in what is called the seasoning, so that at an average in the passage and seasoning together, thirty thousand die, that is, more properly, are murdered.

Thus, insidiously, and in the darkness of ignorance and under the pretence of a pious regard for their welfare, the poor negroes were dragged from their homes in Africa and doomed to bitter servitude in our Christian country, and thus was the slave trade inaugurated and put upon its detestible and devilish career of blood.

With it, as with other gigantic evils that effect mankind, it was the first step that cost. Once under way and the crime

became profitable, a passionate love of gain armed itself for its defence. During more than two hundred years the slave ships plowed the ocean unhindered, and by the sanction of the Christian world, to supply our country with the victims of bondage. Two elements united in its favor,—the avarice of the slave merchants and the silence of the Christian church. A few good men bore their testimony against the crime, but the general silence of the church made the testimony of the few unavailing. The same was true in this respect with the domestic slave trade, and with slavery itself. As the foreign slave trade piously sneaked itself into existence under the general guise of Christian benevolence, so slavery was maintained and so slavery was defended as long as it existed. False in theory, cruel in practice, false in morals, opposed alike to the happiness of the master and the slave, condemned by scholars, statesmen and philanthropists and other eminent persons from Samuel Johnson⁴⁰ to Granville Sharp,⁴¹ from William Wilberforce⁴² to Thomas Clarkson, from Fowell Buxton⁴³ to Benjamin Lunday, from William Lloyd Garrison to Charles Sumner, the systems of bondage still lived on until unnumbered millions of its victims were launched into eternity without once tasting the sweet boon of liberty and until our otherwise happy country was rent in twain and hostile armies confronted each other upon the battle field.

It is not after all so very hard to explain why this evil was

permitted to remain in the world so long, and why it was so long able to defy all moral and political opposition. It had many elements of strength and not the least one was the pride of dominion of man over man. Everybody seems to want some body under his command. The master wanted the overseer under him, and the overseer the slaves, and the slaves wanted a mule or a dog under them. The master cursed the overseer, the overseer (cursed) the slave, and the slave (cursed) the mule. Nothing could minister to human pride more than the relation of a master to a slave, and this power of slavery adjusted itself fully to this feeling so natural to the human heart. To be able to say to this man, come, and go; do this and that, is a coveted power. The love of power in the master proved itself in this case superior to all other loves. He was a little king of men. His veranda was his throne; his plantation was his country; his slaves were his obedient subjects, ready to administer to his every want and caprice. The appetite for power grew by what it fed upon. The longer the evil continued, the weaker became all his resistance to it.

Like indulgence in ardent spirits, each drink induces a craving for ~~more~~ (another).

Not content with his mastery over slaves, he naturally enough sought to extend his dominion over free men, and hence, there arose in the United States what was known as the slave power. It is in the nature of evil as well as good to create conditions favorable to its continuance. Slavery made a moral

atmosphere favorable to itself. It was a positive force and its tendency was to subject to itself all opposing influences. Manners, morals, religion and government were met by it and fell before it.

Three hundred and fifty thousand of slave holders, bound to-gether by one powerful interest and acting as a unit, (was a powerful body and) easily acquired a large and powerful moral and political dominion. They were more than a match for any other interest or combination (in the country.) Political parties and great religious organizations were easily brought under its control. The men who represented it in the Congress of the nation became fierce, imperious and overbearing, and threatened to abolish freedom of speech and the right of petition, not only for the slave states, but for the nation (and for a time were successful.) The habit of ruling slaves, and the assumption and exercise of arbitrary power very naturally gave them an advantage over worthier men whose minds had been directed to studying and managing things, rather than men. Men with far more general ability and learning quailed before the imperious domination of these lordly rule or ruin slave masters. Statesmen who asserted their independence and refused to obey (at the command and) under the moral lash and sting of the slave driver's whip, were denied all chance of preferment in both the Whig and Democratic Parties. Senators Hale,⁴⁴ Chase,⁴⁵ and Seward⁴⁶ (men of experience and splendid attainments) were denied places on (important) committees. A word said against slavery by any statesman, however great and able, divested him at once of

all hope of a presidential nomination. ~~Mr.~~ (Daniel) Webster, the admitted expounder of the Constitution, and the great defender of the American Union, was retired to the rear of his party because of his early sentiments opposed to slavery.

In his earlier and better days Mr. Webster had said: If there be within the extent of our knowledge and influence any participation in this traffic in slaves, let us pledge ourselves upon the Rock of Plymouth

to extirpate and destroy it. It is not fit that the land of the Pilgrims should bear the shame longer xxxx If the pulpit be silent whenever and wherever there may be a sinner bloody with this guilt within the hearing of its voice, the pulpit is false to its trust.⁴⁷ These sentiments were never forgotten nor forgiven by the slave power.

The brilliant Henry Clay, himself a southern man and a slave holder, was distrusted by his class and defeated in his race for the presidency in 1844 because he could give only a qualified assent to the exactions of this slave power, and its purpose to annex Texas to the Union as a slave state. Not only did the representatives of this power become insolent, they became belligerent. Preston Brooks,⁴⁸ the assassin of Senator Sumner, was a fit representative of this slave-holding oligarchy. The South never disowned either him or his deed. On the contrary, he was rewarded for his dastardly act of assassination by the applause and homage of the best people of the southern section of the

Republic. This slave power was not only bold and arrogant in speech, but numbered among its weapons open threats of violence (to individual statesmen) when it could not otherwise have its way. It (By this means it) sought to silence the voice of the venerable John Quincy Adams, Ex-President of the United States, in the councils of the nation. It drove Joshua R. Giddings⁴⁹ from his seat in Congress, and threatened to hang Hon. John P. Hale if he ventured into the State of Mississippi. At last it broke up the Union, as we all know, because it could no longer rule the Union.

The American people had long in advance been warned of this event. There was no concealment of the insolent pride and grasping ambition of this relentless slave power. It swept on to this final catastrophe in logical order. Its designs were open, palpable and easily comprehended, yet the nation was blind to the significance of events. Repeated were the warnings given by the abolitionists of impending danger to the country from further toleration and support to slavery. Every means of pen and voice were employed to awake then nation to the true situation. Among the number of this class were some of the ablest writers, thinkers, poets, scholars and statesmen (America has produced.) They wrote, prayed and preached,—but with no more effect than (that which) followed the preaching of Noah to the anti-deluvians. They were told to mind their own business. Some of them were subjected to mob violence, boycotted in business, insulted in the streets, and denounced as enemies to the Church, infidels to religion and disloyal to the government.

The ears of the nation were only open to those who prophesied smooth things. Not until rebel cannon thundered (in their ears) and solid shot crashed against the walls of Fort Sumpter did the nation awake to the real nature of the for it had long nourished in its bosom.

But before this result was reached (and preparatory to it,) this slave power had rent asunder nearly all our great religious denominations. It had created a southern religion as well as a southern civilization. It controlled Church, pulpit and press and moulded the manners and morals of the section in which it existed (completely) to its own will. It had crowned cotton as King. As early as the year 1838 it valued its slave property at twenty hundred millions. When it struck at the life of the Republic it valued its slaves at more than twice that sum. It is fair to assume that no other interest in our country could have conspired with such success against the stability of the government as did this one enormous system.

In no other direction could elements be found so well calculated to supply and constitute a common cause. The slave holders were welded together, not only by mutual interests and an all pervading sentiment born of slavery but by external pressure. They felt that the moral judgment of the world was against them. The slave system was being abandoned in every other civilized country. Slavery was not only branded by the outside world as a crime, but in the light of American profession it was branded as a flagrant inconsistency and was constantly provoking offen-

sive criticism. The slave holder could look no where outside of his own circle of guilty companions in crime for constant and reliable sympathy. The civilized world was against him. Accusations of guilt met him on every hand except in his own sunny south. The cohesion of guilt (alone) held him to his companions in guilt, and this gigantic slave power thus (at last) became in history the (Southern) confederacy and thus, like many other guilty criminals, the slave power averted its lawful doom by committing suicide.

