

# THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

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CHAUNCEY L. KNAPP, EDITOR.

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## THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

For the Voice of Freedom.

FRIEND KNAPP:

At the winter session of the Ferrisburg Quarterly Meeting of Friends, a committee of men and women were appointed on the question of Slavery, &c., which reported to the spring session of that meeting as follows—an abstract of which was accepted by the said meeting:—

The joint committee of men and women, Friends, appointed by the last quarterly meeting to inquire whether any and what action this meeting can take on the subject of slavery and the condition of the free people of color.

### REPORT

That they have paid attention to their appointment, and submit the following draft of a minute which they propose to be forwarded to our next yearly meeting to be held in New York.

This meeting has been again introduced into near sympathy with that portion of our colored brethren who are in bonds, and cordially unites in the belief expressed in the address issued by the yearly meeting in 1837, on this deeply important subject,—that it is the solemn duty of Christians to do all in their power to ameliorate the condition of mankind.

We desire to stand aloof from those movements of the day which are exclusively of a political character; we would not participate with those who are chasing a phantom of their own minds which can never be realized—neither would we be lulled into satisfaction with past efforts by the encomiums of a distinguished statesman. We would still shrink from offering an apology to the dealers in the living blood and muscles of their fellow-creatures, for our confirmed opposition to their nefarious occupation; nor would we withhold our efforts in the cause of humanity, however feeble they may be regarded: and under a deep sense of what is required of all, but more especially of those who are making a profession of christianity, we would raise our voices against the intolerable injustice and sin of slavery. We do heartily accord in the belief that "we should prove faithful to the cause of our holy religion, and to that Gracious Being who has so bountifully blessed us, were we to remain silent so long as the land mourns under the enormous load of guilt consequent on slavery.

On taking a view of the struggle now pending between the advocates of this loathsome stain upon our national character on the one hand, and of those who are zealously engaged in promoting its abolition on the other, we have been led into this inquiry—Do not we, while we protest against the system as iniquitous, virtually give our countenance to its advocates and our support to the slaveholder, in as much as we partake of the fruits of slavery, as often as we use or deal in the produce of the unpaid labour of the slave? And what will our lamentations avail him that is spoiled, so long as we submit to join hands with the spoiler? Do we maintain our requisite consistency when we suffer the profits of trade or our personal convenience to induce us to touch the unclean thing?

We would advert to the time when our Benevolents and Woolmans could fearlessly, in their scrupulous abstinence from the use of the productions of slavery, in strict conformity with their declarations, bear a convincing testimony to their own strict faithfulness in their exertions for the slaughtered and the maimed; but a fear has rested on our minds that custom, and an earnest pursuit of the world and its enticing enjoyments have so far blunted our tenderness for the slave, that the question of propriety seldom occurs to us as we handle the spoils of oppression. Can we say that we have wiped clean our own hands of the desolating sin, so long as we contribute to that patronage of the slaveholder which will ever be one of his greatest inducements to continue in his unhallowed avocation? Let foreign and domestic patronage be withdrawn; let the demand for the produce of slave labor be wholly suspended—and the consequent abolition of slavery will be the inevitable result, as certain as that demand creates supply in any other department of the commercial world. But as long as we attempt to measure the prudential character of an enterprise by the degree of personal ease that it promises to its votaries, so long may we remain blind to duties which would otherwise be self-evident and irresistibly ours.

We conceive that the tenor of our discipline is clearly and unequivocally against our being partakers with those who subsist on the fruits of violence; and as we cannot, consistently with our testimony against war, share in the spoils of war—so neither can we, consistently with our testimony against oppression, share in the spoils of oppression.

It is true that Friends have broken the shackles from off their own slaves, and doubtless there is a latent objection to slavery still existing among us, but can we say we have done all that is required at our hands—that we have finished "the

work allotted to us by the Supreme Judge of the world?" Is there not a daily, an hourly responsibility resting upon us, in company with other Christians, so long as American slavery is upheld by laws framed and executed by a professedly Christian people? And is there not a wide door open for us to remonstrate with the general government against the continued infraction of the constitution?