In 1839, Henry Clay had haughtily said in the United States Senate, "I know there is a visionary dogma that man cannot hold property in man, but that is property which the law makes property. Two hundred years have sanctioned and sanctified negro slaves as property." "Fifty years ago," he went on to say, "it was said that slavery would bring upon us the judgment of God, but that prophecy", he declared, "has been answered by fifty years of un-exampled prosperity."⁵⁰

We here see the deceitfulness of appearances and the short-sightedness even of (so called) wise men. Our sins as a nation had already gone up to the court of the moral government of the universe, and judgment had already been rendered. (National punishment for national crimes had already been decreed.) Could Mr. Clay have lived to see the events of the year 1861 he would have seen that present apparent prosperity of the wicked is hardly the criterion by which to ascertain divine approval. (The award hung invisibly above him while he attested in wickedness.) He would have seen that slavery disappeared at the very moment of its greatest apparent prosperity and at the height of its greatest power.

The future student of the philosophy of reform in contemplating this (tragic) termination of American slavery will ask the question why slavery could only end in suicide? Why it was allowed to fall by the sword instead of by the power of the Gospel of the "Prince of Peace."⁵¹ He will ask why the American church and clergy neglected the golden opportunity (offered them) to smite the slave system with death, and thus bring honor and glory to the Christian Religion? The opportunity was manifest and the neglect palpable. He will go further, however, in his inquiries. He will ask why it was that Doctor Albert Barnes,⁵² an eminent divine, a scholar and commentator of high authority, could declare that no power outside of the American Church could sustain slavery six months if it were not sustained inside of it.⁵³ He will ask further why the great Methodist Episcopal Church (founded by John Wesley) at its general conference in 1836, passed a (solemn) resolution, declaring that it had no right, wish or intention to interfere with the relation of master and slave as it existed in the southern states, and why all the other great denominations (of the country) acted in accordance with the same sentiment and refrained from bearing any testimony against the sin of slavery, and why it was that it could be truthfully said during the anti-slavery controversy, as it was said by the Hon. James G. Birney,⁵⁴ himself a repentant slaveholder, that the American Church and Clergy were the bulwark of American slavery.

When the Church was asked to preach and pray for the abolition of slavery, it told us with an air of extreme piety that God would abolish slavery in h(H)is own good time. However earnest these people were to cooperate with God in putting down other sins and violations of the laws of God, they were not prepared to be his agents and coworkers for the liberation of the slaves. They said that such interference on their

part would be running before they were sent, and being wise above what was written, that the abolitionists were fanatics and disorganizers. Even in the North the doors of the churches were closed against those who dared to advocate emancipation, while most of them (in deference to slaveholders,) were open to the colonization society to advocate the expatriation of free colored people of the United States. It is a significant fact that while all manner of religious efforts could flourish in the midst of slavery, one word there in pity for the slave or rebuke of the master would break up the largest camp-meeting and scatter any revival or prayer meeting ever held in that section.

By consulting the history of this controversy it will be seen that while individual members of the religious organizations of the country bore faithful testimony against the evil of slavery, that while John Wesley had declared slavery to be the sum of all villainies;⁵⁵ while Doctor Hopkins⁵⁶ had denounced it as a crime, and Doctor Channing⁵⁷ had insisted upon gradual emancipation, and while Doctors Wayland⁵⁸ and Cheever⁵⁹ had argued against slavery in the name of God, the churches with which they were associated were opposed

to the abolitionists and were in sympathy with the slave holders. While Thomas Jefferson trembled for his country when he reflected that God was just, and that h(H)is justice could not sleep forever;⁶⁰ and while Madison was unwilling that it should be seen in the United States Constitution that slavery could exist in this country; while John Quincy Adams and Joshua R. Giddings were offering petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the American Pulpit was generally dumb, and the American Church inactive, or were apologizing for the system.

Perhaps there never was (never) a great controversy between right and wrong, truth and error, where the latter had more decided advantage over the former. The principles in the contest were the slave and the (slave) master. They stood at opposite points. The master was white, the slave (was) black. With the master there was education, refinement, popularity and power; on the side of the slave there was rags, wretchedness, destitution and a hated complexion. The master was honored and courted; the slave was despised and shunned. The one had everything with which to win friends, and the other every thing calculated to repel them; the one was exalted to Heaven in point of privileges, and the other consigned to the lowest depths of earthly misery. To sympathize with and defend the slave was to partake of the

popular contempt and scorn with which the slave himself was regarded. Such is the constitution of the human mind that most men will more readily face an

armed foe on the battle field than offend public opinion by espousing an unpopular cause. While there is not moral or intellectual quality in color, the color of the bondman was against him. His location was against him. All that is beautiful (desirable) in this country is associated with white; all that is ugly and detestible is coupled with black. This trend of public taste was a mighty element in the protection of slavery. Pride, prejudice and popular taste were arrayed on the side of the strong. Satan easily assumed the glittering robes of an angel of light. Right and wrong changed places; the human conscience became confused; moral science parted with the element of certainty; religion was perverted; the Scriptures were given a false interpretation; the Golden Rule was twisted out of shape; heaven and earth, men and angels, and the Word of God were pressed into the service of slavery.

In looking back to this great moral conflict, the student of its history will be amazed at the ingenuity, the learning, eloquence and ability by which the bad cause were supported. Greek, Latin and Hebrew were pressed into its service. It was once said by Theodore D. Weld that slavery never sought refuge in the Bible of its own accord; that the horns of the altar were its last resort.⁶¹ It is nevertheless true that no argument was better calculated to silence the voice of conscience than texts gleaned from the Bible.

The Rev. Dr. Witherspoon,⁶² in writing to the Editor of the

“Emancipator” said, “I draw my warrant in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to hold a slave in bondage. The principle of holding the heathen in bondage is recognized by God.”⁶³

The Hopewell Presbytery of South Carolina says, “Slavery has existed in the Church of God from the time of Abraham to this day. Members of the Church of God have held slaves bought with their money and born in their houses, and this relation is not only recognized, but its duties are defined clearly both in the Old and in the New Testament.”⁶⁴

These views were not the isolated views of individuals merely but they were the views of the leading religious denominations in the southern states. Not only was slavery justified by the Bible, but the fugitive slave law was regarded as in accordance with the direction of Paul in the case of Onesimus.

The Rev. Doctor Smyley,⁶⁵ a Presbyterian Clergyman, of Mississippi, in a pamphlet published in defense of slavery in 1838⁶⁶ says, "If slavery be a sin, and advertising and apprehending slaves with a view to restoring them to their masters is a direct violation of the divine law, and if the buying, selling and holding of slaves for the sake of gain is a heinous sin and scandal, then verily threefourths of all the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists in slave states of the Union are of the Devil."

But I will not weary the reader with further testimony on this

point. I have enough of it on hand to fill a volume.

While however it is perfectly true as I have said that the Christian Churches, as a whole, in the United States refused to aid or co-operate with the movement to abolish slavery, it is also true that the influence of Christianity, as a system of religion, did by its general principles much to promote the abolition of slavery, not only in the United States, but the abolition of slavery throughout the world. Its precepts and examples of mercy and love could not be repeated and held up before the minds of men even (even with limitations imposed and) where no mention was made of slavery without raising questions in honest minds as to the rightfulness of that institution (of slavery.) The teachings of the prophets and the spirit of the New Testament furnished abundant munitions for assaulting, not only slavery, but every form of injustice and cruelty, whether to man or brute.

In respect to the position of the church, a marked difference is observable between the attitude of the church in the United States and that of England. The assaults of (upon) slavery in the West Indies were peculiarly religious. Active in the movement were Baptists and Methodists (Independents) and, in fact, were all ~~the independent~~ denominations. But among these none were more active than the religious society called "Friends" and known as Quakers. They brought to the movement high character, wealth, dignity and zealous devotion. Their sincerity and self-sacrifice in the

cause commanded respect and consideration from every body. They, more than others, held up the hands of Clarkson and Wilberforce, and led the British Government to give liberty to eight hundred thousand slaves in a single day.

But while it is perfectly true that in its general teachings the principles and practice of slavery are condemned, it is also true that both in

the Old and in the New Testament there are passages that distinctly recognize and sanction both the principle and practice of slavery. This is true especially of the Old Testament. No honest and unbiased man can read these parts of the Levitical Code without being convinced that they spring from the selfishness and pride of the human heart and should not be in any sense (be) received as expressing the mind of a merciful God. For certainly here the right to buy and hold slaves is admitted, authorized and sanctioned. No man, without discrediting his moral sense, can deny the truth of this interpretation of the written word.

In the anti-slavery controversy with the Church, I early took notice of the fact that the abolitionists generally made no effort to explain, to deny, or pay any special attention to the Levitical Code. When it was alleged that the Bible sustained the relation of master and slave they simply said, "If so, so much the worse for the Bible." They preferred the prophets to Moses, and Christ to the Apostle Paul.

There were, however, a few efforts made to deprive slavery of Bible support and to show that the practice of slave-holding by Abraham and others of the Patriarchial Age was not like our slavery. But looking back to those expositions, now that the hideous form of slavery is withdrawn, and the subject can be discussed with entire calmness, I think even they who did most to explain away the slavery of the Old Testament will admit their failure. Certain I am that the abolition of slavery could not have been carried to success on the strength of such arguments.

In this controversy our appeal was made substantially outside of the Bible. We found our strongest support in the enlightenment of the age, in the instinctive moral sense of mankind.

Our platform was no where better expressed than by Henry Broughan,⁶⁷ afterward Lord Broughan, who said, in reply to the West India planters, "Tell me not of rights; talk not of the property of the planter in his slaves. I deny the right. I acknowledge not the property. In vain you appeal to laws that sanction such a claim. There is a law above all the enactment of human code(s); the same throughout the world; the same in all time, such as it was before the daring genius of Columbus pierced the night of ages and opened to one continent knowledge, prosperity, and power, and to another all unutterable woe. Such it is at this day and by that law unchangeable and eternal. While men hate fraud and loathe rappine, and abhor blood, they will reject with indignation

the wild and guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man."⁶⁸

It was on this high ground that the abolitionists in the United States took their stand and bravely confronted all comers. Had slavery been left to the decision of the Bible and decided by arguments pro and con exclusively within the limits of the Scriptures, the dispute would have continued till now, for it would then have been simply one text marshalled against another, and a contention more about words than about things.

I do not deny that Christianity in a general sense had some agency in creating conditions favorable to the anti-slavery movement, despite the fact that the American Church and Clergy were found in Christian fellowship with slave holders, and were the most effective apologists for slavery. But what was done in favor of abolition was done without its co-operation and despite of its example and precepts. The shout raised over the downfall of slavery and the claim set up that the result was reached by the prayers and (through) instrumentality of the church, is without just foundation and it is surprising that the claim should be made so soon, and while living witnesses to the contrary remain.

If it were contended that the church was anti-slavery one hundred years ago, the claim might be easily admitted for at that time the leading religious denominations of this country bore faithful testimony against the sins of slavery and denounced its cruelties. [Back] At that time, however, slavery was comparatively weak, and the internal slave trade was a limited interest. The price of an able-bodied slave was at that time (worth) only two hundred dollars; the foreign slave trade was in full operation. When that trade ceased and Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama became slave markets, the price of

an able-bodied slave rose from two hundred to one thousand and on to fifteen hundred dollars per hand. Then Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and North Carolina became slave-breeding states. Slave holders became rich and powerful (by this trade.) With (great) wealth they easily seduced and controlled the church and dictated to the pulpit. The result was a silent pulpit and an indifferent church. Never before did wealth and power more completely assert their dominion over the religious organizations than in this instance. The negro was kept in ignorance. He was not allowed to learn to read and search the Scriptures. Servants obey your masters, was the chief lesson addressed to him (from the pulpits.) He was told to be contented with his condition, while nothing was said of the duties of the master.

It is generally assumed and it is by many admitted that the church has a higher standard of morality than the state; that its members are

more sensitive and responsive to the claims of humanity than by what it is pleased to call the world's people. But the relation of the church and church members to negro slavery, especially in the United States, does not sustain this lofty contention. According to my observation while in slavery, Christian slave masters were no better than infidel slave masters.

The one was not less exacting or less cruel in the enforcement of their exactions than was the other. Both, so far as I could observe, were bent upon obtaining all that could be got out of the body and bones of the slave, either by the lash or by persuasion. As to the attitude of the Church towards the movement for the abolition of slavery, it was not better than the rest of our erring and sinful world. There was no different between its position towards the anti-slavery movement, than that of the ~~prev~~ prevailing political parties. The cause of the slaves had more friends among lawyers and doctors than among ministers of the gospel. Suppression of the anti-slavery movement was the policy pursued by both the church and the state. Congress made all petitions, memorials, and papers favoring the abolition of slavery on its table without reading, without reference, without debate, and without consideration. Neither the slave nor the slave's friends were allowed to be heard on the subject. No whisper of complaint or grief on this subject was permitted to reach the national ear through this national channel. Only the slave holders could speak and tell of the happiness and contentment of their slaves.

The same policy of suppression thus pursued by the Government and by the corrupt political parties, was accepted and adopted by the great body of the American Church and Clergy. Especially is this true of the leading Evangelical denominations. They set

themselves like (a wall of) steel ~~sternly~~ against what they called, the modern abolition agitation. In whatever else they were divided, the union of church and state on this subject was hearty and complete. The moral sentiment of the one was no higher than that of the other. But this was not the case with their influence. The influence of the church was far more hurtful than that of the state. Nothing better was expected of the Government. But the assumed virtue of the church and its admitted higher standard of morality gave (to) it a power to blast the hopes of the slave, (which was) not possessed to the same extent by the Government. Nothing better than a pro-slavery attitude was expected of (either of the) political parties banded together (as each was) for the accomplishment of political ends and governed by the low ground was a grievous

disappointment to the friends of emancipation. It professed a religion to the purpose of which was to destroy the works of the devil. But the system of slavery, than which no evil short of annihilation could be greater, was beyond the line of its operation. In this respect neither the church nor the government could say, "I am more holy than thou!"