On referring to the history of the legal abolition of the African slave-trade, we find among those who were the most zealously engaged in that great work of philanthropy, many of our most esteemed and valued brethren. There was not wanting those who could, for the cause of outraged humanity, stand forward as the bold, uncompromising advocates of justice and benevolence, regardless of the sneers and frowns of a persecuting world: the buyers and sellers of an offending, seduced progeny of African negroes, were denounced as criminals of the first magnitude, without the essay of a soft apology from the abolitionists of that day. To know that the slave-trade was sinful, was deemed a sufficient authority for a vigorous exertion of the means used in its suppression. And why should it be otherwise at this time? Can the standard of right and wrong be subject to variation? Can iniquity be less iniquitous? Can oppression be less oppressive? Or can the duty of Christians be less incumbent now than formerly?

We apprehend that the prejudice against color which entwines itself so closely around the institutions of the South, warping justice from its legitimate course, and flattering the votaries of slavery with the hope that God seeth not their transgressions, does not stop at the Potomac, nor scruple to pass the frontier of the free states. We strongly suspect that it is round about and in the very midst of many of the citizens of the North, among those even who admit in the abstract that slavery is wrong, and concur with us in the wish that it had no existence within our borders; for we cannot behold the distinction made between the white and the nominally free colored, but as evidence in support of that suspicion. We cannot regard the classification in the congregations assembled professedly to worship an all-wise being, who has declared himself no respecter of persons, otherwise than as proof of the desolating effect of that prejudice; and under a deep conviction of the incompatibility of that prejudice with the benign, generous principles of christianity, we are concerned to invite Friends to a more close and scrupulous examination of their own hearts, to see if there is not a remnant of that unchristian ingredient still lurking therein. But as long as the majority of the American people are opposed to the evidence, which is the legitimate fruit of examination on this momentous question, so long will the institution be fostered by a gain-loving, though professedly Christian community, until God in his mercy or in judgment sweeps it away.

There are unquestionably difficulties of no ordinary character in the way of emancipation; but notwithstanding those difficulties are great, yet we feel a consoling assurance that when the public mind, being faithfully operated upon by those who are alive to the enormity of the sinfulness of slavery, becomes thoroughly enlightened on this subject, and after honestly trying the system by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, comes to the unreserved conclusion that it is as we view it, exceedingly sinful and in direct opposition to the principles of the Christian religion; and as that conviction begets a prayerful disposition of the heart, and a looking unto Him for help who alone can turn the wilderness into a fruitful field, and make crooked paths straight,—those difficulties will dwindle into insignificance.

We are strangers to any case in which the benevolent principles of christianity have been faithfully carried out, without meeting with difficulties of greater or less magnitude. We are reminded of the difficulties which opposed the liberation of the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage; of those which opposed the spread of the gospel in apostolic days; of the difficulties attending those who protested against the assumed power of the Romish Church in the days when vital christianity began again to dawn on the benighted sons and daughters of men; and of those which our early predecessors encountered in the discharge of their duties as faithful servants of Christ, when the persecuted had become the persecutors of those who dissented from their creeds: and on reviewing those times we are induced to inquire, where would have been the Hebrews, the Apostles, the Reformers, and where would have been our own society, if the ancient advocates of civil and religious liberty had been deterred by the presence of their difficulties from girding on the armour of faith and resolution to encounter them? The agents of their cause knew that their cause was just, and that however insurmountable their difficulties appeared to them, when measured by the feeble means within their reach as mere creatures, they were not left without the consolation which trust in the arm of an Almighty Father and Friend

conferred. To Him they appealed in unwavering faith, and to them He graciously answered by an indubitable evidence that He was with them and for them, and the clouds of opposition and difficulty were dispelled like the haze of the morning. And is the cause of the American negro of the present day less the cause of justice, of humanity, and of religious anxiety, or less the cause of God's mercy and beneficence, than was that of the Hebrews, or the African negro formerly? Or can we believe that the judgment of Omnipotence can be withstood by those who neglect to execute his holy law in this day, any more than by those formerly who rebelled against him,—for who shall attempt to stand before His righteous indignation when once the vials of His wrath are poured out? To whom shall we flee for safety when He who alone has the power to protect us is against us? Will the mountains cover our sins, or will the deep swallow us up out of His sight? Will the grave be beyond his reach, or the sepulchre a secret place before Him? Can we hide ourselves in the caves of the rocks, or flee from before His presence on the wings of the tempest? Or will not His eye search us out, or His hand follow us? "Therefore thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every man to his neighbor, behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine, and I will make you to be removed unto all the ends of the earth."

"Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we would persuade men"—we would affectionately persuade all our members into a calm, religious examination of the nature, ground, and root of American slavery, of the evidence which the present position of the struggle now presents—and as has been suggested by the London Yearly Meeting, whether that evidence is not conclusive that "a crisis is at hand in this momentous question, in which it will mainly depend under Divine Providence, on the faithful conduct of those who act on Christian principles, whether slavery shall be abolished in our land by peaceful legislation, or by confusion and violence."

We desire to unite in earnest prayer to the Father of mercies, that he would be pleased to protect us in all our dangers, preserve our country in tranquillity and peace, and hasten the day of universal freedom.

Trusting in the wisdom and power of Him who suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed by His Heavenly eye, and with sincere desires that he will be pleased to favor us with that share of holy help that will enable us to stand in our true allotments, we would express a hope that the Yearly Meeting will find its way open to petition Congress that that body should exercise its constitutional powers in the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia and Territory of Florida, in the suppression of the domestic slave-trade, and the removal of those disabilities under which the nominally free people of color continue to labor.

Signed by one of the committee.

HENRY MILES,

Ferrisburg, 5th mo. 17th, 1839.

### From the Mass. Abolitionist. "The Chattel Principle."

Among the pamphlets on our table, from which we hope to enrich future numbers of the Abolitionist, is one from the pen of Rev. Beriah Green, in which he compares 'the chattel principle' at the foundation of American Slavery, with the principles inculcated in the New Testament.—He does, as nearly as may be, for the New Testament, what Theodore D. Weld has done for the Old. The two works make a perfect whole, and drive slavery out of the entire Bible as triumphant as the Saviour cleared the money-changers from the temple. The book will endear the author to the hearts of all abolitionists, and show them that he is, at least, as well qualified for the high business to which he devoted his life, as those titled divines who find in the New Testament justification for the worst of crimes. We are glad to see that his argument is attracting attention in the right quarter. A correspondent in the Andover Theological Seminary calls our notice to it in the following communication.

May 20th, 1839.

Brother Wright—I have just finished the perusal of the 7th No. of the Anti-Slavery Examiner, containing an article entitled 'the New Testament against Slavery.' An article which should be thoroughly examined by every professed believer in the New Testament. It exhibits in a clear and unequivocal light, what the views and feelings of Christ and his apostles, upon the subject of human responsibilities, were, and it affords, in connection with 'Weld's Bible Argument,' an amount of Bible doctrine against American slavery too overwhelming for a candid mind to resist.

The following extract is one among the many rich specimens which might be given from 'The New Testament against Slavery.'

Yours truly,  
JUNIOUS.

"What, in describing the scenes of the final judgment, does our Saviour teach us? By what standard must our character be estimated, and the retributions of eternity be awarded? A standard, which both the righteous and the wicked will be surprised to see erected. From the 'offscouring of all things,' the meanest specimens of humanity will be selected—a 'stranger' in the hands of the oppressor, naked, hungry, sickly; and this stranger, placed in the midst of the assembled universe by the side of the sovereign Judge, will be

openly acknowledged as his representative. 'Glory, honor, and immortality,' will be the reward of those who had recognized and cheered their Lord through his outraged poor. And tribulation and anguish and despair, will seize on 'every soul of man,' who had neglected or despised them. But whom, within the limits of our country, are we to regard especially as the representatives of our final Judge? Every feature of the Saviour's picture finds its appropriate original in our enslaved countrymen.

1. They are the LEAST of his brethren.

2. They are subject to thirst and hunger, unable to command a cup of water or a crumb of bread.

3. They are exposed to wasting sickness, without the ability to procure a nurse or employ a physician.

4. They are emphatically 'in prison,' restrained by chains, goaded with whips, tasked, and under keepers. Not a wretch groans in any cell of the prisons of our country, who is exposed to a confinement so rigorous and heart-breaking as the law allows theirs to be continually and permanently.