It is commonly affirmed and admitted that the Christian Religion has had much to do with the extirpation of slavery in all the Christian countries of the world. I am not disposed to deny or question this fact, but the honor of the extinction of

slavery is not wholly due to Christianity. The tidal wave that has swept slavery from the world came from an ocean fed by many streams, and Christianity was only one of them. Human selfishness as well as human love must be in part credited with this achievement. Slavery was found to be unprofitable as well as sinful. Art, science, discovery and invention and the natural law of the evolution of ~~raees~~ (mankind) operating in the line of higher and still higher civilization gradually undermined slavery and made its continuance impossible. If it had not itself committed suicide in the United States (as it did) by its attempt to overthrow the Government, it would have ultimately fallen by the silent forces of moral and material civilization. It had an enemy in every bar of railroad iron and in every electric wire (and in every improvement for the distribution of knowledge.) In its nature it was happier in the dark places of the earth than in the light of civilization. The laws of population were against it. The growth of education was against it. Labor saving machinery was against it; mechanical discoveries were against it; the growing intercourse of nations was against it; the diffusion of intelligence was against it; in fact, every step of the world's progress from barbarism to a higher civilization was against slavery and in favor of its abolition. The world (must move but it) could not move without jarring the fetters and weakening the chains of slavery. All the wonderful (laws and) tendencies of the moral universe conspired against the slave system and in favor of emancipation.⁶⁹ It would be easy to

dwell upon these general agencies operating against slavery, but we may leave that subject to larger space than is afforded in this volume.

It now becomes proper to speak especially of the particular agency of the modern abolition movement in promoting the extinction of slavery in the United States. By the popular voice and (the voice) superficial men ~~taking~~ (who take) cognizance only of immediate results, without

reference to original causes, it is contended that the abolition of slavery was by divine providence, and others that it was purely accidental and that it was only due to military necessity and that it could never have been brought about by the efforts of the abolition societies. I will not attempt to answer in detail all these contentions, (certainly not that which suspects divine providence, but will) ~~but~~ speak of that which assumes that the sole motive and object of the emancipation measure was to cripple and demoralize the forces of the slave-holding rebellion. They say it was forced upon the South and the country simply as a punitive measure. This statement is unquestionable to a certain extent true. But it is plainly only a part of the truth. It cannot come into court as the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is at best but a half truth. It is neither just to the nation ~~or~~ (nor) to Abraham Lincoln nor to the abolition societies. In the mind of Mr. Lincoln there was an idea of justice and humanity as well as military necessity in the issuance of his emancipation proclamation. But granting that the aboliti-on of slavery was simply the result of military necessity, we must

go far behind that fact to find the cause of that necessity. It did not come of itself. There was a time when it did not exist. War measures grow out of the existence of war, and there was a time in our country when there was no war (and) when profound peace reigned throughout our borders. When slavery was threatened from no quarter of the land, except (by) the silent (and unrecognized) forces already referred to; when the influence of no commanding statesman was marshalled against it; when the conscience of the nation slept; when the ocean of national passion was (motionless) smooth and unruffled. Whence then came this sudden change from national repose to national perturbation; from beneficent union to malevolent division; from profound peace to bitter and turbulent war? Whence then came ~~this change?~~ (the change that followed this national calm?) What minister of wrath and rage stirred up the elements of passion and let loose this whirl wind of war and (brought with it this cloud of) dismal terror(?) ~~upon the land?~~ It was, as we have seen, not the church; it was not the state nor the political parties; these were all solemnly branded together to support and protect the slave system. Conservatism with them meant that so far as slavery was concerned all things should remain as they were (from the beginning) and forever. The church was silent and the pulpit dumb, and the press gave the subject a wide berth. The condition of the heathen abroad drew tears from the pulpit and dollar from the congregation, but there

were no tears for the negro. No man cared for the negro. He was outside of the circle of human thought and sympathy. If he were (was) flogged,

manacled, and branded with hot irons, he was thought to deserve it. If he ran away from his master to a free state, it was thought to be both a constitutional and Christian duty to hunt him down and return him to his alleged master. We made it crime to assist him in his flight; to feed him when hungry; to shelter him when he was shelterless; to clothe him when he was naked, or to render him any assistance whatever. We were not required to treat him as a man, a brother, and a neighbor. The Golden Rule was not supposed to apply to him. The slave holders received our entire sympathy and support. There was no strain upon our commercial or our political relations to the different sections; the North and the South were wedded by denominational ties; by Ecclesiastical interests; by harmonious political perferments; by the marriage of the sons and daughters, and by the absence of sectional strife. Thus, all was peace. It is true that once in a while from the outside world this repose was slightly disturbed, and caused a dream, not a pleasant dream, to intrude upon this peaceful slumber (of the nation.) The negroes of Santo Domingo a hundred years ago arose in their might and struck for liberty. Nat Turner⁷⁰ struck a blow at South Hampton, Virginia. The shadows of Toussaint L'Overture⁷¹ and Nat Turner across their vision, (England was putting forth efforts to abolish slavery in her colonies,) but like all shadows ~~they~~ (these) soon passed away and the southern mind listened to the reassuring cry of, (from pulpit, platform and press,) "all is well!" (This was sounded all along the lines of American politics and American religion, and (the nation) fell again into sound sleep. Hymns were

sung; sermons preached; long prayers were made; solemn fasts were observed; great revivals of religion took place, (the 4th of July was celebrated) but the slave-holding conscience was untouched with alarm or apprehension. The pulpit was hard upon the scribes and Pharisees; upon Thomas Payne and the Devil, (an occasional [rap] was given thus of Judas Iscariot,) but the slave holder entirely escaped its divine wrath. The terrors of hell could be held up, and the necessity of a new birth insisted upon; the duty of joining the church set forth, but none of these things ~~disturbed~~ moved the slave holder, and none were intended to disturb him.

Just here, and under these conditions, there were organized a few abolition societies in the country. First, by one Benjamin Lunday⁷² who

travelled on foot and wrote and preached against slavery. He was subsequently joined in his anti-slavery work by William Lloyd Garrison, and soon the local societies were followed by great national societies, and the land was flooded with abolition papers, tracts, pamphlets and books. Eloquent men in different parts of the country took the platform in advocacy of the abolition of slavery and soon the South became alarmed for the safety of their peculiar institution. The slave, whom they had held as a chattel, was becoming recognized as a man. The slave system which had been esteemed as divine, was being painted and helped up before the world as a system inhuman and monstrous (wickedness) and a (a very) hell of horrors. The public sentiment of the North under the influence of abolition teaching was becoming hostile to slavery.

It protested against the annexation of Texas; the repeal of the Missouri Compromise of the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia; the extension of slavery into Kansas; the hunting of fugitive slaves, and at last it organized the free-soil party and the republican party, and the last straw that broke our pro-slavery camel's back was the election by this Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln to be president of the United States, and all the consequences which now become matters of history and upon which I need not dwell. First there was peace, then agitation, then war, then military necessity, then the abolition of slavery. It is not enough, however, on this subject to stop with the sundering of the physical chains which bound the negro in slavery. If we are to take account of his progress we must look beyond the simple fact of his legal and physical emancipation. We might look beyond these in order to discover the duty and the obligations still incumbent upon the nation. Emancipation was a great fact and its importance cannot be over estimated. It is nevertheless a partial and imperfect fact.

Institutions like individual men have a power of transmission. Conditions and qualities descend from them through generations and ages. The foot prints of serfdom may be observed in Europe to-day though the institution has not existed there for centuries. Norman pride may still be detected in England. Many (in that country) are proud to trace their Norman descent. Thus the evil as well as the good

that men do, lives after them. It was not in the nature of things that the practice of slavery could exist in this country during two centuries and a half without leaving many of its natural evils in the wake of its formal abolition. It left behind it a legacy both to the master and to the slave.

Legislative action, however sudden and complete, could not change the habits and customs of the master, nor enable the slave to shake off the degrading conditions of his bondage. Generations of enforced ignorance, of thoughtless dependence, of absolute submission to authority, of self-renunciation have descended to the slave and have not tended to fit the freedman for the duties and responsibilities of his new position as an American citizen. It is unreasonable to expect any such sudden transformation by the simple act of liberation made upon the statute book of the nation. Time, cultivation and experience, and the exercise of liberty will be needed a long time to develop a true, self-respecting, manly character. What is true of the freedman is equally true of the slave holder. His habits and (his) slavery formed character were little fitted for his new (his) condition. Emancipation did not emancipate him from a legacy left behind by a slavery any more than it did the slave. It would have been more than a miracle if the old master class of the south, disappointed, humiliated, defeated in the object of a four years' war as they were, could have upon the instant rejoiced over their defeat. Such a spectacle would have contradicted all human experience. It is quite natural for the late slave holders to

follow this emancipated slaves as far as possible with the conditions they imposed them in a state of slavery. The efforts that are now being made to limit the rights of the negro by legislation, to degrade him on railroads, steamboats, hotels, to deprive him of his constitutional right to vote, to intimidate him by violence, and to do all in their power to make his freedom a curse, is perfectly natural though deplorable. The slave holder could not have done otherwise and preserve the consistency of his former position. It is natural he should love those who fought for slavery, and hate those who fought against it. If he said the reverse of this it would be hard for men of common sense to believe it.

The attempt had been made by certain politicians and others to make the people of the North believe that the old things of slavery have passed away and that all things have now become new. That, in fact, we have now a new south, constructed like the north,—on the lines of liberty. Many at the north seem to have been duped by this representation and to (have) raise(d) a shout of joy over the supposed conversion. But it does not really appear that any such conversion has taken place. There is no new south at present in sight. (The facts are all the other way.) The spirit of slavery is still dominant. The new south talked of is yet as (but) a castle in the air; only a hope of the future. It is a new name

for an old thing, as in the nature of things it must be. Upon inspection it will be found the new

south will turn out to be like the story of the new jail built out of the materials of the old one, and the new one will be found to be about as rotten as was the old one. That the old jail is still there is shown in its chain gangs; in its pretended payment of wages for labor with worthless orders on stores; in its persecu-tion of the negro; in its lynch-law practices; in its denial of (to) the negroes the right of a fair trial in its courts when accused of crime; in its presumption of guilt in all controversies when the black man is accused by a white one; in its cunning devices to ~~keep~~ (cheat) the negro out of his vote; in counting out the negro's friends who may be elevated and in counting in the negro's enemies who have not been elected; in swearing to support the Constitution of the United States while openly violating its provisions. No! The "new south"⁷³ is a fraud framed to deceive; to obtain desirable ends by false pretenses. Those who think that there is a new south, especially colored people, in the hope or expectation of finding it new, will discover their delusion. They will find it exploded on the railroad; on the steamboats; in the hotels, and in the general spirit of injustice with which colored people are treated in that section. In religion, in manners, morals, and habits, the new south so-called resembles its old parent in all its forms and features, and from the nature of the case, must do so for a long time to come. The law of transmission of qualities cannot be evaded here any more than elsewhere. Both the slave

class and the master class are subject to this law. The most that can be hoped for either the one or the other is that happy environments, time, and painstaking effort may gradually change the habits and character of both.

But I proceed to the consideration of another aspect of the subject. That which relates to the question of ~~duty~~ what is due on the part of the government of the United States to the emancipated class. To the minds of some it appears to be accepted that the Government of the United States by the simple act of emancipation (has) absolved itself from all further duties and responsibilities in the premises and all ~~just~~ claims ~~justly~~ due from it to the emancipated people of the South. It does not appear to (me or to) those who understand the agency of the federal government in relation to slavery that ~~their~~ (its) duties and obligations in the premises were cancelled by ~~this~~ (the) simple act of emancipation.

The southern people and the old master class (bad as they were) were not wholly responsible for the existence of slavery in this country. Though the southern people were the recipients of its benefits, the northern people and the nation as a whole were fairly responsible for the continued existence of the institution. It was fashionable during the anti-slavery agitation for northern men to ask, "What have we of the North to do with slaver?"⁷⁴ It was easily shown that the slave holder was only one party to the slave system. He held his slave not only by his own strength but by the moral and physical support given him by the whole nation.

Nor could he have held them otherwise. It was not an individual thing. Every sword and bayonet of the nation was pointed at the breast of the negro and told him as plainly as gunpowder could speak, that he must remain a slave in the hands of his master or die. That if he ran away, every state was bound to return him to his bondage. That if he struck for freedom the nation would kill him. The nation was the safe guard and overseer of the plantation. When Nathaniel Turner and other slaves struck for their liberty at South Hampton, Virginia, in 1831, he and his brave comrades were hunted down like wild beasts by the national government. When the negroes of Virginia and Maryland struck for their freedom at Harpers Ferry under their leader, Captain John Brown, and Virginia soldiers found themselves powerless to ~~asure~~ (measure) arms with the insurgents, Federal soldiers in Federal uniform, paid with Federal money, were summoned to suppress the revolt, and obeyed, as they were bound to obey that summons. It was however not alone the physical force of the nation but the moral and social forces ~~of the nation~~ that made and perpetuated the enslave-ment of the slave. It is not merely the sheriff that holds the prisoner but the nation behind the sheriff.

So that the claim of the emancipated slave against the nation which enslaved him, is very easily established even upon moral and legal grounds (not only against the slaveholder but against the nation.) His natural and rightful liberty was taken from him and his earnings appropriated, not only by the individual slave master, but by the nation itself. But for this overwhelming national power, the slave could have emancipated himself, either by force, or by flight. (Long before the proclamation of emancipation by Abraham Lincoln and the act of Congress (he could have secured his liberty.) In every sense of the word, the nation was the principal in the affair of slave holding. It was the nation

that legalized the slave trade and continued the conditions which made it impossible for the slave to regain his liberty. No matter how heavily and grievously he was oppressed by the yoke of bondage; no matter how painful were the wounds inflicted upon his back; no matter how noble the qualities of manhood he exhibited in the eye of the nation he was a slave, and the fist of its Government was ratified by the moral, social, literary and religious forces of the American people, as such. Hence, from national responsibility for slavery, there is no escape. The American church pronounced a curse upon the children of Ham, and the nation executed the curse.

Now, there is a solemn lesson of justice set forth in the Christian scriptures, to which, nations, not less than individuals,

should take heed. It is this, ; Whenever and wherever, and upon whomsoever, a wrong is inflicted, it is the plain right of the injured party, to demand redress, and the plain duty of the wrong doer, to make restitution, as far as it may be in his power to do so.

The fundamental principle violated in the case of the slave, is the universally accepted one, that what a man earns by the sweat of his brow, is his, against all other claims whatsoever. This fundamental right can never be denied to any, unless it can be shown to have been forfeited by crime. In the case of the slave, no such forfeiture can be shown or pretended. His case (against the American Government) is one of systematic, prolonged and bare-faced robbery; and ~~for thi~~ I have shown that for this, the nation is responsible. It is not, however, only a corporate responsibility, but one which addresses itself to every man and woman composing the nation. Only those of them who can plead in their defense the fact that they have done all that they could for emancipation of the slave, can claim exemption or modification of the weight of responsibility for the wrong. It was said by a converted tax-gatherer, when brought face to face with the author of the Christian religion, "If I have taken anything by false accusations from any man, I will restore him four-fold."⁷⁵ Of course this cannot be done in the present instance. Millions upon millions have suffered, endured, and passed on to the silent shades of eternity. To them no restitution can be made. To them the voice of restitution must be heard on the other side of life. But there are yet amongst us, millions of their children, and our manifest

duty to them is, to do whatever we can to undo the wrongs entailed by the slavery of generations of enslaved which have passed on.