5. And then they are emphatically, and peculiarly, and exclusively, STRANGERS—strangers in the land which gave them birth. Whom else do we constrain to remain aliens in the midst of our free institutions? The Welch, the Swiss, the Irish? The Jews even? Alas, it is the negro only, who may not strike his roots into our soil. Every where we have conspired to treat him as a stranger—every where he is forced to feel himself a stranger. In the stage and steamboat, in the parlor and at our tables, in the scenes of business and in the scenes of amusement—even in the church of God and at the communion table, he is regarded as a stranger. The intelligent and religious are generally disgusted and horror-struck at the thought of his becoming identified with the citizens of our republic—so much so, that thousands of them have entered into a conspiracy to send him off 'out of sight,' to find a home on a foreign shore!—And justify themselves by openly alleging, that 'a single drop of his blood, in the veins of any human creature, must make him hateful to his fellow citizens!—That nothing but banishment from 'our coasts,' can redeem him from the scorn and contempt to which his 'stranger' blood has reduced him among his own mother's children!

Who, then, in this land 'of milk and honey,' is 'hungry and athirst,' but the man from whom the law takes away the last crumb of bread and the smallest drop of water?

Who 'naked,' but the man whom the law strips of the last rag of clothing?

Who 'sick,' but the man whom the law deprives of the power of procuring medicine or sending for a physician?

Who 'in prison,' but the man who, all his life, is under the control of merciless masters and cruel keepers?

Who a 'stranger,' but the man who is scornfully denied the cheapest courtesies of life—who is treated as an alien in his native country?

There is one point in this awful description which deserves particular attention. Those who are doomed to the left hand of the Judge, are not charged with inflicting positive injuries on their helpless, needy and oppressed brother. Theirs was what is often called negative character. What they had done is not described in the indictment. Their neglect of duty, what they had not done, was the ground of their 'everlasting punishment.' The representative of their Judge, they had seen a hungered and they gave him no meat, thirsty and they gave him no drink, a stranger and they took him not in, naked and they clothed him not, sick and in prison and they visited him not. Inasmuch as they did not yield to the claims of suffering humanity—did not exert themselves to bless the meanest of the human family, they were driven away in their wickedness. But what if the indictment had run thus: I was a hungered and ye snatched away the crust that might have saved me from starvation; I was thirsty and ye dashed to the ground the 'cup of cold water,' which might have moistened my parched lips; I was a stranger and ye drove me from the hovel which might have sheltered me from the piercing wind; I was sick and ye scourged me to my task; in prison, and you sold me for my jail-fee—to what depths of hell must not those who were convicted under such charges be consigned! And what is the history of American slavery but one long indictment, describing under ever-varying forms and hues just such injuries!

Nor should it be forgotten, that those who incurred the displeasure of the Judge, took far other views than he, of their own past history. The charges which he brought against them, they heard with great surprise. They were sure that they had never thus turned away from their necessities. Indeed, when had they seen him thus subject to poverty, insult, and oppression? Never. And as to that poor friendless creature whom they left unprovided and unhelped in the hands of the oppressor, and whom their Judge now presented as his own representative, they never once supposed that he had any claims on their compassion and assistance. Had they known that he was destined to so prominent a place at the final judgment, they would have treated him as a human being, in despite of any social, pecuniary, or political considerations. But neither their negative virtue nor their voluntary ignorance could shield them from the penal fire which their selfishness had kindled."

### From the Christian Reflector.

J. Q. Adams' Second Letter.

This letter is strictly and strikingly Adamsonian. It is like a widely extended lake, most of whose waters are deep and yet so clear that the very sand at the bottom is visible.—but there are spots in that lake so shallow that the Indian's Bark Canoe would strike. No writer has stated the abstract principles of Human Rights and Duties more lucidly, or applied them to matters of fact more correctly than John Quincy Adams has done, in general; but in a few points, he is dark as Erebus and flings his arrows at random. Who ever uttered sounder sentiments than the following? "In the moral question of the North American Revolution, the primary source of all the arguments on the British side was constituted power. The arguments on the American side

were all drawn from elementary rights." "I adhere to the ethics of the Revolution.—The self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence are still self-evident truths," &c. "I hold the opinion that ONE HUMAN BEING CANNOT BE MADE THE PROPERTY OF ANOTHER.—That persons and things are, by the laws of nature and nature's GOD, so distinct that NO HUMAN LAWS can transform either into the other." Here we have the substance and the sum of the creed of ABOLITIONISTS. And now will not this great statesman apply these foundation principles of the morals of politics in every case to which they are obviously applicable? We did hope he would. We did hope that, when he should come in contact with any 'Human Laws' which were enacted for the express purpose of transforming 'persons' to 'things,' actually making 'one human being the property of another,' as literally so as the article caught on the hook of the fisherman is made 'property' by sale, he would declare the absurdity and wickedness of such a law, and in the name of 'Nature and Nature's God,' demand its repeal, whether enacted by a single despot or a Republic of despots.