Manifestly our whole duty was not done by the simple act of emancipation. It is not enough for the highwayman to stop robbing. It is his duty also, as far as possible, to restore the stolen goods.⁷⁶ The negro has been deprived, not only of liberty, of opportunity, of the rewards of industry, but of his natural right to knowledge. He has been kept, by force of law, imprisoned in a castle of ignorance; forbidden by the laws of the land to learn to read the teachings of religion or science or the rules of right living. It is often said that enough has already been done for the negro, but in the eye of justice, if the American church and clergy could put a Bible in every freed-man's cabin, a school house in every valley, a church on every hill-top in the South, and place a teacher in the one and preacher in the other, and thus do missionary work for a century to come, they would not even then atone for the manifold wrongs perpetrated upon the present and past generations.

While the negro may well be thankful for what is now being zealously done by Northern philanthropy to enlighten his mind and to ameliorate his condition, it is impossible for him to look upon it as unearned assistance. He has paid for all he gets in a ten-fold degree, by labor, stripes and blood?

No more striking illustration of the confusion of moral ideas can be cited than that which comes to us in the claim set up by the late slave-holders, for compensation for the loss sustained (by them) by emancipation.

of their slaves. Many of them have kept a strict account of these losses, and it is expected that opportunity will, at some time, favor the presentation of their claims to the Government. ~~for compensation.~~ Nor is it altogether certain that these claims will not finally be presented and paid by the Government, while no idea is for the moment entertained that any compensation, money wise, (or otherwise) will ever be rendered to the emancipated slaves for the wrongs and hardships inflicted upon them by the fiat of the nation.⁷⁷

The generations which may come after us will doubtless be amazed at the moral obliquity that could see that the slave-holders had just claim compensation against the Government for the loss of their slaves, but are totally blind to the losses sustained by the slaves in their slavery; that they could not see that the slaveholder had a good claim for the loss of the labor of the slave, but could not see that the slave had any just claim for the loss of this liberty. For it does not yet appear that any part of the American people is concerning itself with the question of

compensation to the emancipated slaves. Most people seem to think that enough was done for them when they were turned loose and allowed to go their own way. This moral obliquity illustrates the blinding power of long indifference to the suggestions of justice and proves the (the hardening) influence of long continued indulgence of selfishness. Many who can plainly see the wrong done the slaveholder, are totally blind to the (the wrong done the) the slave. It may be admitted, even here, that since the nation

was a party, and a guilty party, to the enslavement of the negro, the nation should share a just proportion of any hardships and losses involved in the act of emancipation. As against the nation, therefore, the slaveholder may have a good claim; but if this be granted, it must be admitted that the emancipated slave has a claim against the nation, ten-fold stronger.

But the abolition of slavery should not be viewed in the light only of its consequences to the slave or to the slaveholder. It was not only a blessing to the one and to the other, but to the nation also. Nothing so endangered our grand experiment of self-government, as did slavery; and nothing was more needed to ensure its success, than the abolition of slavery. Long before honest and far seeing Abraham Lincoln uttered that striking formula, "This Republic cannot permanently exist half slave and half free,"⁷⁸ thousands of thoughtful men had reached the same conclusion. Though few had uttered it before, millions had felt its truth. All slave, or all free, was the alternative presented by the situation. Slavery was the one rock of danger in the voyage of our ship of state. While slavery lasted, no true union could exist between the North and the South. The moral atmosphere which was life to the one section, was death to the other. The habits, thoughts and feelings, congenial to the slave states, were in blank contradiction to those of the free states. In the North, free speech was encouraged, education was diffused, freedom of thought was tolerated, and labor was honored; while in the South, every thing with the prefix "Free," wa

suspected, limited and hated. It requires no great insight into the nature of things, and into the natural operation of (social) forces, for us (all) to discern that there was, indeed, an irresistable conflict between the two great sections of our country. War between the two was not, in any sense, a matter of choice, but the inevitable result of the iron logic of events. Like a boat once caught in the rapids

of Niagara, there was no escape, but only the awful plunge over the cataract.

The policy of Government during the earlier years of the war, was, to protect slavery; to sternly refuse (any attempt) to disturb the relation of master and slave. ~~It~~ (The proclamations of freedom by generals Fremont⁷⁹ and Hunter⁸⁰ were rescinded by Abraham Lincoln. He) meant to save the Union without in anywise releasing the slave from his bonds. ~~Its~~ (The loyal array in the fiel(d) gave the slave no hope. The blue and gray meant, for him, the same thing. The loyal Generals ordered the return of all slaves to their masters, and the suppression of all antislavery sentiments by loyal soldiers. Loyal troops were stationed (around) to guard rebel plantations to the end that no slave might escape therefrom. The National Secretary of State⁸¹ notified (his ministers and consuls) the nations of the earth, that no change was to be wrought in the condition of the slave, however the war might terminate. Although the Union was to be saved at any cost, slavery must remain untouched. In pursuance of this policy, the (assistance of) slaves, as an element of loyal power, ~~were~~ (was) scornfully ignored and rejected. The war was called a white man's war, and loyal soldiers threatened to lay down their arms if arms were (once) put into the hands of slaves. This was the prevailing sentiment during

two years of the war. At last, however, disaster supplanted pride by wisdom. Scorn fell before necessity. The salvation of the country became more important than the salvation of slavery, and prejudice yielded to the suggestions of reason and common sense.

The claims of the negro upon the American Government and upon the American people, for their gratitude and for aid in his efforts to improve his condition, and to realize as far as possible, the benefits of civilization, do not rest alone upon his labors, hard-ships and loss of liberty by his enforced bondage. He can come before both the Government and the people, upon grounds vastly high-er than these. He was their friend when they most needed friends, when whatever is valuable in the maintenance of the Union, and precious in free institutions, were at stake and dependent upon his help. It is plain that, had the Government of the United States persisted in its cowardly policy towards slavery and slave-holders ~~and~~ (as) adopted and pursued during the first two years of the war for the Union; had it continued to protect slave property, to guard slave plantations by Federal arms, to recapture and return fugitive slaves, refused emancipation, (and) scorned to employ the arm of

the negro in the loyal cause the chances are that the country would have been dismembered, the rebellion would have triumphed, the Union would have been dissolved, and that, two, republics, with fundamental ideas and institutions hostile to each other in spirit, antagonistic in civilization, would have been erected on the soil now dominated by one solid republic, with the possibility of complete homo-

geneousness,

happiness and success. In weighing the debt due to the negro, the American people should never forget or ignore this aspect of the case. It was the timely aid and good offices of the negro that saved the Republic. But for him, there would have been a line running from east to west across the continent, separating two nations, each jealous of its territorial border and certain to become (subject) to the incursions, strife, and blood. The republic on the north could not, if (it) desired to do so, restrain the expression of its antislavery sentiments, and the Southern republic could not tolerate such expression, or restrain its wrath at the inevitable losses which would result from the neighborhood of a free Republic. Its slaves would cross the border line and thus gain their freedom, in which case there would be the same causes of irritation and incitement to war that existed under the old Union. In this new condition there would be no new Constitutional obligations to recapture and return slaves to their masters, no duty to assist in suppressing domestic insurrections. The people of the North, imbued with a spirit of humanity, would not only shelter and protect the fugitive slave, but would otherwise assist him and defend him, all along the dividing line. Where, there was, under the old dispensation, but one John Brown, there would have been under the new dispensation, hundreds. From all this and more, ~~there~~ the arm of the negro has saved the great American Republic. Hence I contend that the negro is no mendicant, begging for favor; no culprit praying for pardon; but an American citizen, rightfully demanding the pro-

tection of the American Government, not only from the circumstances of birth on American soil and under the American flag, but for immeasurable services (rendered) to that Government (in the day of trouble.) However this Republic may now, in the pride of its power and security, scout the claims of gratitude, despise and neglect his appeals, refuse to fulfill its solemn obligations and grant him his civil rights; however it may allow him to be degraded, excluded from hotels, maltreated by Rail

way employees, exposed to lynch law and mob violence; however it may connive at the fraud and injustice that cheats him out of his right to vote; impartial history and a God of justice, despoiling pride of race, prejudice of color, (and) the meanness of ingratitude will award, in large measure, the credit to (of) the salvation of the country from the mad ambition of traitors (in their effort) to compass its destruction. I assert, in conclusion, that it was the negro who, in the supreme moment of the nation's distress and peril and against the doubts of loyal men and the contempt of traitors, with the terrors of torture and death by the halter as well as by the sword, before him; with a courage that never quailed and a heart that never grew false, bravely stepped to the front in war, and, by his almost matchless valor, saved the American Republic from ruin, and invested it with a power and glory which it could never have illustrated while slavery lasted.

Notes

1. A note on the text: though composed on a typewriter, Douglass made further edits by hand. Any words marked out on the manuscript will be denoted by a strikethrough, and any handwritten additions will be in parentheses. Where necessary, I have marked words too illegible to discern as [illegible]. I have corrected minor typing mistakes that may unnecessarily impede readers but have otherwise maintained the integrity of the text as it appears in the Library of Congress. All notes are my own.

2. This seems to be Douglass's only suggestion that the African American community itself has forgotten much of the horrors of enslavement. Douglass's decision to recount a history of slavery for readers to demonstrate its impact on the present, however, occurs elsewhere. In "Lessons of the Hour" (1894), for instance, he notes, that the violence and anti-Blackness of the Reconstructed South is inseparable from and born directly out of American slavery.

3. Reminiscent of Douglass's earlier claims, in his 1867 "Sources of Danger to the Republic" (Blassingame et al., *Douglass Papers*, 4:149–72), to have "elaborated quite a lengthy chapter of political philosophy, applicable to the American people," from his "slave experience," and a departure from John Collins's suggestion to Douglass that he "give . . . the facts" and let others "take care of the philosophy" (*My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), In *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: The Library of America, 1994, 207). Despite Douglass's frequent philosophical interventions, scholars have only recently begun to name him as a philosopher in his own right. See Maurice S. Lee's *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Nicholas Buccola's *The Political Thought of Frederick Douglass* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), and Nick Bromell's *Power, Dignity, Struggle: The Black Political Philosophy of Frederick Douglass* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

4. William Paley (1743–1805): English utilitarian and anti-slavery philosopher.

5. Douglass is quoting directly from Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785).

6. Thomas Jefferson makes a similar point in a letter to John Wayles Eppes (24 June 1813): "We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right, by the will of its majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation, more than the inhabitants of another country." *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813, ed. J. Jefferson Looney. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 220–26.

7. John C. Calhoun (1782–1850): proslavery advocate, South Carolina representative, and vice president under John Quincy Adams.

8. Douglass makes this argument in numerous other places, including his "First of August Address at Canandaigua" in 1847; "Expatriation," published in the *North Star* in 1848; an ad-

dress to the New England Anti-Slavery convention in 1848; and “What the Black Man Wants,” delivered in Boston in 1865.

9. Augustin Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans: Its Causes, and Its Consequences, in England, Scotland, Ireland, & on the Continent* (1825), trans. Charles C. Hamilton (London: Whittaker and Co., 1841).

10. Douglass uses this same phrasing in his 1865 speech “What the Black Man Wants,” Blassingame et al., *Douglass Papers*, 4:59–69: “If you read the history of the Norman Conquest, you will find that this proud Anglo-Saxon was once looked upon as of courser clay than his Norman master, and might be found in the highways and byways of old England laboring with a brass collar on his neck, and the name of his master marked upon it.”

11. John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery, in Easy Lessons. Compiled into Eight Studies, and Subdivided into Short Lessons for the Convenience of Readers* (Natchez: Jackson Warner 1852).

12. This sentence is pulled directly from John Fletcher’s *Studies on Slavery*, “Lesson XXII.”

13. This sentiment is a shift from Douglass’s statement in 1861 that “the doctrine of submission to injustice, has its limits, and those limits have been fully reached.” *Rochester Evening Express*, May, 8, 1861, reprinted in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, series 1: *Speeches, Debates, and Interviews*, ed. John W. Blassingame et al., 5 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979–92), 3:428–35.

14. Douglass’s sentiment regarding Henry’s famous line seems to have changed greatly from previous years. Douglass writes in 1855, “Patrick Henry . . . could say, GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH, and this saying was a sublime one, even for a freeman; but, incomparably more sublime, is the same sentiment, when practically asserted by men accustomed to the lash and chain . . . I believe there was not one among us, who would not rather have been shot down, than pass away life in hopeless bondage.” *MBMF*, 312.

15. Douglass is critiquing what he deemed a romantic and heroic conception of resistance. Despite his own previous arguments for rebellion, Douglass, at the end of his life, offers a more subdued take on the power of the African American community to survive through “fortitude” rather than the “hasty impatience” of resistance and, as he argues, possible “annihilation.”

16. *Paradise Lost*, book 1: 105–09. “What though the field be lost? All is not lost; the unconquerable will, And study of revenge, immortal hate, And courage never to submit or yield: And what is else not to be overcome?”

17. Douglass’s faith in the certainty of progress contrasts starkly with the uncertainty he admitted in his 1857 “Dred Scott” speech: “Standing, as it were, barefoot, and treading upon the sharp and flinty rocks of the present, and looking out upon the boundless sea of the future, I have sought, in my humble way, to penetrate the intervening mists and clouds.” Blassingame et al., *Douglass Papers*, 3:163–83.

18. Like Saidiya Hartman’s “afterlife of slavery” and the Black Lives Matter movements, Douglass emphasizes that US slavery continues to exert its influence long after emancipation through anti-Black violence and the idolization of the confederacy through monuments, flags, and national memory. Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 5.

19. “The Christian’s scorn—the heathen’s mirth,” from John Greenleaf Whittier’s pro-abolition poem “Stanzas.” In *The Poetical Works in Four Volumes by John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1892).

20. Douglass makes this argument repeatedly throughout his speeches, most notably, perhaps, in 1850, where he reminds his non-US audience that “there is no analogy” between oppression and slavery: “The Irishman is poor, but he is not a slave. He may be in rags, but he is not a slave. He is still the master of his own body.” “The Nature of Slavery: Excerpt from a Lecture on Slavery, at Rochester,” In *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: The Library of America, 1994), 419–24.

21. Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–62): British historian. Douglass seems to be paraphrasing here from Buckle’s 1873 *History of Civilization in England*.

22. This sentence is directly borrowed from chapter 8 of John Lothrop Motley’s 1855 *The Rise of the Dutch Republic, 1555–1566, Complete: A History*.

23. Brackets here and elsewhere denote my best guess as to Douglass’s handwritten additions.

24. This annotation can be found on page 17 of the manuscript.

25. Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846): formed, and served as a member of, the British Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and published more than forty works including most

notably *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, by the British Parliament* (1839) and *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African* (1785).

26. Psalm 91:6: "Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

27. Douglass's most extensive discussion of the Middle Passage occurs in his "First of August Address at Canandaigua" (1847); its horrors do not frequently feature in Douglass's speeches or writings.

28. It isn't clear whether Douglass is drawing on a source here, but his account of sharks following Middle Passage ships is corroborated by other sources. See, for example, Willem Bosman, *New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea: Divided into the Gold, Slave, and Ivory Coast* (London: The Rose and Crown, 1704).

29. From Thomas Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question," published anonymously in February 1849 in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*.

30. *Hamlet*, act 5, scene 1: "The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense."

31. Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517): Spanish cardinal.