For what purpose did Mr Adams declare his adhesion to the self-evident ethics of the Revolution? Was it to show their 'impracticability?' Not in the case of 'the revolution,' which was accomplished by them, surely. And, if that great event proved their practicability, why despair of their potency in any other case? In astounding contradiction of himself, however, we find him making their 'impracticability,' his principle argument against attempting their application to the abolition of the American human chattel system.

It cannot be done. Why? Because "four fifths" of the people are unwilling to do it.—But has Mr. Adams all at once lost sight of the power of persuasion, the power of truth on the human mind? If so where does he ground the hope he expresses, that Slavery may yet sometime cease? If four fifths are not willing to abolish the nefarious system, why did not Mr. Adams address "those self-evident truths" to the judgment and conscience of the erring and sinning multitude to change and revolutionize their sentiments? Why tell them that because they will not, therefore, they can not do right. This doctrine, if heard from the pulpit, would be acouted as arrant antinomianism, may as a cloak for sin. It is saying, we can't do right, and therefore we need not attempt it because we won't. In this way, the reader of Mr. Adams' Letter which we are now publishing, will see, that great and most acute logician reasons, in dissuading the citizens of this Republic from petitioning Congress to repeal their own Slave laws &c. &c. True, he talks of the injustice of Congress abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, so long as a majority of the inhabitants of that District are opposed to such a measure. But who compels those citizens to reside in that District? and under whose "exclusive legislation" has the Constitution of the land placed that District? and why has the Congress been Constitutionally empowered to legislate for the District, if it is not to exercise that power, except at the dictation of the dwellers there? If Congress may never rightfully legislate for the District, but as the majority of the citizens orders them, why not leave the population of the District to legislate for itself, since it would always enact laws by a majority, if left to itself. There are undoubtedly good reasons for giving to Congress exclusive jurisdiction over the District, inasmuch as it is the common ground of the whole nation, to be appropriated and used as the will of the nation may be, and those who choose to reside there under these conditions can do so, and others are at liberty to stay away or depart.

According to Mr. Adams' reasoning on this topic, the nation is to be governed by the District and not the District by the nation.

Notwithstanding these obvious errors of the Letter, we rejoice in its publication. In the main, it is worthy of the highest commendation.

If we had room here, we could say a word about the true meaning of "immediate emancipation," which, wonderful as it may seem, Mr. A. seems not to have apprehended. We can now only say, however, that many things are immediate duties, which, we have reason to fear, will not be done these many days. If nothing is to be urged as a duty to be done immediately, but that which all men are disposed to do immediately, we may well despair of reforming the world; for, in all such cases, there is the same "impracticability" of which Mr. Adams speaks. But this species of impracticability can be overcome by convincing those in error that they are wrong and inducing them to do right. Here is the world's hope.

### From the Philanthropist.

### DUTIES OF THE STATES IN RELATION TO FUGITIVES FROM LABOUR.

Dr. BAILEY:—In the Philanthropist of the 14th you have given to the public a statement of what you call 'Another Court House Meeting,' in which you suggest that I 'advanced the idea that Ohio under the Federal Constitution was not bound to deliver up runaway slaves.' This, though correct in the main, does not so fully express what I said on that point as I could wish; I remarked that the states as parties to the federal compact were themselves judges of the time and manner of the performance of those duties which that compact required of each, for carrying on its operations. That the states respectively had reserved to themselves the power to protect, and also prevent the abduction of any person within their jurisdiction, and from being transported out of the state, without the assent of such 'State in pursuance of her own laws.' That the law of Congress of the 12th February, 1793, providing, that persons escaping from the service of their masters in one state, and being found in another state, shall be arrested and delivered to the claimant was unconstitutional, and in violation of the reserved rights and sovereignty of the states. That Ohio nor no other state was bound by the operation or force of any foreign law to deliver up any runaway slave or person escaping from the service of their master; that the states were under a moral constitutional obligation to do so, but that they were themselves judges when and how they would exercise the power,