32. Bartholomew de Las Casas (1484–1566): Dominican priest and bishop of Chiapas. Douglass's source regarding Cisneros and Las Casas is unclear.

33. The only record of this quote appears to originate in John Grahame's *The History of the United States of North America from the Plantation of the British Colonies till Their Assumption of National Independence*, vol. 2 (1836).

34. John Hawkins (1532–1595): English naval commander and enslaver.

35. John Wesley (1703–1791): English Methodist leader and founder of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

36. "Thoughts on Slavery," in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. 10: *Tracts and Letters on Various Subjects* (1827).

37. These journal excerpts come verbatim from John Wesley's "Thoughts on Slavery," but the identity of "the surgeon" is unclear.

38. Adam Anderson's *An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce: From the Earliest Accounts* (1787).

39. Figure taken from the appendix of Anderson's *Historical and Chronological Deduction*.

40. Samuel Johnson (1710–1784): English author of *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), supporter of West Indies insurrections.

41. Granville Sharp (1735–1813): British abolitionist, member of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, famously advocated for the prosecution of those responsible for the *Zong* massacre.

42. William Wilberforce (1759–1833): British parliamentarian, also a member of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

43. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786–1845): British parliamentarian, succeeded Wilberforce as leader of the abolitionist campaign in the House of Commons.

44. John P. Hale (1806–73): Douglass endorsed Hale's presidential run as the Free Soil Party candidate in 1852.

45. Dudley Chase (1771–1846): Vermont senator from 1813 to 1817 and again from 1825 to 1831.

46. William H. Seward (1801–1872): New York senator from 1849 to 1861, secretary of state from 1861 to 1869. Injured in an assassination attempt concurrent with Lincoln's assassination in 1865.

47. Quote taken from Daniel Webster's 1820 speech "The First Settlement of New England," *A Discourse, Delivered at Plymouth, December 22, 1820: in Commemoration of the First Settlement of New-England*, (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1821).

48. Preston Smith Brooks (1819–1857): South Carolina representative from 1853 until 1856 and proslavery advocate. Brooks is best known for his 1856 assault on anti-slavery senator Charles Sumner in the Senate Chamber.

49. Joshua Reed Giddings (1795–1864): Ohio representative from 1838 until 1859. Giddings eventually moved from the Whig to the Free Soil Party and, later, to the Republican Party. He resigned from the House of Representatives in protest after violating the "gag rule" that forbade the House from considering anti-slavery petitions.

50. These quotes come from a speech Clay delivered in the senate, "On the Subject of Abolition Petitions," on February 7, 1839.

51. Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

52. Albert Barnes (1798–1870): American theologian and author of *The Church and Slavery* (1857).

53. This appears to be a paraphrase of Barnes's assertion in *The Church and Slavery* that "there is not power enough out of the church to sustain the system" if "the church were wholly detached from it and arrayed against it."

54. James G. Birney (1792–1857): presidential candidate for the Liberty Party in 1840 and again in 1844. Douglass is here referring to Birney's 1840 *The American Churches, the Bulwarks of American Slavery*.

55. John Wesley famously writes of "that execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the slave trade." *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: T. Mason & G. Lane, 1837), 181.

56. Likely Johns Hopkins (1795–1873).

57. William Ellery Channing (1780–1842): Unitarian preacher, author of *Slavery* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1835) in which he similarly argues for the merit of "forbearance and non-resistance."

58. Francis Wayland (1796–1865): American philosopher, president of Brown University. Despite his belief that enslavement was wrong, Wayland held that it was not the place of the US government to interfere with the Southern states. In one of his most well-known works, Wayland writes that "as citizens of the United States, we have no power whatever either to abolish slavery in the southern States; or to do any thing, of which the direct intention is to abolish it." *The Limitations of Human Responsibility* (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1838), 163.

59. Reverend George Barrell Cheever (1807–90): Congregational and Presbyterian minister. Best known for his sermons and speeches, which include "The Fire and Hammer of God's Work Against the Sin of Slavery" (1858) and "The Extortions of Slavery" (1860), as well as the texts *God against Slavery* (1857) and *The Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding: Demonstrated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures* (1860).

60. A paraphrase of the quote from Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785): "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference!"

61. This comes directly from Weld's *The Bible against Slavery, an Inquiry into the Patriarchal and Mosaic Systems on the Subject of Human Rights* (1838).

62. While the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon typically refers to John Witherspoon (1723–1794), signatory of the Declaration of Independence, the quote that Douglass gives indicates that this is, instead, Dr. T. S. Witherspoon of Alabama.

63. Harriet Beecher Stowe refers to this same letter and quote in both the appendix of *Dred* and in her *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Horace Greeley also refers to it in *American Conflict* (1865).

64. Quoted from a pamphlet published by the Hopewell Presbytery of South Carolina, included in a collection of pamphlets and writings, edited by James Gillespie Birney, entitled *The American Churches: The Bulwarks of American Slavery* (1840).

65. Reverend James Smylie II (1780–1853).

66. It is possible that Douglass's year is incorrect, as this quote appears in Smylie's *A Review of a Letter, from the Presbytery of Chillicothe, to the Presbytery of Mississippi, on the Subject of Slavery* (1836).

67. Henry Brougham (1778–1868): British lord high chancellor. Prominent in the passage of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act.

68. The origin of this quote is unclear, though it was quoted in William Lloyd Garrison's *Thoughts on African Colonization* (Boston: Garrison & Knapp, 1832), as well as Daniel Appleton's *The American Annual Cyclopædia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1862* (New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1863). Given the slight differences between Douglass's quote and Brougham's original, it is possible that Douglass was quoting from memory.

69. Douglass makes a similar argument in 1861: "Material progress, may for a time be separated from moral progress. But the two cannot be permanently divorced . . . let all the subtle enemies of the welfare of man, in the protean shapes of oppression, Superstition, priestcraft and Slavery—plainly read their doom." "Pictures and Progress," Blassingame et al., *Douglass Papers*, 3:452–73.

70. Nat Turner (1800–1831): leader of an American slave rebellion.

71. François-Dominique Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803): general of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804).

72. Benjamin Lundy (1789–1839): Quaker abolitionist, founder of the Union Humane Society in 1815.

73. The New South was coined by Henry W. Grady (1850–1889) in 1874. Reformers frequently used the term to reflect the South's supposed participation in postwar modernization and reunification efforts. Douglass urges his readers to look beyond the South's rebranding to see that much of the oppression and inequality of enslavement has remained, new names notwithstanding.

74. Though not a direct quote, similar arguments can be found in works such as Francis Wayland's *Limitations of Human Responsibility* (1838) and Moses Stuart's *Conscience and the Constitution* (1850).

75. Luke 19:8: "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

76. Douglass makes a similar argument in 1857: "If I were on board of a pirate ship, with a company of men and women whose lives and liberties I had put in jeopardy, I would not clear my soul of their blood by jumping in the long boat, and singing out no union with pirates. My business would be to remain on board, and while I never would perform a single act of piracy again, I should exhaust every means given me by my position, to save the lives and liberties of those against whom I had committed piracy." "The Dred Scott Decision," Blassingame et al., *Douglass Papers*, 3:163–83.

77. One of Douglass's few discussions of reparations in the form of monetary restitution.

78. From Lincoln's "House Divided" speech, delivered on June 16, 1858.

79. John C. Frémont (1813–1890) declared martial law in Missouri in 1861 and demanded the release of all enslaved persons. Lincoln ordered Frémont to rescind the edict one month later and began to build a case for Frémont's removal.

80. David Hunter (1802–1886) issued an 1862 order to free enslaved persons in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. Lincoln, again, ordered Hunter to immediately rescind the edict.

81. Secretary of state here refers to William Seward (1801–1872).